
 COMMENTS ON THE ANURUDDHA SUTTA*

J. D. Ireland

The question might well arise as to whether these visitations, such as that of Jālinī, of devas in general and, in other instances, those of Māra, should be regarded literally. Or are they merely symbolic, literary, poetic or teaching devices? It is difficult for us living in another age and another culture to appreciate the thought-processes of those persons living two and a half millennia ago. It is probable that they did not have the sharp distinctions we have between the symbolic and the actual, between subjective and objective experience. It is likely that these distinctions did not apply and the two tended to coalesce. Another problem is that what is being described is the experience of an arahant whose thought-processes are beyond the range of unenlightened beings even in their own culture.

It seems possible that this visitation is the objectifying of memories of past habitual thought-processes. An anterior dialogue concerning the pleasures the arahant once knew, the desires he once entertained, egotism, pride, worldly delusions and so forth. These are recognised by mindfulness, but have no power now to take hold of his mind. Māra is recognised and defeated by

**Editor's Note.* Owing to a technical mishap, most of the author's Comments were mislaid and so inadvertently not published in the last issue of BSR. We wish to express our profound apologies to Mr Ireland for the distress and inconvenience this may have caused him, and now publish the entire Comments from the beginning. The verses to which they refer can be found in BSR 12, No. 2, pp. 107-8. Please note that in n.3 (p.107), 'thirty-three companies of Sakka' should read: 'thirty-three companions . . .'

Frontispiece: the calligraphy in Sino-Vietnamese characters (Nôm) by Ven Thích Huyền-Vi reads:

*"Therefore, know
Transcendent Wisdom
as the Great Holy Mantra,
the Mantra of Great Knowledge."*

The seals, engraved by Ven. Bhikkhu Dhamma-vīro of Thailand, convey the same meaning as the calligraphy.

just this fact of recognition. Jālinī seems to be the personification of former sensual desires (*kāmacchanda*) held by Anuruddha and the memory of the enjoyment once derived from them. It is no coincidence that Jālinī means 'The Ensnarer', 'The Bewitcher'¹¹. Most men would recognise her, the personification of youthful sexual fantasies, perhaps we are even now still ensnared by her. But for Anuruddha, through his experience of the Deathless, his insight into impermanence and his overcoming of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, the self-embodiment view, such pleasures afforded by sensual delights no longer have a hold over him. In the Māgandhiya Sutta (M 75) the Buddha uses a powerful (and shocking) simile, comparing such pleasures to that of a leper deriving relief by scorching his sores with burning embers. It is this vision of the Deathless, the ultimate goal of Nibbāna, that provides the ariyan disciple with an alternative to the pleasures afforded by sensuality that enables him to reject them decisively. An alternative powerful enough evidently to warrant such a simile. Those who have not had this experience are 'fixed in individuality' (*sakkāyasmim patiṭṭhitā*), the idea of the continuity and permanence of 'self' associated with any of the five aggregates of grasping and the spheres of the senses (*āyatana*). The contrast between the outlook of the *ariya*, the Buddhas and their disciples who are free from this fixation and the ordinary person, the *puthujjana*, is set forth in the Dvayānupassanā Sutta (Sn vv.756f.):

'See how the world with the devas has self-conceit for what is not-self. Enclosed by mind-and-body (*nāmarūpa*) it

11 Confirmation perhaps that *jālinī* is the personification of desire is the occurrence of the word in Thag v.162, where it is not used as a personal name, but in the abstract as a synonym for craving. See also Dhp v.180: 'For whom there is no *ensnaring*, entangling craving . . .'

imagines: "This is real!" Whatever they imagine it to be, it is quite other than that. It is unreal, of a false nature and perishable. Nibbāna, not false in nature, that the *ariya* know as true . . . Forms, sounds, tastes, scents, bodily contacts and ideas which are agreeable, pleasant and charming, all these, while they last, are deemed to be happiness by the world with the devas. But when they cease, that is agreed by all to be painful. By the *ariya* the cessation of *sakkāya* is seen as happiness. This is the reverse of the outlook of the entire world!

It appears it is a thoroughgoing insight into the impermanence of conditioned existence that destroys the belief in *sakkāya*. 'What is impermanent, that is suffering; what is suffering, that is not-self'. So that heavenly bliss is, after all, suffering!

That the delights of heaven could have no attraction for one striving for enlightenment and seeing impermanence is illustrated by a story found in the Saṃyutta Commentary¹². It seems a certain bhikkhu striving for insight died suddenly whilst leaning against a vihāra gate-post. He was then reborn as a deva in the Tāvātimsa heaven leaning against a door-post there. Being approached and greeted as their lord by a host of lovely celestial nymphs, he gave vent to his disappointment in a verse recorded in the Devatā Saṃyutta (S I 5.6) which, without this story, would be incomprehensible. In the verse he compared the nymphs to a host of demons (*pisāca*), renaming the *Nandana* ('Delightful') Grove the *Mohana*, the 'Delusive', and declaring that a life indulging in sensual enjoyments there would be insufferable for him.

The verse beginning, 'Impermanent are all conditioned things . . .' is repeated several times in the first vagga of the Saṃyutta

12 Saratthāppakāsinī I, p.85f.

alone and is spoken to or by devas of the Tāvātimsa heaven. It is apparently the special Dhamma-teaching of the Buddha for that deva-world. Sakka the devarāja repeats it again on the occasion of the Buddha's passing away or *parinibbāna*. Sakka is said to be an *ariya-sāvaka* and a *sotāpanna* and has thus evidently rid himself of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and taken its message to heart. This verse is also elsewhere the response to the lines repeated by Jālinī: 'They know no bliss . . .'. These appear to be a quotation expressing a popular view current, presumably, among those who would aspire to be born after death in that heaven world.

If it were merely a matter of contrasting two kinds of bliss or happiness, that of indulgence in our desires and the bliss of Nibbāna, for those who have not experienced the latter there is little incentive to be rid of the former. As it is usually conceived heaven is the reward for good and blameless deeds performed here in the human world. The popular idea is that after enjoying such heavenly bliss for a vast period of time, a being could return to this world and presumably repeat the process indefinitely¹³. With such a view there seems little point in pursuing with any urgency the path leading to Nibbāna for the cessation of suffering. The attitude of Anuruddha and that unnamed bhikkhu would seem almost eccentric, were it not for another aspect of the holding of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* that has a more sinister implication. Contrary to the popular view, Anuruddha states that those beings holding *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* are *duggatā*, are destined for rebirth in misery, in the lower realms of existence, the *apāya*: the hells, animal birth and realm of the hungry ghosts (*petā-visaya*). Furthermore, this is not just a remote possibility due to some evil deed performed in the past, but is the direct and inevitable con-

13 See, for example, the view expressed by the devas in Itivuttaka, sutta 83.

sequence of holding *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* itself. In the Pañcagati Sutta (S LVI 11.10) the Buddha compares the little dust taken up on the tip of his fingernail with the great earth. Even so, ' . . . few are those beings deceasing as devas who are born again as devas or men, most are born again in hell (*niraya*)'. In other places these lower realms are portrayed as containing the vast majority of living beings, as the great oceans of the world are teeming with creatures. Again, as there is no opportunity there for performing meritorious deeds, so there is practically no way of escaping from these realms once a being has been born there. The simile is given that to escape from the *apāya* is as difficult as a turtle coming to the surface of the ocean once in an hundred years and putting its head through the hole in a yoke drifting on that ocean¹⁴. No wonder then that the blissful enjoyments of the heavens are held by the *ariya-sāvaka* in such abhorrence and regarded as miserable in themselves because of this terrible danger. In contrast to this, for a person who knows no happiness other than sensuality as the escape from suffering, the bliss of Nibbāna would appear fearful and ego-threatening, hence misery or *dukkha*, for that person. Thus, the quotation from the Sutta Nipāta cited earlier continues, 'What others call happiness, that the *ariya* declare to be misery; and what others call misery, that the *ariya* have found to be happiness . . . Herein those without insight have completely gone astray'.

Anuruddha, being an arahant, has finished completely with any kind of future birth. There is not even the remotest possibility that he could imagine aspiring to return to a deva-realm and find enjoyment there. Such an idea would be absurd and quite abhorrent to him.

14 M 129, S V, pp.455-6.

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* * * * *

akkharaṃ ekamekaṃ ca buddharūpasamaṃ siyā |
tasmā hi paṇḍito poso rakkheyya piṭakattayaṃ |

caturāsīti saḥassāni sambuddhā parimāṇakā |
ṭhītā nāma bhavissanti tiṭṭhante piṭakattaye |

Every single letter of the Dhamma is equal to an image of the Buddha:
Therefore a wise person should preserve the Tipiṭaka.

In the Dhamma of the Buddha there are 84,000 teachings,
Therefore, where there is a Tipiṭaka there are 84,000 Buddhas.

SĪHANĀDA — THE LION'S ROAR

OR WHAT THE BUDDHA WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WILLING TO DEFEND IN DEBATE¹

Joy Manné

In the Dīgha (D), Majjhima (M), Saṃyutta (S) and Aṅguttara (A) Nikāyas the Buddha is frequently compared to a lion, and like a lion is said to roar. His roar takes place under conditions which the texts relate to the debate situation. His roar has content. His monks, although not compared to lions, may also utter a lion's roar. They are encouraged to roar on one particular subject specified by the Buddha. They may also roar on their own initiative, although it is only of Sariputta's 'lion's roar' that the texts contain a record. Suttas may themselves have the term *sihanāda*, 'lion's roar', in their titles. An examination of the notion of the 'lion's roar' shows the imaginative and creative way its reciters (*bhāṇakas*) treated the Buddha's message within the context of their society, relating it to its customs and traditions.

1. *The Buddha's 'lion's roar'*.

The simile in which the Buddha is compared to a lion occurs frequently in the Sutta Piṭaka. Occasionally the comparison is simple — the Buddha simply is a lion:

¹ These investigations were supported by the Foundation for Research in the field of Theology and the Science of Religions in the Netherlands, which is subsidised by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research (Z.W.O.), and in part constitutes Chapter V of my doctoral dissertation, 'Debates and Case Histories in the Pali Canon' (Utrecht 1991).

- (1) 'Like a lion lonely faring . . .'
- ²
- .

'Lo, what a lion is the worshipful recluse Gotama! 'Tis by his lion's nature that he endures, mindful and discerning, the pains that have arisen in his body, keen and sharp, acute, distressing and unwelcome, and that he is not cast down'³.

'You are a lion . . .'⁴.

'He is the Lord Buddha — he is an incomparable lion . . .'⁵.

In these simple comparisons the Buddha is referred to by the epithet 'Buddha' or 'Samaṇa Gotama'.

The comparison between the Buddha and a lion, however, is most usually expressed in the formula:

- (2) 'The lion, monks, the king of the beasts, comes out of his lair in the evening. After coming out of his lair, he yawns. After yawning, he surveys the four quarters. After surveying the four quarters, he roars his lion's roar three times. After roaring his lion's roar three times, he goes hunting'
- ⁶
- .

The simile is explained in this way,

- (3) "'Lion", monks, is a metaphorical expression for the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One. And it is in his lion's roar that the Tathāgata teaches Dhamma in the assembly'
- ⁷
- .

In this simile the Buddha is invariably referred to by the epithet 'Tathāgata'. The emphasis in this formula is on the utterance that

2 S I 16; tr. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings* (KS) I 25.

3 S I 28; tr. *ibid.*, I 38.

4 Sutta Nipāta (Sn) 546 = 572.

5 It. 123.

6 A II 33 = III 121 = V 32 = S II 84.

7 A III 122 = V 33.

the lion/Tathāgata makes. The simile (formula 3) continues:

- (3A) 'Just so, monks, when a Tathāgata arises in the world, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One, One who has knowledge and (right) conduct, One who has attained bliss, One who knows the world, the unsurpassed Trainer of men, Teacher of devas and mankind, a Buddha, an Exalted One. He teaches Dhamma: . . .'
- ⁸
- .

On one occasion it is the way that the Buddha teaches that is emphasised: the carefulness with which the Buddha teaches Dhamma is compared to the carefulness with which the lion strikes his blow while hunting⁹. On a different occasion it is the effect of the Buddha's Teaching that is emphasised: the effect that the Buddha's Teaching has on devas is compared with the effect that the sound of the lion's roar has on brute creatures: in both cases causing fear, agitation and trembling¹⁰. Most usually, however, what is emphasised is **what** the Buddha, the Tathāgata, roars. The Tathāgata's lion's roar has **content**, and its content varies in the different suttas that contain the simile.

There are two particular formulas that introduce the content. One of these is that of formula (3A) above where the Buddha is simply said to teach Dhamma. The other is,

- (4) 'There are these [ten] Tathāgata-[powers] that belong to the Tathāgata. Endowed with these [powers], the Tathāgata claims as his own
- ¹¹
- the bull's place (the position of the leader); he roars his lion's roar in the assemblies; he sets in

8 A II 33, etc. This formula exists also independently of the lion simile (formula 3).

9 A III 121.

10 A II 33.

11 Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit Dictionary*, s.v. *prajñā*.

motion the wheel of Dhamma¹².

The words I have placed in square brackets change according to the context¹³.

The emphasis in the formula, as in (3) above, is that the Tathāgata's lion's roar is uttered in assemblies. When the Tathāgata does this, he takes the position of leader, like a bull. By uttering his lion's roar in assemblies the Tathāgata propagates his Teaching and sets in motion the wheel of Dhamma.

Various groups of assemblies are referred to in this literature. The Mahā-Sīhanāda Sutta (M 12) refers to eight assemblies: the assembly of nobles, of brahmins, of householders, of recluses, the retinues of the four great regents, the gods of the Thirty-three, the Māras and the Brahmās¹⁴. As it is a *sīhanāda* sutta we may perhaps infer from it that these are the assemblies intended in the 'lion's roar' situation. In any case we may deduce from this that the 'lion's roar' is a particular type of utterance to be proclaimed in public where particular prestigious groups gather, and indeed the Kassapa-Sīhanāda Sutta¹⁵ confirms that this is the case. From the rules that this sutta provides for satisfying the assembly it is clear that a 'lion's roar' is a challenge. In a sudden insert in this sutta, which gives no indication why the Buddha felt called upon to vindicate himself at that particular moment and in that particular situation, the Buddha enumerates and refutes potential criticisms that he suggests might be made against him by recluses

12 A III 9, V 33; Vibhāṣa (Vhb) 318.

13 The subjects of confidence (*vesarajjāni*) of formula (11) are introduced by this formula.

14 M I 72.

15 D 8 [I 175]. Suttas with *sīhanāda* in their titles are discussed in section 3 below.

of divers schools. These potential criticisms are that, although he utters his lions' roar, i.e. issues his challenge¹⁶:

- (5) 1. 'he does this in empty places, and not in public'¹⁷ ;
2. 'he issues his challenge in assemblies, but he does it without confidence'¹⁸ ;
3. 'he challenges with confidence . . . but people do not ask him questions'¹⁹ ;
4. 'people ask him questions, but he does not answer'²⁰ ;
5. 'he answers their question, . . . but he does not win over their minds with his exposition'²¹ ;
6. 'he wins over their minds with his exposition, . . .but they do not find him worth hearing'²² ;
7. 'they find him worth hearing but after they have heard him they are not convinced'²³ ;
8. 'having heard him, they are convinced, . . . but the faithful make no sign of their belief'²⁴ ;

16 *sīha-nādaṃ nadati*, 'utters his lion's roar', 'makes his assertion', 'issues his challenge'. See Nathan Katz, *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection: The Arahant of the Sutta Piṭaka compared with the Bodhisattva and the Mahā-siddha* (Delhi 1982) 29ff, for further usages of this expression.

17 D I 175.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 *sotabbaṃ c'assa maññanti . . . na ca kho sutvā pasīdanti*, *ibid.* *Pasīdati* 'a mental attitude which unites deep feeling, intellectual appreciation and satisfied clarification of thought and attraction towards the teacher'. K.N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London 1963, New Delhi 1989) § 655.

24 *Ibid.* Presumably this means that they utter no acceptance formula, provide no meals for the bhikkhus, etc.

9. 'the faithful give the sign of their belief, . . . but they do not follow the path to the Truth (Nibbāna)²⁵ ;

10. 'they follow the Path, . . . but they do not succeed'²⁶.

These are clearly important accusations and the Buddha's refutation of them is categorical. He asserts that in fact exactly the opposite is the case.

The Buddha refutes further potential accusations regarding his conduct when challenged in a different debate sutta (A I 187). Sarabha, a wanderer, who had recently stopped being a follower of the Buddha is claiming that he left the Buddha's teaching for the very reason that he understood it²⁷. This controversial utterance is reported to the Buddha who seeks out Sarabha and challenges him. The Buddha asks Sarabha whether the report is true, and how Sarabha has understood the Dhamma²⁸. Sarabha remains silent throughout this inquisition 'confused, dejected, hanging his head, downcast, cowed down'²⁹. The Buddha then makes three assertions about himself. He asserts that anyone challenging him with regard to the following: (1) his claim to be fully enlightened³⁰, (2) his claim to be free of intoxicants³¹, and (3)

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*

27 A I 185.

28 The second question is put twice. The situation here is very similar to that described by M. Witzel in 'The case of the shattered head' (*Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 13-14, 1987), pp. 363-415, although it does not include this threat. This may be because the challenge is directed against a *paribbājaka*. It is worth noting that in the Buddhist texts this threat is directed solely against brahmins.

29 A I 186.

30 *sammāsambuddha*.

31 *khīṇāsava*.

his claim that his Teaching leads a practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering³², would end up in the same pitiable condition as Sarabha. The sutta continues, 'Then the Exalted One, having thrice uttered his lion's roar . . . departed . . .'³³.

The situations discussed above show that the context in which the Tathāgata utters his lion's roar is a debate³⁴. They also show that it is as Tathāgata that Gotama makes the claims upon which he is willing to be challenged in public³⁵. The Tathāgata's lion's roar is a particular type of challenge. It is an assertion that the Buddha is willing to defend in public and this also accounts for the fact that it is uttered three times³⁶.

What are those points that the Buddha was willing to defend in public? Three of them are given above: (1) that he was fully enlightened, (2) that he was free from intoxicants, and (3) that his Teaching leads a practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering³⁷.

32 A I 187.

33 *Ibid.*, tr. Woodward, *Gradual Sayings* (GS) I 169f.

34 See Joy Manné, 'Categories of Sutta in the Pāli Nikāyas and their implications for our appreciation of the Buddhist Teaching and Literature', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XV, 1990, 29-87. See also Witzel, *op. cit.*

35 Further, the study of debate techniques in Joy Manné, 'The Dīgha Nikāya Debates: debating practices at the time of the Buddha' (*Buddhist Studies Review* 9, 2, 1992, pp. 117-36) shows that the Buddha regularly used his Tathāgata status to support his arguments in debates.

36 M. Hara, in his article 'Mittabi' ['Three Times'], *Bukkyo kyori no kenkyū, Tamura Yoshida hakase kanreki kinen ronshū* (Tokyo 1982, pp.527-43), shows that in Indian philosophy and literature 'doing an action three times means that it must be intentional and that one is therefore held responsible for the action'. I am extremely grateful to Dr Tom Tillemans for providing a translation of this article, from which this quotation is taken.

37 A I 187.

We have already met the two formulas that introduce the contents of the Tathāgata's lion's roar, (3 and 3A) together, and (4). Each of these formulas introduces a different type of content. The contents of (3 and 3A) comprise the Teaching that the Tathāgata roars; the contents of (4) comprise the Tathāgata's qualities. Of these two formulas (the combination of (3 and 3A) is the least frequently used.

The aspects of the Teaching that are placed within (3 and 3A) are:

(6) 'This is the body, this is the arising of the body, this is the ceasing of the body³⁸. This is feeling . . . , perception . . . , creative acts³⁹ . . . , this is consciousness, this is the arising of consciousness, this is the ceasing of consciousness⁴⁰.

and

(7) 'This is individuality: this is the origin of individuality, this is the cessation of individuality, this is the path leading to the cessation of individuality⁴¹.

The ensuing remarks by the devas, identical in each of these suttas, show that they understand this to be a Teaching about impermanence: ' . . . We know, indeed, sirs, that we are impermanent, changing, not to last, taken in by individuality⁴².

38 See Rune Johansson, *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*, London and Malmö 1979, pp.29-34.

39 Johansson's translation of *saṅkhārā*, *ibid.*, pp. 125ff.

40 S III 85.

41 *iti sakkāyo iti sakkāyasamudayo iti sakkāyanirodho iti sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ti*. A II 33. *sakkāya* is defined to be the five 'groups of grasping' *pañca upādānakkhandhā*, which are *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa*. M I 299.

42 S III 85; tr. Woodward, KS III 71.

The qualities of the Tathāgata that warrant a lion's roar are comprised either in a statement about the Tathāgata's powers (*balāni*), or in a statement about the subject concerning which he has complete confidence in himself (*vesārajjāni*) introduced as in formula (4).

The powers the Tathāgata is willing to claim for himself in the assemblies are enumerated variously as ten, six or five. The ten powers are:

- (8) i. 'that the Tathagāta knows, as it really is, causal occasion (of a thing) as such, and what is not causal occasion as such⁴³,
- ii. 'the fruit of actions past, future and present, both in their causal occasion and the conditions⁴⁴,
- iii. 'the directions whatsoever of each practice⁴⁵,
- iv. 'the world as it really is, in its divers shapes and forms⁴⁶,
- v. 'the divers characters of beings⁴⁷,
- vi. 'the state of the faculties of other beings⁴⁸,
- vii. 'the defilement, the purification, and the emergence of attainments in meditation (*jhāna*), liberation (*vimokha*) and concentration (*samādhi*)⁴⁹,
- viii. 'The Tathāgata can recall his many states of existence, thus: One birth, two births, three births and so on . . . up to an hundred thousand births; likewise many evolutions

43 A V 33; tr. Woodward, GS V 24. Explained at Dhammasaṅgaṇi (Dhs) 1337.

44 *Ibid.*; tr. *ibid.* Cf. *Middle Length Sayings* (MLS) I 93f.

45 *Ibid.*; tr. *ibid.*

46 *anekadhātunādhātu-lokaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānati*. A V 33f; tr. *ibid.*

47 A V 34; tr. *ibid.*

48 *parasattānaṃ parapuggalānaṃ indriyaparopariyattaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānati*. *Ibid.*; tr. *ibid.*

49 A V 34.

- of aeons, many dissolutions of aeons, many evolutions and dissolutions of aeons, (remembering): At that time I had such a name, was of such a family, of such complexion, was thus supported, thus and thus experienced pleasure and suffering, had such and such a lifespan. Passing away from that existence, I arose in another state of existence. And there, I had such a name, was of such a family. . . . Passing away from that existence, I arose here⁵⁰,
- ix. 'The Tathāgata with divine vision, purified and surpassing that of men, sees the deceasing and rising up again of beings, both low and exalted, beautiful or ugly, gone to a state of bliss or a bad state according to their deeds. He knows beings thus: these beings, sirs, who are given to the practice of wrong conduct in body, word and thought, who criticise the noble ones, who are of wrong view and who acquire for themselves the fruits of their wrong view, having passed away arise after death in a state of loss, a bad state, a state of lower existence, a state of destruction, those beings, sirs, who are given to the practice of right conduct in body, word and thought, who do not criticise the noble ones, who are of right view and who acquire for themselves the fruits of their right view, having passed away arise after death in a state of bliss, in the heavenly world⁵¹,
- x. 'The Tathāgata, through destroying the intoxicants, having seen for himself in this very lifetime, through his own higher knowledge, the release of the mind and the release through wisdom that is free from intoxicants,

50 A V 34f.

51 A V 35f.

remains in that attainment⁵².

This list of ten is supported in the Vibhaṅga where it occurs in identical form with the exception of the ninth *bala* which is expressed simply:

- (9) ix. '[The Tathāgata] knows as it really is the rebecoming of beings⁵³.

In the commentarial section that follows this list, however, the exposition comprises the full text of the ninth *bala* as given in the list of ten above⁵⁴. When six powers are enumerated these are Nos 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the list of ten⁵⁵. The five powers are made up of a quite different list:

- (10) 'The powers of faith, modesty, conscience (shrinking back from doing wrong), energy and wisdom⁵⁶.

The four subjects of confidence (*vesārajjāni*) that the Tathāgata is willing to proclaim in the assemblies are expressed in the form of a denial. The Buddha says, 'I do not behold the ground on which a recluse or a brahmin or a deva or a Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world will legitimately reprove me⁵⁷. These potential charges are:

- (11) i. 'These dhammas are not enlightened in you, although you claim to be fully enlightened⁵⁸,

52 A V 36. The reference for the whole attestation is A V 32-6; cf. M 12 [I 69-71]. Translation taken from Woodward, GS V 23ff as indicated. Otherwise I have used my own.

53 Vbh 318.

54 Vbh 343.

55 A III 417ff.

56 *saddhā-balaṃ, hiri-, ottappa-, viriya-, paññābalaṃ*. A II 9.

57 *Ibid.*

58 A II 9.

- ii. 'These intoxicants are not destroyed in you, although you claim to be free from intoxicants'⁵⁹,
- iii. 'There is no impediment for one who follows the dhammas that you have called the dhammas that cause impediment'⁶⁰,
- iv. 'The Dhamma that you teach purportedly for this reason does not lead to the complete destruction of all suffering for the practitioner'⁶¹.

Because the Tathāgata sees no legitimate ground upon which he may be reproved, he is peaceful, fearless, convinced⁶² concerning potential charges that may be made against him.

Two suttas in S (II 27 = Nos. 21, 28 = No.22) open with the formula (4), adapting it so as to include both the ten powers (*balāni*) and the four confidences (*vesārajjāni*). Instead, however, of listing these as we have seen them above, these suttas follow the opening formula with the Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). These suttas begin with (4) above⁶³, and continue:

- (12) 'Thus, "this" being, "that" becomes, from the arising of this, that arises; this not being; that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases. That is to say, conditioned by ignorance, activities come to pass, conditioned by activities consciousness comes to pass, and so on: such is the uprising of this entire mass of Ill. But from the utter fading out and cessation of ignorance, activities cease, from the ceasing of activities consciousness ceases, and so on: such is the ceasing

59 *Ibid.*

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.* (A II 8f = M I 71f).

62 A II 8f = M I 71f.

63 In full in No.21, indicated in brief in No.22.

of this entire mass of Ill'⁶⁴.

It is difficult to see how the phrases quoted in these suttas comprised of (4) and (12) above contain ten powers (*balāni*) and four confidences (*vesārajjāni*). This indicates some confusion in the handing down of the tradition.

The above suggests that there were a number of points that the Buddha was willing to defend in public. (There was also a list of questions he refused to defend either in public or in private, the well-known unexplained (*avyākata*) questions.) The question is whether these points have some particular importance in the Buddha's Teaching and should be regarded as its most important features, or alternatively, whether these points are more relevant to the debate procedures, topics and requirements of the time, being permissible or required subjects in the context of the discussion between contemporary religious movements⁶⁵. With regard to their importance as aspects of the Teaching, the problem is that records remaining to us in this literature of topics that come within the category of 'lion's roar' subjects are so meagre that it is difficult to have any confidence in them, comprising as they do only the arising and ceasing of the five *khandhas*, formula (6) and the arising and ceasing of 'individuality' (*sakkāya*), formula (7). With regard to the qualities of the Tathāgata, on the other hand, there are relatively many examples of lists of these, even though they are not always mutually consistent. This evidence suggests that it was primarily those qualities and capacities that the Buddha claimed for himself personally as Tathāgata, and that he would defend in public, that comprised the content of the Buddha's lion's roar, and that the

64 S II 27f.

65 See Witzel, *op. cit.*

inclusion of the elements of the Teaching as material for a lion's roar is spurious.

2. *The monks' 'lion's roar'.*

The debate suttas, reflecting the debate tradition, show how important the requirement was to assert and defend one's religious knowledge. Two suttas suggest that it was so important that the Buddha instructed his monks regarding which aspects of his Teaching they were rightly (*sammā*) allowed to proclaim in the form of a lion's roar, and also how to defend them. In the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta*⁶⁶ and in A II 238, § 239, the Buddha specifically permits the monks to make a certain claim in the form of a lion's roar:

- (13) 'In this teaching, monks, the recluse is to be found, also the second, third and fourth (class) of recluse. Void of such recluses are the systems of those who teach contrary views. Thus, monks, do ye rightly roar the lion's roar. . .'⁶⁷

In M II he teaches them the argument for its defence.

Although these two suttas have this assertion in common they differ completely with regard to content. The A sutta defines the four *samaṇas* in its subsequent verses as the 'Stream-Enterer' (*sotāpanna*), the 'Once-Returner' (*sakadāgāmin*), the 'Non-Returner' (*opapātika*, lit. 'born by spontaneous generation'), and 'one who, having destroyed the intoxicants, lives in the attainment of having experienced for himself through his own higher knowledge in this very life the release of the mind, the release through wisdom that is free from intoxicants'⁶⁸. The M sutta, which may

be categorised as a sermon, teaches the monks how to refute, in debate, practitioners who hold various contrary views⁶⁹. The points made in this sutta have no relation to the definitions with which it starts out and which it has in common with the A sutta. The points on which others making the same claim may be refuted are divided into two: one concerns aspects of the Teaching, the other concerns lines of attack against the position of the opponents. The first point is that the Buddhist monks make this claim having seen for themselves four things: that they have (i) confidence in their Teacher and (ii) in their Dhamma, (iii) that they fulfil the moral requirements (*sīla*), and (iv) that they have good relations with their fellow monks and their lay supporters. The second, a line of attack to be used in case the opponents should make exactly the same claims about their relationship with their leader and co-practitioners, comprises various challenges regarding the nature of their goal. After these first two paragraphs the sutta becomes a debate with potential opponents⁷⁰ against the views of becoming and annihilation⁷¹, and the four kinds of grasping (*upādāna*)⁷². The Buddha sums up by saying that the holders of wrong views cannot fulfil the first group of conditions above, because they are wrongly taught by a teacher who is not completely enlightened. The sutta contains various expositions of the Teaching rather than instructions in refutation.

It is difficult to see how these points support the challenge, the *sīhanāda*, at the beginning of this sutta. In fact the common beginning and separate development of this pair of suttas suggests

66 M II. See below, section 3, for a discussion of suttas called *sīhanāda*.

67 A II 238, § 238 = M II, I 63; tr. Woodward, GS II 242.

68 The text omits *paññavimuttim* which belongs in this formula.

69 See Manné (1990): 25.

70 See *ibid.*: 23.

71 M I 64.

72 M I 66.

that in the M sutta the Buddha's original defence of his position either never existed or has been lost. There is no evidence that a monk ever defended this aspect of the Teaching in a debate, but then the suttas are primarily about the Buddha and only occasionally about individual monks.

The right to utter a lion's roar is not limited to the Tathāgata, or to those situations where the Buddha permits his monks to proclaim certain subjects in this way. A monk may also utter a 'lion's roar' on his own initiative. In the Nikāyas this monk is always Sāriputta.

In an upsurge of faith, Sāriputta proclaims to the Buddha, 'Lord, such is the faith I have in the Exalted One — *Bhagavā*, that (I know) there has not been, will not be and is not found today any samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who is better than the Exalted One, or has more higher knowledge with respect to the Highest Enlightenment'⁷³. The Buddha acknowledges Sāriputta's remark, 'This speech you have uttered, Sāriputta, is noble, bull-like. A lion's roar, seized with certainty, is uttered'⁷⁴. Thus the Buddha himself categorises this utterance as a 'lion's roar'. The Buddha immediately challenges Sāriputta on his capacity to make such a remark, forcing him to admit that he has not known all past Buddhas, does not know all future Buddhas, and does not even know the present Buddha to the required extent to be able to support his claim. Sāriputta, however, is not daunted. He asserts that he can support his claim, which he has made because he has

73 D 28, III 99. Cf. D II 82f = S V 159, both of which only include (14) below. S V 159 includes the Buddha's final injunction (see below) that this text should regularly be recited to converts (monks, nuns and lay-followers).

74 D III 95; tr. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* (DB) III 95.

seen in accordance with Dhamma⁷⁵, arguing through the use of a simile that he has seen what is important.

The content of Sāriputta's defence of his lion's roar is a lengthy itemisation of what all the Buddhas, past, present and future, have achieved. The details, in as brief a form as possible, are:

- (14) i. 'That all Buddhas, "after they have abandoned the five hindrances and after they have weakened corruptions of the mind by means of wisdom, being possessed (then) of hearts well established in the four exercises for setting up mindfulness and having thoroughly developed the seven constituents of knowledge, have wholly awakened (or will wholly awaken) to the uttermost awakening"⁷⁶.
- ii. 'That on one occasion when he came to the Buddha to hear Dhamma, the Buddha taught it in such a way that Sāriputta attained perfection in one particular dhamma, namely, faith in the Teacher⁷⁷.
- iii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the skilful dhammas is unsurpassable by any samaṇa or brāhmaṇa, these skilful dhammas being the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Four Right Exertions, the Four Bases of Psychic Power, the Five Controlling Principles, the Five Powers, the Seven Constituents of Knowledge, and the Noble Eightfold Path. In this connection, a bhikkhu, having destroyed the intoxicants, lives in the attainment of having experienced for himself through his own higher knowledge in this very life the release of the mind, the

75 *dhammanvayo vidito*. D III 100.

76 D III 101.

77 D III 102.

- release through wisdom that is free from intoxicants⁷⁸.
- iv. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the description of the sphere of perception⁷⁹ is unsurpassable.
 - v. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to conception⁸⁰ (gestation and birth) is unsurpassable. (The text here shows that conception, gestation and the quality of the birth of the foetus are meant.)
 - vi. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the ability of mind-reading⁸¹ is unsurpassable.
 - vii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the attainment of seeing⁸² is unsurpassable. (The text here describes four levels of attainment with regard to meditation on the body.)
 - viii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the typology of people⁸³ is unsurpassable. (The text here describes seven characteristic ways of attaining release, *vimutti*).
 - ix. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the (qualities of) concentration of the mind⁸⁴ is unsurpassable. (The text here describes the seven constituents of knowledge, *satta bojjhaṅgā*).
 - x. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to modes of progress⁸⁵ is unsurpassable.
 - xi. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to conduct in conversation⁸⁶ is unsurpassable.

78 *Ibid.*79 *āyatana-paññatti*. D III 102.80 *gabbāvakkanti*. *ibid.*81 *ādesana-vidhā*. D III 103.82 *dassana-samāpatti*. D III 104.83 *puggala-paññatti*. D III 105.84 *padhāna*. D III 106.85 *paṭipadā*. *ibid.*

- xii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the ethical conduct of man⁸⁷ is unsurpassable.
- xiii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the variety (of the results) of instruction⁸⁸ is unsurpassable. (The text here describes the Buddha's knowledge with regard to the stage an individual will reach on receiving a particular (form of) instruction.)
- xiv. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to knowledge concerning the (stage of) release of other people⁸⁹ is unsurpassable.
- xv. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to eternalism⁹⁰ is unsurpassable.
- xvi. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the knowledge that enables the remembrance of former life-times⁹¹ is unsurpassable.
- xvii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to the knowledge regarding the decease and rebirth of beings⁹² is unsurpassable.
- xviii. 'That the Buddha's teaching with regard to varieties of supernormal power⁹³ (i.e. the noble and the ignoble) is unsurpassable.
- xix. 'That with regard to the varieties of supernormal power⁹⁴

86 *bhassa-samācāra*. *ibid.*87 *purisa-sīla-samācāra*. *ibid.*88 *anusāsana-vidhā*. D III 107.89 *para-puggala-vimutti-ñāṇa*. D III 108.90 *sassata-vādesu*. *ibid.*91 *pubbe-nivāsānussati-ñāṇa*. D III 110.92 *sattānaṃ cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*. D III 111.93 *iddhi-vidhā*. D III 112.94 *iddhi-vidhā*. D III 113.

the Buddha is unsurpassable. There is nothing *hē* does not know⁹⁵, and no other *samaṇa* or *brāhmaṇa* knows it better.

- xx. 'That the Buddha has achieved whatever can be achieved by a faithful clansman who is steadfast and has aroused his energies, by a man's capacity to bear burdens, (his) endeavour, energy and steadfastness'⁹⁶ — The text here specifies that the Buddha is not attached to what is low nor to asceticism, and that he can attain the four *jhānas* at will.

Sāriputta concludes his argument by saying that he has heard from the Buddha himself that there have been equal Buddhas in former times and that there will again be Buddhas equal to himself, but that it is impossible for two equal Buddhas to exist at the same time.

The qualities attributed to the Buddha as *Bhagavā* in Sāriputta's lion's roar bear remarkably little resemblance to the points claimed by the Buddha, in the name of *Tathāgata*, to be his powers and confidences. Only in points (xiv), (xvi) and (xvii) of quote (14) is there any correspondance and this is with the list of quote (8) above, regarding points (vii), (viii) and (ix) respectively.

I have argued⁹⁷ that the collection of suttas now known as *Dīgha Nikāya* was originally a collection of suttas grouped together through their effectiveness in gaining converts and lay support (and that for that reason it is entertaining). The ending of this sutta shows clearly its propaganda purposes. After Sāriputta has finished, a monk, Udāyin, remarks that the *Tathāgata* will not proclaim himself, although any other ascetic who had even one of those qualities would boast about it. The Buddha, also speaking

95 *asesaṃ abhijānāti*. *ibid.*

96 *Ibid.*

97 Manné (1990): 4.

about himself as *Tathāgata*, agrees with this rather emphatically, and then instructs Sāriputta to give this discourse frequently to those among the followers, monks, nuns, lay-men and -women, who feel doubt and hesitation concerning the *Tathāgata*⁹⁸. In this way the Buddha specifically approved this as a list of his qualities which may be taught to followers. I think it is significant that he imposes this limit, i.e. that he does not acknowledge this as a list which is to be defended before a general public⁹⁹.

There is another occasion when Sāriputta roars his lion's roar¹⁰⁰. Here a monk goes to the Buddha and accuses Sāriputta of an offence. The Buddha sends for Sāriputta. Ānanda and Mahā Moggalāna immediately call all the monks, telling them to come because 'Sāriputta is about to roar his lion's roar in the presence of the Buddha'¹⁰¹. Clearly they expect a theatrical occasion. Sāriputta defends himself against the accusation. He agrees that someone who is not mindful of the body's action¹⁰² might have done such a thing, but as for himself, 'his heart is like the earth, abundant, extensive, boundless, without hatred, doing no harm'¹⁰³ and, moreover, he is 'filled with horror, loathing and disgust at his foul body'¹⁰⁴, and he carries it around like a dripping bowl of fat¹⁰⁵. The accusing monk immediately begs Sāriputta's pardon. The Buddha reprimands him, and then says to Sāriputta, 'Forgive this

98 D III 115f = S V 161.

99 Cf. by comparison A II 238, (13) above.

100 A IV 238.

101 A IV 374.

102 *Ibid.*

103 A IV 375.

104 A IV 377; tr. Woodward, GS IV 251.

105 A IV 377.

foolish man, before his head splits into seven pieces¹⁰⁶.

A further lion's roar is attributed to Sāriputta in the Saṃyutta Nikaya¹⁰⁷. Here a monk reports to the Buddha that Sāriputta has claimed arahantship. The Buddha summons Sāriputta and challenges him. Sāriputta is able to answer all the Buddha's questions satisfactorily and the Buddha leaves the scene. Sāriputta then proclaims to the bhikkhu that, although it took him a while to find his answer to the Buddha's first challenge, once he had found his wits, he could have gone on answering for several nights¹⁰⁸. This proclamation is reported to the Buddha by one of the monks, Kaḷārakkhattiya, who as his name shows is a noble (*khattiya*), and who may therefore have had some knowledge of debate conventions. It is this monk who gives the utterance the designation 'Sāriputta's lion's roar'¹⁰⁹ although the expression 'lion's roar' itself does not appear in Sāriputta's utterance. The Buddha supports Sāriputta's claim, using the same terms as Sāriputta did in his proclamation: 'If I were to question Sāriputta on this matter differently, with different words (or) differently according to a different method, Sāriputta would explain this matter to me, differently, with different words (or) differently according to a different method'¹¹⁰.

This so-called 'lion's roar' is qualitatively different from Sāri-

106 *khama Sāriputta imassa moghapurisassa, purāssa tath' eva sattadhā muddhā phalissatīti*. A IV 378. See Witzel, *op. cit.*, regarding this threat. The threat is surprising here as the accusing monk was neither questioning nor being questioned by Sāriputta although he may be taken to have challenged him, albeit behind his back.

107 S II 50-5.

108 S II 54.

109 S II 55, § 46.

110 S II 56.

putta's previous one in several important ways. In the first place it is not a proclamation of the Buddha's qualities: it is Sāriputta's demonstration of his own understanding of the Teaching. Secondly, and most importantly, this utterance is not termed a 'lion's roar' by the Buddha, but only by a monk. The monk uses this terminology in his report to the Buddha and the latter uses different terminology in his answer. On the previous occasion it was the Buddha who gave the name 'lion's roar' to Sāriputta's utterance. Here the text specifically attributes different terminology to him. In this literature prone to repetition, the absence of repetition where it could be expected must be regarded as significant. Instead of the repetition, the Buddha describes Sāriputta as someone who has 'well-mastered the sphere of religion'¹¹¹.

Sāriputta is attributed with three different types of lions' roar. Two of these can be regarded as genuine, the criterion for genuineness being that the texts have the Buddha himself so designate the utterance. These are (i) when the 'lion's roar' took place in debate circumstances in praise of the Buddha (D 28); and (ii) when the 'lion's roar' took place in defence of, and asserting the quality of his own mental state (A IV 238). The third, i.e. the final example in this section cannot be accepted as a true 'lion's roar' as, according to the text, the Buddha did not give it this title. In none of these is the location a public assembly, but rather these are private lion's roars made only before the Sangha of monks.

There is one occasion in each of the Thera- and Therī-gāthā when a monk utters his 'lion's roar',

111 *Ibid.*

- (15) 175. 'Come, Nandaka, let us go into the presence of the preceptor. We shall roar the lion's roar face to face with the best of the Buddhas.
 176. We have now attained that goal for which, with compassion for us, the sage made us go forth — the annihilation of all fetters'¹¹².
- (16) 331. '... The Buddha's teaching has been done.
 332. Allow me, noble lady; I wish to go to Sāvattthi: I shall roar a lion's roar in the presence of the excellent Buddha'¹¹³.

The reason for these 'lion's roars', as the texts show, is that the disciple has attained the final goal and wishes to announce this to, and perhaps have it confirmed by, the Buddha. This may be evidence of a custom or a tendency to proclaim this degree of personal attainment publicly in the presence of the Buddha. As, however, only two examples are attested, one in Theragāthā, one in Therīgāthā, it is impossible to be certain of this. These instances could be also be cases of poetic licence

A monk might also be described as a 'lion's roarer'. In a list that gives the highest qualities of various monks, the monk Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja is called chief of the disciples who are lion's roarers¹¹⁴. There is no sutta passage which tells us what he roared¹¹⁵.

Whereas the Buddha's lion's roar is a public event governed by what we may imagine were the debate rules of the time, the monk's lion's roars, insofar as we can tell from the small number

112 Tr. K.R. Norman, *Elders Verses* (EV) 12.

113 Tr. Norman, EV II.34.

114 A I 23.

115 G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, s.v. Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja.

that remain to us in this literature, were private events, assertions in front of the Teacher and the Sangha and not open to public challenge.

3. *Suttas with sīhanāda* in their titles.

There are three suttas with *sīhanāda* in their title, i.e. *sīhanāda* suttas, in D: Kassapa-sīhanāda Sutta (No.8), Udumbarikā-sīhanāda Sutta (No.25), and Cakkavatti-sīhanāda Sutta (No.26); two in M: Cūḷa-sīhanāda Sutta (No.11) and Mahā-sīhanāda Sutta (No.12), which gives this name to the vagga¹¹⁶, and a Sīhanāda Vagga in A IV 373-96.

The M *sīhanāda* suttas are both suttas with debate elements. The Cūḷa-sīhanāda Sutta is a sermon in which the Buddha teaches his monks debate techniques; in the Mahā-sīhanāda Sutta he refutes a challenge Sunakkhatta is reported to have made against him. The D *sīhanāda* suttas are more diverse. Two concern challenges: in the Kassapa-sīhanāda Sutta, Kassapa challenges the Buddha on the theme of asceticism, and the Buddha refutes this challenge, while the Udumbarikā-sīhanāda Sutta concerns a challenge made against the Buddha by Nigrodha in Queen Udumbarikā's Park. It is, however, hard to see what the common element is in the shared name regarding the third, the Cakkavatti-sīhanāda Sutta, which is a tale about good rulership. The Sīhanāda Vagga of the A gets its name from its first sutta, which is the lion's roar by Sāriputta in which he proclaims his own attainments.

In their diversity the relationship between the names of *sīhanāda* suttas and their content reflects that of the contents of the various *sīhanādas*. Both challenges and proclamations of

116 See I.B. Horner, *Middle Length Sayings* (MLS) I xiv.

attainments are found. Probably the Cakkavatti-sihanāda Sutta should be regarded as falling into the latter category. It is the proclamation of the attainments and qualities of the best ruler.

4. *The 'lion's roar' and the debate tradition*

In the Pāli Nikāyas the term *sīhanāda* — 'the lion's roar' — is used for various types of expressions. When the Tathāgata's lion's roar is referred to we are close to the Vedic religious speech contest or Debate which Witzel has described in his article. When the 'lion's roar' is attributed to a disciple, we find that it is his own claim to attainments. Both the Tathāgata's 'lion's roar' and that of a disciple are utterances which the speaker is willing to defend in public, the former in front of a large public of the world, the latter in front of the smaller public of the monks. It seems then that the Buddhists have adapted the Vedic tradition of challenges in debate to their own purposes, using their own terminology — *sīhanāda* — and generalising it to include a monk's public assertion of his achievements. Suttas with *sīhanāda* in their title generally confirm this usage. As we do not usually know how and when a sutta got its title, only limited weight can be attached to this last point.

5. *Conclusions.*

I said in the introduction that a study of the notion of the 'lion's roar' showed the inventive and creative way the reciters conveyed the Buddha's message, relating its content to the customs and traditions of their society. In fact it provides a variety of examples of their way of going about their task.

First a word about the reciters.

Recounting those aspects of daily life one had shared with the Buddha to one's fellow practitioners, passing on to them the content of the discourses one had heard — that is to say, one's

own understanding of his Teaching, telling what one had seen, heard and experienced while one was with the Teacher, all that certainly began as early as Buddhism itself did. The first converts and earliest monks would obviously talk to each other about the Buddha and the Teaching, and keep each other informed about what had happened during, for example, an absence due to an almsround or a meditation retreat. What had happened would include what had been taught, who the Buddha had talked to in particular, who came to see him, what advice he gave, and so forth. As the community grew and spread this was essentially its way to keep in touch and up to date. Some people love to recount, to narrate stories, to share their experiences, to tell. Probably those who told about the Buddha and the Teaching especially well were invited to do so again and again and became known as good reciters. Telling skilfully requires invention and the texts are indeed full of literary inventions created by very skilful raconteurs.

The early reciters told about true events, events in which they had participated as observers and witnesses. Although we cannot know whether the accounts of the debates in D contain any actual words that the Buddha spoke, the style of debating they attribute to him is consistent and differentiated from that attributed to other debaters, and they are true to the Vedic debate tradition¹¹⁷. The early reciters also passed on the experiences of others that had been told to them. In telling a tale there are always modifications depending on the character and interests of the teller.

The early reciters created similes. A simile that compares the Buddha to a lion is hardly surprising. The comparison between a

117 See Manné (1990) and (1992).

great man and a lion exists in other Indian texts¹¹⁸. It exists too in our language¹¹⁹, and doubtless in many other languages which have inherited the idea that the lion is the king of the beasts. Lions roar, so the Buddha roars too. The early reciters attributed the epithet 'lion' to the Buddha, expanded the comparison to describe the likenesses and included the detail of the (lion's) 'roar'. The evidence (to be considered in detail below) suggests that it was the existence of this simile which inspired the reciters to attribute a content to, or to invent a content for the Buddha's lion's roar.

Having set the scene, so to speak, with regard to the early reciters, we can now show how our investigation of the texts about the lion's roar supports these ideas.

First of all there is the invention of situating the Buddha's lion's roar within a tradition of debate. The term 'lion's roar' is not connected with the Vedic debate tradition. It occurs neither in the Upaniṣads nor in the Brāhmaṇas. As the Buddhist texts can be so faithful and so accurate in their representation of the Vedic tradition¹²⁰, we can conclude from this that the term 'lion's roar' for a challenge is an invention of the Buddhist reciters. We can further conclude that it was part of this invention fictitiously to situate the lion's roar challenge within the debate tradition. Some details placed within the Buddha's lion's roar probably authentically belong to the Vedic debate tradition: the Buddha's refutation of a potential challenge to his capacities as a debater may be among these¹²¹, though I specify that I mean that these

118 See Monier-Williams, s.v. *siṃha* for many examples.

119 We have the expressions 'a lion among men', 'the strength of a lion', etc.

120 See Witzel, *op. cit.*; Manné (1990), (1992).

121 Formula (4). See also Manne (1992).

represent the demands of the tradition on a debater and not that the Buddha himself uttered these very phrases. There is no way we can establish as a fact which phrases the Buddha ever uttered. Other details have to be accounted for differently.

I have argued that the early reciters spontaneously created similes, and with them, in this example of the lion's roar, frameworks within which they could present their accounts. With regard to the aspects of the Teaching that come within the 'lion's roar' and the powers and confidences of the Tathāgata, I think that here we see redactors using such a framework inventively. The framework is that of the simile that compares the Buddha to a lion and attributes content to his roar. The existence of this framework, and the illogicality (why these particular aspects?) of the examples that remain to us of the Teachings placed within it, suggest the likelihood that many other aspects of the Teaching were also placed within it but those cited here are the only ones that have come down to us in these texts. With regard to the qualities of the Tathāgata that are placed within this framework, these are not particularly coherent, those in quote (8) comprising adaptations of other formulas, especially that of paras. 40-94 of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, those in quote (11) perhaps based upon a challenge that was once made against the Buddha and of which no record remains in these texts.

Having invented the attribution of a lion's roar to the Buddha, the redactors generalised this invention to include monks as well. With regard to the monk's lion's roars, the permission to the monks to make a 'lion's roar' about the four types of samaṇa is an example of textual muddle¹²². Probably Sāriputta's great im-

122 See Manné (1990): 41

portance attracted to him also the attribution of various lion's roars. One of Sāriputta's lion's roars is a piece of pure propaganda, while the other two form part of dramatic stories. The anomaly between these lion's roars, two being designated as such by the Buddha while the third does not possess such purported authorisation may reflect the different tendencies on the part of the reciters regarding what they would or would not put into a lion's roar. The examples in the Thera- and Therī-gāthā are clearly poetry, as is the attribution of the epithet 'lion's roarer' to a monk.

A simile is invented, a lion's roar is created for the Buddha, and then for the monks. The next step is to impose this invention on suttas (the inclusion of the term *sīhanāda* in their titles may reflect late ideas in which suttas were particularly important). Thus is tradition created!

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ABHIDHAMMA STUDIES

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DEATH AS MEDITATION SUBJECT IN THE THERAVĀDA TRADITION

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In 1986, headlines such as 'U.S. Buddhist monk meditates on decaying corpses'¹ and 'Corpses remind me of nature of Samsara'² were on the front page of Sinhalese newspapers. The articles were describing the peculiar meditation practice of an American monk named Alokadhamma. Three years after his ordination, Bhikkhu Alokadhamma had become famous throughout the island of Sri Lanka because he resided in a cave in the company of two decomposing bodies placed in a glass cage, with four other bodies laid outside. These reports became the impetus for the attempt to answer the question that this paper is revolving around: what is the place and the role of the meditation on death within the contemporary Theravāda Buddhist tradition?

Alokadhamma's practice was most probably derived from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, where the Buddha describes the nine types of charnel-ground meditation. In order to clarify this unusual practice, however, the position as put forth in Theravāda literature first needs to be investigated. This will clarify the boundaries of the two major meditation practices centred on death, i.e. *asubha-bhāvanā* and *maraṇasati*. Secondly, in an attempt to conceptualise the contemporary practice, I will allude to eleven qualitative interviews that I conducted with Buddhist monks and with a *dasa sil mātāvo* in Sri Lanka during May 1993; it is important to em-

1 Dharmasiri Gamage, 'U.S. Buddhist monks meditates on decaying corpses', *The Sunday Observer*, Colombo, 2 November 1986.

2 *Id.*, 'Corpses remind me of nature of Samsara', *op. cit.*, 9 November 1986.

phasise that all the interviewees belonged to hermitages (*ārañ-ñaka*) where meditation is given priority. The two-fold procedure of textual and contemporary analyses will allow us further to understand the theoretical and modern expressions of these practices.

Bhikkhu Alokadhamma's meditation on death seems to stem from the description of the nine charnel-ground meditations mentioned in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. This discourse, traditionally considered the theoretical base for meditation practice, is divided into four main sections: meditation on the body (*kāyānupassanā*), on the sensations (*vedanānupassanā*), on the mind (*cittānupassanā*) and on the mental contents (*dhammānupassanā*). The section concerned with the body is often regarded as the most eclectic of the four since it adumbrates different types of meditation. It discusses successively 1) *ānāpānasati*, mindfulness of the breath, 2) mindfulness of the four postures (walking, standing, sitting and lying down), 3) mindfulness of whatever activities one is involved in, 4) mindfulness of the repulsiveness by reviewing the thirty-one³

3 These 31 parts of the body, along with the brain, are the 32 subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) that Buddhaghosa includes in *kāyagatāsati*. (...*dvat-tiṃsākārakammaṭṭhānaṃ*: — *idam idha kāyagatā satī ti adhippetam*. Vism 240). We must point to the fact, however, that *kāyagatāsati* is not restricted to these 32 parts of the body in the Sutta literature, for it includes all the practices described in the *kāyānupassanā* of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (see *Kāyagatāsati Sutta*, M III 89). We must also remark that although this portion of the Satipaṭṭhāna is commonly known as the meditation on *asubha* (the 'not-beautiful'), the term *asubha* is neither employed within the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta itself nor in commentarial literature referring to this passage; in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, Buddhaghosa uses the term *paṭikūla* (or *paṭikkūla*), meaning 'disgust'. Yet the two practices seem to be analogous, for the *Girimānanda Sutta* (A V 108) defines *asubhasaññā* as the awareness of these 31 parts of the body. Although a slight nuance may be introduced between *asubha* and *asubhasaññā* we will, for the sake of

parts of the body, 5) mindfulness of the four elements and finally, the practice that interests us, 6) the nine charnel-ground meditations (*nāva sīvathikapabbānī*)⁴. For each of these nine types of contemplation, a standard formula is used throughout. The only nuance lies in the degree of decomposition of the body (or what is left of it) from the body that died the same day, to the rotten bones that have started transforming into dust. The formula runs like this: 'as if a monk were to see a corpse thrown aside in the charnel-ground [either dead since only one day, or since many months depending on the type of charnel-ground meditation one is involved in], he focuses on this [meaning *his*] body thus: "this body has the same nature, it will become the same as that body;

simplicity, adopt the common interpretation and refer to this practice as one belonging to *asubha* meditation.

4 However, these six different types of meditation within the section on the body (*kāyānupassanā*) may not be as eclectic as it seems if considered from a particular perspective. Since this portion of the Satipaṭṭhāna deals with the body, it might be possible that the Buddha classified the six meditations related to the body temporarily, i.e. in the same order as the evolution of the body. The first bodily activity to take place after birth is breathing (*ānāpāna*) and the baby remains in the position he was laid (more or less); later the child learns to sit, stand and walk (the four postures); subsequently, the child becomes aware of his own person, his separate existence and activities on which he can reflect (mindfulness of whatever activities one is involved in); when the child reaches his teens, passion emerges and therefore mindfulness of the repulsiveness by reviewing the 31 parts of the body becomes appropriate; when the individual's intellectual capacity is at its peak, the more introspective practice of the four elements might be more appropriate; at the very end of life, when the body returns to ashes, we find the nine charnel-ground meditations (*nāva sīvathikapabbānī*). This hypothetical scheme demands further investigation and does not imply that a specific practice ought to be undertaken exclusively during a particular period of life.

it cannot escape it"⁵. The recurring aspect of this formula stresses that the monk must establish a parallel with his own body by reflecting on the fact that it possesses the same nature (*evaṃ-dhammo*) and that it will eventually reach the same state as that decaying body (*evaṃ-bhāvī*).

We may raise the question of whether this particular passage prescribes the actual contemplation of corpses, for the only explicit prescription is to reflect on the fact that one's own body will eventually be similar to those lying in charnel-grounds. The text does not necessarily require that the practitioner observe a corpse⁶. According to this passage, therefore, it does not seem imperative for someone practising the nine charnel-ground contemplations actually to observe corpses at that moment; it is only said that this person must reflect on the fact that his own body is possessed of the same nature as that of the bodies at different stages of decay.

However, in the sixth chapter of the Visuddhimagga (*Asubhakkammaṭṭhānaniddesa*), Buddhaghosa elaborates on the method of pursuing such a practice and describes the observation of corpses at one of the ten different stages of decomposition. In this chapter, ten stages are enumerated as *asubhakkammaṭṭhāna* (object of meditation for the practice of the non-beautiful): the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested and the skeleton. These are basically the same as those nine described in

5 *puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave bhikkhu seyyathā pi passeyya sarīraṃ sīvathikāya chaddītaṃ ekāmatam vā dvīhamataṃ vā tīhamataṃ vā uddhumatākaṃ vinīlakaṃ vipubbakājātaṃ, so imam eva kāyaṃ upasaṃharanī: 'Ayaṃ pi kho kāyo evaṃ-dhammo evaṃ-bhāvī etaṃ ti'. D II 295.*

6 The verb of the subordinate clause (*passeyya*) is in the optative tense (*sattami*) and is preceded by an adverb (*seyyathā*) meaning 'just as'.

the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the primary difference being that in the latter, the classification is arranged according to the period of decay, while in the former it is according to the qualitative state of the corpses. Elaborate training and preparation are prescribed prior to the culmination of practice — the actual contemplation of decaying bodies⁷. The commentator also explains the different approaches one ought to take during the actual contemplation⁸ and also warns the reader that one should not use the body of the opposite sex for this practice. As Kevin Trainor has remarked⁹, Buddhaghosa does not seem to take into consideration the section

7 A monk must intensively prepare himself before setting forth to the charnel-ground (or a similar place). According to Buddhaghosa (*Vism* 180), the practitioner must first find a teacher to supervise him; one cannot undertake this discipline without guidance. Only after having learned everything from him, should the disciple find a proper dwelling (this 'proper dwelling' is described in Ch.IV of *Vism*, §§1–20) and abide meditating (investigating; *pariyesantena*) on the subject that was given to him. Later, if he hears that a corpse is lying at the root of a tree, a village gate, a charnel-ground, etc., he must first inform his superior before setting forth and undertaking his contemplation, the reason being that if he does not return due to lions, tigers, robbers, or others (. . .), the superior could send some younger monk to rescue him. Then only, the text says, can he proceed 'as happy as a warrior longing to witness an inauguration'. Buddhaghosa also says that the yogi ought to go alone (*eko adutiyo gacchati*) and should not approach the charnel-ground against the wind (*paṭivāta*), for his own body might react to the smell and he might repent having undertaken this project.

8 The yogi ought to apprehend the sign (*nimitta*) (of the bloated, . . .) by 1) its colour, 2) its mark (the three phases of life), 3) its shape, 4) its direction, 5) its location, 6) its limitations, (*Vism* 184), 7) its joints, 8) its openings, 9) its concavities, 10) its convexities, and 11) all round (*Vism* 185). The last five approaches are only recommended if the practitioner has not grasped the sign.

9 Trainor, Kevin, 'In the Eye of the Beholder; Nonattachment and the Body in Subhā's Verse (Therīgāthā 71)', *JAAR* LXI/1, note 35, pp.68–9. The verses referred to are Therīgāthā 393–8.

of the Theragāthā where an arahant is portrayed as contemplating a woman's corpse in a charnel-ground.

In this chapter, although the objects of meditation are cadavers, the concept of death itself is totally absent. The chief aim of this practice is to develop *asubha* towards our own body and that of others, in order to eradicate any kind of lust or passion that may arise¹⁰. The purpose of this meditation was not to develop an awareness of death itself, but rather to stimulate some sense of repulsion. Buddhaghosa further characterises these ten meditations as belonging to *asubhabhāvanā*, and he perceives them as distinct from the meditation on death (*marañānussati*), for he devotes a full chapter to this type of meditation, to which we will soon return. Buddhaghosa explains that the meditation on *asubha* particularly fits the greedy temperament (*rāgacarita*), and he further elaborates by correlating each of the ten degrees of decay to a specific greed¹¹.

Although this correlation with the ten expressions of greed is probably the construct of the commentator, the Sutta literature —

10 'This filthy body stinks outright / Like ordure, like a privy's site / This body men that have insight / Condemn, is object of a fool's delight / A tumour where nine holes abide / Wrapped in a coat of clammy hide / And trickling filth on every side / Polluting the air with stench far and wide / If it perchance should come about / That what is inside came out / Surely a man would need a knout / With which to put the crows and dogs to rout'. (Vism VI 93, translation taken from *The Path of Purification*, p.203). It is interesting to note that in the Vism, the meaning of the term *asubha* is very similar to that of *paṭikkūla*, i.e. repulsiveness.

11 Vism, p.193 ff. Abhidhamma and commentarial literature classifies personalities into six types of temperament (*cārīta*): greedy (*rāga*), hating (*dosa*), deluded (*moha*), faithful (*saddhā*), intelligent (*buddhi*) and speculative (*vitakka*). On these, see Vism, p.101 ff.

and especially the older sections — establishes an explicit link between the practice of *asubha* meditation and the greedy temperament. The Theragāthā, for example, depicts the story of Sīṅgālapitā who got rid of greed towards sensual desire through the contemplation of a skeleton (or at least the idea, *saññā*, of a skeleton)¹². However, the two most explicit passages correlating the awareness of *asubha* with the diminution of lust are found in the Saṃyutta Nikāya and Aṅguttara Nikāya where it is clearly stated that *asubha* should be developed in order to rid oneself of lust¹³. Moreover, the various classifications of the qualities necessary for the eradication of lust always include *asubha* or *asubhasaññā*¹⁴. Other passages in the Sutta literature indicate that these qualities do not eradicate lust, but lead to the deathless, a term often equated with Nibbāna¹⁵. More precisely, the Saṃyutta Nikāya indicates that properly cultivating the recognition (*saññā*) of any of five types of cadavers (the skeleton, the worm-eaten, the discoloured, the fissured and the inflated corpse)¹⁶ can induce arahant hood or the state of non-return¹⁷. From what we have

12 Thag, p.4 (18).

13 *Asubhāya cittaṃ bhāvehi*. A I 118; *asubhā bhāvetabbā rāgassa pahānāya*. A IV 358.

14 In a list of 10, see A V 309–10; in a list of 9, A IV 465; in a list of 7, A IV 148; in a list of 5, A IV 276.

15 In a list of 9, at A IV 387; in a list of 7, A IV 46.

16 *Aṭṭhika*, *puṣavaka*, *vinīḷaka*, *vicchiddaka*, *uddumātaka*. These 5 are members of Buddhaghosa's ten-fold list of *asubhakkammaṭṭhāna* referred to previously.

17 S V 129–31. The Vism exemplifies this statement by presenting the story of Mahātissa Thera: upon seeing the teeth (*dantāṭṭhika*: the bones of the teeth). The author stresses that it is the bones [*ṭṭhika*] that Mahātissa perceives, for they are part of the skeleton and fall into the *asubhakkammaṭṭhāna* of a woman running away from her husband. Mahātissa acquired *asubhasaññā* and attained Nibbāna. When her husband, seeking his wife, asked him whether he had seen a woman

seen so far, the place ascribed to *asubha* within canonical Pāli literature is unequivocal: its cultivation can lead to Nibbāna, or at least to great benefits such as the eradication of passion¹⁸.

This type of meditation is dependent, to a certain extent, upon death, for in many instances it uses death as an object. We use the term *object* in the sense that there is something visible or tangible that can be observed. In these cases, the practitioner contemplates cadavers. Although death as an object is not necessary to practise *asubha* meditation, as with the contemplation of the thirty-one parts of the body, it is often considered a crucial requirement. It has already been noted that Buddhaghosa's ten objects of meditation for the cultivation of *asubha* are corpses at different stages of decay. Although Buddhaghosa's emphasis on contemplation of corpses is not accentuated in the Sutta literature, I have found passages referring to it. There is, however, another type of meditation on death, known as *marāṇasati*, which is

pass by, Mahātissa replied with the verses which later became famous in the Theravāda tradition: Whether it was a man or a woman / That went by I noticed not / But only that on this high road / There goes a group of bones. (Vism, p.21. Translation quoted from *The Path of Purification*, p.22).

18 However, this practice has to be undertaken with extreme care. A passage of the Vinaya (Vin. III [Suttavibhaṅga], p.68 ff.) reports that monks who have been instructed by the Buddha to cultivate *asubha* asked a *samaṇa* named Migalaṇḍaka to deprive them of life, for their bodies had become an inconvenience to them. It is said that Migalaṇḍaka killed 60 monks in one day. The Buddha, noticing that the number of monks had decreased, requested Ānanda to assemble all the monks. To counteract the effect of this practice of *asubha*, the Buddha taught *ānāpānasati* meditation, the meditation on respiration. Although it is not explicit in the text, it seems that *ānāpānasati* is used to counterbalance the negative effects that may arise from the practice of *asubha*. This incident is used in the Vinaya to explain the rule (*pārājika* III) that a monk should not intentionally kill anyone or be the instrument in the killing of anyone.

radically different from *asubha* meditation, for it does not use death as an object, but rather as a subject. Death becomes the theme of the meditation, and the practitioner is not required to contemplate corpses.

Very few allusions to *marāṇasati* are made in the canonical literature¹⁹, yet this practice seems central to the tradition. Most Buddhist traditions share the myth that before Gotama decided to leave the householder's life to become a recluse, he came in contact with four sights: sickness, old age, death and asceticism. It is these four sights that triggered Gotama's desire to go forth. It is interesting to note that the middle two sights are elements belonging to the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, a doctrine central to the tradition. Old age and death cannot be avoided and, on account of them, a whole mass of suffering arises in the future²⁰. Facing the continuous presence of suffering, as well as the inevitability of death which may be sensed through ageing and old age, Gotama sought release from this ongoing cycle of life and death. Quests triggered by a similar realisation were also undertaken by other characters in the Canon, especially in the Jātaka literature²¹. All

19 Actually, the term *marāṇasati* appears rarely in canonical literature. To my knowledge, only 4 discourses of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A III 303-8; A IV 316-22) are centred around the them. I have not found occurrences elsewhere in the Sutta literature.

20 *Evaṃ etassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudaya hoti.* S II 5.

21 For example, the Bodhisatta, in one of his previous lives, is reported to have said: 'Our life as living beings is similar to dew drops on the grass; having asked my mother and father, I ought to go forth in order to subjugate sickness, old age and death' (J IV 121). One of the elders of the Theragāthā uttered a comparable verse: 'Having seen an aged person, someone afflicted by sickness and someone whose life faculties have vanished, I became a wandering renunciate, abandoning all enticing pleasures' (Thag, p.11). Many other passages from the Jātaka literature show that desire to renounce worldly life arose from the

these passages underscore the urgency (*saṃvega*) that is felt when death approaches.

Buddhaghosa, however, places considerable emphasis on the practice of *maraṇasati*²². He first introduces the subject by circumscribing what is meant by *maraṇa* in this particular context. Death is simply the termination of one's life faculty, i.e. the end of one's life span. He then proceeds to define *maraṇānussati* itself and what is entailed in this practice:

So mindfulness of death is the remembering of death, in other words, of the interruption of the life faculty. One who wants to develop this should go into solitary retreat and exercise attention wisely in this way: 'Death will take place; the life faculty will be interrupted' or 'Death, death'²³.

According to the commentator, this exercise ought to generate mindfulness (*sati*), the sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) and knowledge (*ñāna*)²⁴. If it is not successful, the practitioner should recollect death in eight different ways: 1) as a murderer (who appears sud-

mere fact of realising that we are not immune to old age. King Makhādeva, for example, uttered the following verse upon noticing one single grey hair on his head: 'These grey hairs that appear on my head are death's own messengers that come to rob my life. Now is the time that I renounce the worldly life' (J I 138. The *Suṣīma Jātaka* [J III 237], *Cullasutasoma Jātaka* [J V 91] and *Nimi Jātaka* [J VI 53] are of the same character).

22 It is interesting to note that Buddhaghosa does not use the term *maraṇasati* but rather *maraṇānussati*. Though one would tend to think that the commentator used a different terminology than the one used in the Sutta in order to underline a nuance between two practices, Buddhaghosa himself wrote that *sati* itself is an *anussati* and the main distinction is that the latter 'occurs only in those instances where it should occur' (*The Path of Purification*, p.204).

23 *The Path of Purification*, p.248.

24 *Ibid.*

denly and takes away life), 2) as the ruin of success (for death is the ruining of life's success), 3) by comparison ((i.e. by comparing oneself to others who have died), 4) as to the sharing of the body with many (kinds of worms and creatures), 5) as to the fragility of life, 6) as signless (in the sense of unpredictable), 7) as to the limit of the extent, and 8) as to the brevity of the moment (in the sense that one is alive only for the duration of one's consciousness). This last perspective on death contradicts the definition that the commentator himself had set at the beginning of the chapter. Death, in this context, ought to be seen as the termination of the life faculty and does not include the constant dissolution of the aggregates — what is technically termed *momentary death* (*khanikamarāṇam*). Yet, having excluded momentary death at the outset, Buddhaghosa reintegrates it with the eighth perspective.

In modern Sri Lanka, where Buddhaghosa lived some 1,500 years ago, charnel-grounds are basically non-existent. Bodies are either burned, when the financial situation of a family allows it, or buried. Monks wishing to practise *asubhabhāvanā*, as described by Buddhaghosa, have to find alternatives. Since one of the ten stages of decomposition of corpses is known as 'cut up' (*vicchiddakam*) a possible option for monks wishing to follow Buddhaghosa's prescription is to attend sessions where bodies are actually cut up: postmortem examinations are the ideal modern alternative. Although Buddhaghosa originally suggested locations such as battlefields, forests infested with robbers or charnel-grounds where kings have theives cut up²⁵, the autopsy room seems a viable compromise.

25 *Vicchiddakam yaddhamaṇḍale vā carāṭaviyaṃ vā susāne vā, yattha rājāno core chindāpentī, araṇṇā vā pana sīhavyaggehi chinnapurisaṭṭhāne labbhati.* *Vism* 190.

During my research, I had the opportunity to observe one monk who attended an autopsy at the Colombo General Hospital²⁶. I interviewed a monk of British origin who mentioned that he was planning to attend an autopsy a few days later. He invited me to accompany him. On that day, I met him at the hospital temple around 9.30 am and proceeded directly to the room where postmortems were performed. When we entered, two cadavers were already being autopsied, with a third one laid on the ground waiting its turn. All were males. Since the monk had not enquired as to the sex of the bodies, it did not seem that Buddhaghosa's restriction carried much weight.

The smell was paradoxically vivid. The monk approached one of the bodies. Two men were working on the abdomen, emptying it of its contents. The monk remained beside the body for approximately five minutes, then walked around, keeping his eyes on the object of his meditation. He asked me how I was coping with the situation three times. The two technicians were now working on the head, cutting it open with a saw. The monk approached to have a closer view of the process. Two minutes later, he moved to the other body, whose autopsy was already completed. He looked at all the internal organs (lungs, heart, liver, . . .) lying on the table, took the hand of the dead man in his, and asked me: 'you can feel death, do you want to touch?'²⁷. I politely

26 We were supposed to attend a second one at the Kandy General Hospital, with 2 other monks. The morning of the autopsy, we all went to the hospital as planned with the medical authorities, and waited in vain for 2 hours for the judicial medical officer. At 11.00 am, we had to return to the monastery since monks have to eat before noon.

27 Buddhaghosa, when describing the practice of *asubha* in reference to the 'cut up', continues by stressing that the yogi should never touch the body; the dismembered parts should be reassembled by a monastery attendant, someone

reminded him that my task was simply to observe him and his practice, nothing else. He then proceeded to the body of the elderly man lying on the floor, after which we left. We had spent approximately twenty minutes in the autopsy room before heading back to the hospital temple where I interviewed him.

Immediately following the autopsies, when asked how he felt, the monk answered that he still had a feeling of 'unease' and that disgust was still pre-eminent in his mind. By witnessing an autopsy, he continued, one is able to investigate at a deeper level the nature of the body, that is, the foulness inherent in the body we often perceive as attractive. It is also crucial, he stressed, to couple this particular practice with *vipassanā* meditation. The emotions, sensations and images that arise when one witnesses an autopsy need to be dealt with. In order to transform this experience into a meditative process, one has to develop constant and objective awareness of these sensations and emotions. This enables the practitioner to cultivate an understanding of the reality as it is, without generating hatred or disgust towards individuals themselves.

After reflecting on the extreme nature of this particular practice, I questioned the monk as to its relation to one of the central teachings of the Buddha — what is known as the middle-path (*majjhimaṭṭipadā*). He explained that what is meant by 'middle-path' is not moderation, but rather the capacity to develop a stable state of mind, a sort of indifference — or rather equanimity — regardless of the situation. The middle-path is avoiding

studying to become an ascetic, or by the yogi himself with the help of a stick. The reason given is that 'he would come to handle it without disgust as a corpse-burner would' (Paramatthamañjūsā 176; translation taken from *The Path of Purification*, p.197, n.11).

extremes in the sense that the mind remains aloof from pleasure and pain; the mind simply becomes a detached observer of the situations being experienced. However, he admitted that this was an extreme and occasional situation that he decided to place himself into in order to observe the reactions that would arise. During the seven years that he has been a monk, this was only the second time he witnessed an autopsy. His own specific practice is grounded in an interest in understanding how the mind manufactures emotions and how these are related to thoughts. To achieve this comprehension, he practises the more traditionally accepted form of meditation, i.e. *vipassanā*.

I also interviewed ten other members of the Sangha²⁸, most of whom had practised this postmortem-meditation at least once. When asked to explain how they understood *marāṇasati*, all agreed with Buddhaghosa's interpretation that *marāṇasati* requires the practitioners to remind themselves constantly of the proximity of death. From the subsequent analyses of the interviews, I noticed that two other practices had also been classified as *marāṇasati*. Without ever challenging Buddhaghosa's definition, eight of the eleven interviewees suggested that *marāṇasati* was broader than this mere awareness of the potentiality of death. First, they considered meditation on *asubha*, as described by Buddhaghosa (i.e. the ten types of charnel-ground contemplations or their modern expression in the autopsy room) as belonging to *marāṇasati* as long as the yogis perceived and constantly contemplated the fragility of life. This falls in line with the Sati-

28 The status of the *dasa sil mātavo* is the object of a controversy among the Sinhalese monastic community. [For more information on the subject, see Tessa Bartholomeusz, *Women under the Bo Tree*. Buddhist Nuns in Sri Lanka, Cambridge 1994]

paṭṭhāna's suggestion that practitioners must reflect on the fact that their body possesses the same nature. In fact, many monks in Sri Lanka have witnessed autopsies in order to cultivate *asubha* and/or *marāṇasati*. Moreover, photographs of autopsies are broadly available for the Thai monastic community and these are widely circulated in Sri Lanka. Most of the hermitages where the interviews were conducted had at least a few of these photographs and/or partial or complete skeletons used for meditation purposes. All the monks using these tools, however, strongly emphasised that without reflecting on their own body, the charnel-ground contemplations (or the contemplation of the photographs or the skeletons) remain solely at the *asubha* level.

These same eight monastics perceived *marāṇasati* as the natural result of their daily meditation. As the abbot in charge of a major meditation centre in Colombo remarked, 'death itself is merely a concept which is totally devoid of substance. For this reason, it is impossible to focus on it'. He further explained that what we conventionally call death does not exist, for the simple reason that in order for something/someone to die, it needs to possess an independent existence which Buddhist doctrine denies with the theories of *anicca*, *anatta* and *paṭiccasamuppāda*. A person does not merely die at the end of one's existence for, at the deepest level, this person never existed. What we normally term 'person' is an amalgam of five aggregates which are constantly changing. Every moment, each of these aggregates arises and passes away (*upajjhivā, nirujjhanti*). Therefore, *marāṇasati*, viewed from this angle, cannot be separated from the normal practice of *vipassanā* meditation which aims, as the tradition claims, at seeing things as they really are. Practitioners of *vipassanā* who simply observe their own mind and body soon notice the transitory character of existence. Eventually, they become aware that birth and death happen at every single mo-

ment. Material particles arise and vanish: death is present throughout the life-process. Such an awareness helps, on the one hand, to cope with what we conventionally call death. By becoming increasingly aware of the presence of death, at the experiential level, practitioners are no more intimidated when the final moment comes. Death is nothing but the culmination of successive deaths which one had gradually learned to deal with. On the other hand, this same process helps them live a less egocentric, more detached, equanimous and compassionate life, for they have come to understand that nothing is worth clinging to, and that human suffering is directly related to the cultivation of the awareness of impermanence, the core of Theravāda Buddhist meditation. In fact, when one practises one of these two thoroughly, the other is also automatically practised, whether consciously or not.

The view that *maraṇasati* is intimately linked with *vipassanā* is also corroborated by the fact that the former is one of the four protections (*caturarakkhā*). Members of the Sangha as well as lay-meditators in intensive training are encouraged to recite daily the verses of protections. By recollecting the qualities of the Buddha, promoting loving-kindness, restraining sexual desires through *asubha* and promoting the awareness of death, the practitioners' ability to deepen their meditation is supposed to increase. It is also noteworthy that lay people going to the temple in order to pay respect to the Buddha often recite a standard verse similar to those found in the four protections: I pay respect to the Buddha; may I obtain some merit. This body [of mine] will be destroyed just as these flowers will fade²⁹. This indicates that

29 *Pūjemi buddhaṃ kusumena nena / Puññena me te labhāmi mukhaṃ / Puppam milāyati yathā idaṃ me / Kāyo tathā yāti vināsa bhāvaṃ //* A similar verse stressing that all are subject to death is also frequently used by lay follow-

the practice of *maraṇasati* as such is not only followed by meditators but, to a certain extent, by most devout Buddhists as well.

When asked how a monk should practise *maraṇasati*, the abbot suggested two methods, the second being much more effective than the first. One may start by the simple recital of the four protections discussed above. When meditators are more advanced in their practice of *vipassanā*, they can embark on a radically different practice. They should lie like a corpse, preferably at night and, as suggested by Buddhaghosa, recall that Buddhas, kings, neighbours and parents have died. They then remind themselves that death is inevitable. It is at this stage that they must 'feel life go out from every part of the body, from the toes upwards. If this practice is accomplished properly, one actually dies'. The abbot himself refused to answer when I asked if he practises this sort of meditation, for members of the Sangha are not supposed to brag about their accomplishments. Neither did he clarify whether he meant that the body technically dies and is reanimated, or that one symbolically dies by becoming aware of the ever presence of death throughout the body, a presence manifesting itself through the constant process of impermanence. This second interpretation would be in line with the traditional practice of *vipassanā*.

It is clear from these eight interviews that the practice of *maraṇasati* not only includes a constant remembrance of the finitude of life, but also incorporates *asubhabhāvanā* and the awareness of *anicca*. This perception of *maraṇasati* differs radically from Buddhaghosa's, for the latter only considered the aware-

ers: *Naṃāmi buddhaṃ guṇasāgaraṃ taṃ / Satthā saddhā hontu sukhi avira / Kāyo jiguḷḷo sakalo dugandho / Gacchanti sabbe maraṇam ahaṃ ca //*

ness of death as the essence of this practice. I must stress, however, that three other monastics categorically stated that *marāṇasati* was solely the awareness of death, and that the nine charnel-ground meditations belonged exclusively to the realm of *asubhabhāvanā*.

I would like to conclude by summarising the divergences of interpretation that have been alluded to in this paper — that is, divergences between canonical literature, the Visuddhimagga and contemporary practice. The description of *marāṇasati* in canonical literature is sparse and limited to the awareness of ageing and the proximity of death. Two simple methods for developing this awareness are described in the Aṅguttara³⁰, while many passages of the Jātakas and Thera- Therīgāthā praise this awareness by offering numerous examples of persons who, having realised the inexorability of their fate, either decided to renounce worldly life or attained enlightenment. Buddhaghosa, however, built an eight-fold method for developing this awareness, a systematised method that is absent in earlier Pāli literature. Yet contemporary practice shows a much wider interpretation which, according to the majority of the monastics interviewed, includes *asubhabhāvanā* and the awareness of *anicca*.

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30 The first thing is constantly to remind oneself that death could happen at any moment: after one day, one night, a meal, a single bite [A III 303 and also at A IV 316]. The other being the different reasons for dying such as being bitten by a centipede, a snake or a scorpion, or falling, choking . . . [A III 307, and also at A IV 320].

EKOTTARĀGAMA (XX)

Translated from the Chinese Version by
Thich Huyèn-Vi and Bhikkhu Pāsādika
in collaboration with Sara Boin-Webb

Ninth Fascicle
Part 18
(Shame and Remorse)

6. ¹Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in Śrāvastī, at the Jeta Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍada's Park. Then Venerable Nanda donned exquisite robes, and with eye-shadow he brightened up his eye[lids], wearing slippers ornamented with gold. Again, he rubbed² the cosmetic off his eye[lids] and, holding in his hands his alms-bowl, he was about to enter the city of Śrāvastī.

From afar many bhikṣus saw Venerable Nanda [on the point of] entering the city to beg for alms-food, while he was wearing exquisite robes. Now those bhikṣus went to the whereabouts of the Exalted One, bowing down their heads at his feet, and sat down at one side. Hardly had [they taken their seats] when they stood up [again], saying to the Exalted One: As far as Bhikṣu Nanda is concerned, he has donned exquisite robes and brightened up his eye[lids] with eye-shadow and is [thus] entering the city of

1 See T 2, 591a8 ff; Hayashi, p.153 ff.

2 For 按 Hayashi reads 按 (to compare; to criticise; to oppose), which does not seem appropriate.

Śrāvastī to beg for alms-food³. — Now the Exalted One said to one of the bhikṣus: Hasten to the whereabouts of Nanda [and tell him that] the Tathāgata requests the gentleman's⁴ presence. — So be it, Exalted One, replied the bhikṣu complying with the Exalted One's bidding, bowed down his head at [the Tathāgata's feet] and left for Bhikṣu Nanda's whereabouts. On his arrival he said to Nanda: The Exalted One requests the gentleman's presence. — Hearing the bhikṣu's words, Nanda immediately went to the Exalted One, bowed down his head at the [latter's] feet and sat down at one side. — Why have you put on these exquisite robes? the Exalted One asked Nanda, and why are you wearing slippers while entering Śrāvastī to beg for alms-food⁵? — Venerable Nanda kept silent, and the Exalted One asked again: Why, Nanda? Is it not out of faith and resolution that you have gone forth into homelessness in order to follow the way [leading to Nirvāṇa]? — Yes, Exalted One, replied Nanda. — And now, son of good family, the Exalted One went on, having gone forth into homelessness out of faith and resolution in order to follow the way [leading to Nirvāṇa], you do not [think] it necessary to practise [in accordance with] ascetic discipline (*vinaya*)!? For what reason then do you want to enter Śrāvastī to beg for alms-food by wearing

3 Here, as in many other places, the text is riddled with inconsistencies. Thus, for instance, above Nanda rubs the cosmetic off his eyelids, but after that his concerned fellow monks make out (from afar!?) the eye-shadow applied by Nanda. Perhaps it is meant that the rubbed off cosmetic did not altogether disappear but left stains which did not escape the other monks' notice.

4 Lit.: 'The Tathāgata is summoning the lord/minister of state'. This sentence is certainly meant to convey irony.

5 According to Vin IV 194, it is an 'offence of wrongdoing' for a monk (unless he is ill) to enter a village wearing sandals (*na... sa-upāhanena gāmo pavisi-tabbo*). See I.B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* (Mahāvagga), Vol.IV (PTS), London 1951, p.260.

exquisite robes, pressed and tailor-made? What is the difference between these bright (*śukla*) garments [of yours and those of laymen]? — Thereupon the Exalted One uttered the following verses:

When shall [we] see Nanda being capable of
Embarking (*ā-pad*) on a forest[-dweller's] practice?
'Heartening is the ascetics' Dharma, [the virtues of]
The pure (*dhutaḡaṇa*), whose practice (*saṃ-car*) [however]
Has nothing to do with what is excessive (*atyartha*)⁶.

Once and for all, Nanda, [the Buddha concluded his admonition,] do not indulge in this kind [of showiness]. — Having listened to the Buddha's words, Venerable Nanda and all [those present belonging to] the four assemblies⁷ were pleased and applied themselves to practice⁸.

7. 'Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in Śrāvastī. . . Then Venerable Nanda [found it] unbearable to lead the holy life (*brahmacarya*) and yearned to take off his monastic

6 Concerning the question of which austerities are extremes and which are not, see J. Dantinne, *Les qualités de l'ascète (Dhutaḡaṇa)*, Étude sémantique et doctrinale, Brussels 1991, pp.1-4 (Préliminaires: le Bouddhisme et les austerités). Regarding the *dhuta-dhutaḡaṇas / dhūtaḡas*, cf. BSR 3, 2 (1986), p.141, n.4; BSR 4, 1 (1987), p.57, n.3; BSR 6, 2 (1989), pp.123-5, 128-9, n.5-8.

7 For the 'four assemblies' comprising bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas and upāsikās, see Soothill, p.183; the Indic equivalents of 四部家, *parṣad, parisā*, are given in Ci-yī (gen. ed.) *Fóguāng dàcǐdān*, the Fo Kuang Shan Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Kaohsiung 1989, p.1763c. Cf. BSR 2, 1-2 (1985), pp.44, 46, n.28 ('quatre catégories de fidèles' — no reference given); BSR 12, 2 (1995), p.164, n.21.

8 Cf. S II 281 (21.8): . . . *āyasmā Nando . . . ākoṭṭāni paccākoṭṭāni cīvarāni pārupitvā akkhīni añjetvā . . .*; cf. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, F.L. Woodward, *The Book of Kindred Sayings II* (PTS), London 1922, p.191. As for Nanda, see also BSR 9, 2 (1992), p.180f., n.13.

(lit. *dharma*) robes in order to wear the white [layman's] garb he was accustomed to.

A large group of bhikṣus went to the Exalted One, bowed down their heads at his feet and sat down at one side. — Bhikṣu Nanda, they said to the Exalted One, [finds it] unbearable to lead the holy life and yearns to take off his monastic robes so as to live as a householder (*grhastha*)⁹ as before. Now the Exalted One said to one of the bhikṣus: Go to the whereabouts of Nanda and tell him that the Tathāgata wishes to see the gentleman¹⁰. — So be it, Exalted One, replied that bhikṣu complying with the Exalted One's bidding, rose from his seat, bowed down his head. . . and left. On his arrival he said to Nanda: The Exalted One is summoning you¹¹. — So be it, replied Bhikṣu Nanda and lost no time in following that bhikṣu back to the Exalted One's whereabouts. [There] he bowed down. . . and having sat down at one side was [thus] asked by the Exalted One: Why do you loathe, Nanda, leading the holy life? Why do you want to take off the monastic robes and return to live in white garb? — So it is, Exalted One, replied Nanda, [but] the Exalted One went on asking: For what reason, Nanda? — And Nanda admitted: My mind is burning with desire; I cannot control myself (*sam-vr*)¹². — How is that, Nanda? the Exalted One went on, have you not, son of good family, gone forth into homelessness in order to follow the way [leading to Nirvāṇa]? — Yes, I have, Exalted One, Nanda replied, I am a son of good family, and it is out of faith and resolution that I have gone forth into homelessness so as to follow the way [leading to

9 Le., 居家 — after Foguang, p.2324a.

10 Cf. n.4.

11 Lit ' . . is summoning Nanda'.

12 Cf. Foguang, p.5539a (under 禁戒).

Nirvāṇa]. — Son of good family, said the Exalted One, this [frame of mind] is indeed not conducive to homelessness, to leading a life of purification (*pariśuddhi*), to follow the way [leading to Nirvāṇa]. Why do you turn your back on the Dharma, why are you intent on indulging in what is defiling (*vidūṣaṇa*)? You should know, Nanda, there are two things that make for insatiability. Anyone who has taken to these things becomes insatiable. Which are the two? Desiring sexual intercourse (*maithunarāga*) and drinking alcohol. Anyone who indulges in these two things [has to] bear the consequence of his actions: he will be unable to realise the state of the Unconditioned (*asam-skrtasthāna*). Therefore, Nanda, one should bend one's mind to abandoning these two things so that, in due course, one succeeds in becoming free of malign influences (*āsrava*). Now, Nanda, do your best to lead the holy life in order to obtain soon the fruit of the [Noble] Path, the certain reward [of your efforts]. — Then the Exalted One uttered the following verses:

If the roof of a house is not tight, the rain will leak in; and
[If] one does not practise, desire, hatred¹³ and delusion will
[leak in.

[If] the roof of a house is really tight, the rain will not leak
[in; nor will

Desire, hatred and delusion [if] one is really capable of
[practising]¹⁴.

13 Lit. 'anger, wrath'; as for the meaning of *dveṣa*, see Foguang, p.6114a.

14 Cf. Dhṛ 13-4: *yathā agāraṃ ducchannaṃ vuṭṭhī samativijjhati /
evaṃ abhāvitaṃ cittaṃ rāgo samativijjhati //
yathā agāraṃ succhannaṃ vuṭṭhī na samativijjhati /
evaṃ subhāvitaṃ cittaṃ rāgo na samativijjhati //*

At the beginning of this section Hayashi (p.154) and Lancaster (p.222) refer to a Pāli parallel to EĀ, viz. Dhṛ-Aṭṭhakathā I, ed. H.C. Norman, London 1906

Thereupon the following thought occurred to the Exalted One: This son of good family has his head full of lustful thoughts. Now the best thing would be that I extinguish the fire by means of fire. — At once the Exalted One exerted his supernormal power and took Nanda by the hand. Just as a strong man instantly bends and [again] stretches his arm, he took Nanda to the summit of Gandhamādāna¹⁵ [in the twinkling of an eye]. Near the summit there was a gigantic cave in which there was a blind female monkey. [Here] they stopped, and the Exalted One, holding Nanda's right hand, said to him: You are taking a good look at this blind female monkey, are you not? — Yes, I am, Exalted One, answered [the latter], and the Exalted One went on asking: Which is more beautiful — Sundarī of the Śākya clan¹⁶ or this blind female monkey? — The latter, replied Nanda, looks like a fierce dog whose nose has been injured by someone, or like a dog that is all the more malicious [because] it is smeared with poison. It is impossible to compare the Śākyan lady Sundarī with this blind female monkey. This Śākyan lady always remains in my heart. [My feelings for her are] like a huge mass of fire devastating mountains and plains, or like a column of fire blazing up because of dry combustibles. —

After this [encounter, in the twinkling of an eye] the Exalted

(PTS), p.1155ff, in which the above Dhp verses are quoted and explained (Nanadattheravattu). The Pāli parallel to EĀ begins in fact at *op. cit.*, p.118. For the story of Nanda see DPPN II, 10f. Two more parallels to the Nanda story in EĀ can be mentioned: Ud, 21–4; J II, 92–5.

15 See Soothill, p.319, Hackmann, p.235f.

16 As for Sundarī Nandā / Janapadakalyāṇī, see DPPN I, 934; II, 1217; BSR 9, 2 (1192), p.180f., n.13, where Āśvaghoṣa's Saundarananda is mentioned. The same topic is also treated in Avadanā-Kaḷpalatā I, ed. P.L. Vaidya (Darbhanga 1959), pp.85–95 (Sundarīnandāvadāna).

One [and Nanda] — as quickly as one bends and [again] stretches one's arm — were no longer seen at the [top of the] mountain. They proceeded to the heaven of the Trāyastriṃśa gods. At that time all the gods there were assembled in the assembly hall¹⁷ Sudharmā¹⁸. Not far from it there was a palace (*prāsāda*) [in which] five hundred apsaras¹⁹ were enjoying themselves. As a matter of fact, only women were [there] and no men at all. From some distance, Nanda caught sight of the five hundred heavenly nymphs who, while amusing themselves, proved talented musicians. Looking at them, [Nanda] asked the Exalted One: What are these five hundred apsaras like, having fun and being good at making music? — Go, Nanda, said the Exalted One, and ask them. — So Venerable Nanda went to the palace to call on the five hundred nymphs. Some hundred kinds of fine seats were arranged [there]²⁰. — All of you, Venerable Nanda asked the apsaras, what are you heavenly nymphs like, having such fun and amusing yourselves? — The apsaras replied: We are five hundred in number. Having no husbands, all of us are pure. We have heard that the Exalted One has a disciple named Nanda who is the son of the Buddha's aunt²¹. He leads the holy life of purity under the Tathāgata. After his passing away (T2, 592a) he is bound to be reborn here. [Then] he will be our husband, and all of us will have immense fun. — On [hearing their words,] Venerable Nanda

17 Lit. 'preaching hall, lecture hall'.

18 Cf. DPPN I, 1002–4 (under 'Tāvatiṃsa').

19 玉女 usually stands for the 'noblewoman-treasure' of a universal monarch. The usage in this place seems to be peculiar to EĀ.

20 Hereafter the Chinese repeats the above 'As a matter of fact, only women . . .'

21 As for Mahāpajāpatī, the Buddha's aunt and foster-mother, Nanda's mother, see DPPN II, 522–4.

was overjoyed. Consumed by his emotions, he thought to himself: Now I am the Exalted One's disciple and, moreover, I am his aunt's son; and all these heavenly nymphs will definitely be my wives! — Then, having joined the Exalted One, Nanda was asked by him: Well, Nanda, what have the apsaras said? — They informed [me], replied Nanda, they were unmarried, that they had heard of the Exalted One's disciple diligently leading the holy life and that [the disciple] after his passing away would be bound to be reborn there. — Nanda, the Exalted One went on, tell me, tell me! What have you been thinking? — This thought has occurred to me, answered Nanda: I am the Exalted One's disciple. . . and all the apsaras will definitely be my wives. — Excellent²², Nanda, said the Exalted One, you do your best to lead the holy life, and I will declare (*ud-ā-hr*) that these five hundred women will have to be appointed (*vinīyoktavā*) to be at your service. — Tell me, Nanda, the Exalted One continued, [who is more] beautiful, the Śākya lady Sundarī or these five hundred heavenly nymphs? — Just as the blind female monkey at the top of the mountain, answered Nanda, is ugly and disgusting by comparison with Sundarī, she similarly is ugly by comparison with the apsaras. — You do your best, repeated the Exalted One, to lead the holy life, and I will herewith declare that these five hundred beings will be yours. —

Again the Exalted One thought: Now I have to extinguish Nanda's 'fire' by means of fire. Just as a strong man instantly bends. . . , with his right hand the Exalted One took Nanda's arm and led him to the Avīci hell [where] the hell-wraiths undergo so much suffering. In the centre of Avīci, there was a huge gaping

22 The usage of 悦哉 standing for *sādhu* in this place seems peculiar to EĀ.

cauldron without anybody to be seen [around or therein]²³. On beholding [just that cauldron], one would become panic-stricken with one's hair standing on end (*romaharṣa*). In front [of it] the Exalted One said: All these living beings have to suffer immensely, even though only this cauldron [can be seen] in this vast emptiness without anybody [in it]. — This is, the Exalted One went on, what is called the hell Avīci. — Nanda became more and more terrified with his hair standing on end. — This is the hell Avīci, he repeated what the Exalted One [had said], and there is sheer emptiness and not [a single] offender [visible]. — Go, Nanda, said the Exalted One, and ask somebody. — So Venerable Nanda called out: You hell-servants, what kind of hell is this? Why is this hell empty without anybody in it? — You should know, bhikṣu, answered the hell-servants, the Buddha Śākyamuni has a disciple, Nanda by name, who leads the holy life of purity under the Tathāgata. [Once that disciple's life] comes to an end and his body breaks up, he will be born in a fortunate heavenly realm. There he will have a life-span of a thousand years, knowing nothing but enjoyment and happiness. However, when that [kind of existence] draws to a close, he will appear in this Avīci hell, and it is this empty cauldron that will be his abode (lit. 'room'). — Having listened to this announcement, Venerable Nanda was paralysed with fear with his hair standing on end. All

23 Cf. EncBuddh II, 3, p.452 (Avīci). Bearing in mind D III, 75 and A I, 159, where Avīci is employed as a simile with reference to dense populations, it seems strange that it is stated in this EĀ passage that nobody is seen in Avīci, although in the preceding sentence the 'hell-wraiths' are mentioned. Most probably the ghastly emptiness of Avīci is meant to serve the purpose of dramatic effect. As for such effect, the spectacular excursion to Avīci in the Nanda story seems to be a distinctive feature of EĀ, not to be found in the Pāli sources.

of a sudden, he realised that this empty cauldron was just where he was destined. He turned to the Exalted One, bowed down his head at the latter's feet and said to him: I humbly ask forgiveness (*ksam*) for my wrongdoing by not leading the holy life and therefore annoying the Tathāgata. — Then Venerable Nanda uttered the following verses:

To be born a human being cannot be esteemed highly
[enough;

Long life in a heaven is not eternal, [but] ends with one's
[downfall.

Hell [means] suffering, grief and pain.

The only happiness — that is Nirvāṇa. —

— Excellent, said the Exalted One to Nanda, what you have uttered is well said; Nirvāṇa as the highest (*para*) — [that is] happiness²⁴. [I] acknowledge, Nanda, your confession; you have realised your wrongdoing [owing to] your ignorance and delusion. For this reason the Tathāgata accepts your remorse (*kaukrtya*) for your transgressions (*atyaya*). Henceforth abstain from wrongdoing! — Thereafter, [once more] the Exalted One took Nanda by the hand [and in the twinkling of an eye] — as quickly as one bends and [again] stretches one's arm — they were no longer seen in that hell and reached Anāthapiṇḍada's Park at the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī.

24 Cf. Therī-Gāthā (ed. H. Oldenberg, R. Pischel, K.R. Norman, L. Alsdorf; PTS, London 1966) 476 (p.170): *nirayesu bahū vinipātagatassa kilissamānassa /*

devesu pi attānaṃ nibbānasukhā paraṃ n' atthi //

See K.R. Norman, *The Elders' Verses* II (PTS 1971), p.47: '... Even among the devas there is no protection; there is nothing superior to the happiness of quenching'. As for the Pāli reference, see also H. Hecker, *Pāli, Systematisches Wörterbuch der Existenz nebst Konkordanz* III (Hamburg 1995), p.294 (including lists of renderings by various translators).

There the Exalted One said to Nanda: Now you should cultivate two conditions (*dharma*). Which two? Tranquillity and penetrating insight²⁵. You should further practise [in the light of] two facts: [in the light of the fact that] birth and death do not make for happiness; that the realisation of Nirvāṇa is happiness. And again you should develop two qualities, that is comprehension (*parijñāna*) and presence of mind (*pratibhāna*). — The Exalted One instructed Nanda by dint of manifold instructions. Then after having received the Exalted One's teaching, Venerable Nanda rose from his seat, bowed down at the Exalted One's feet and left.

He went to the Andhavana. There he sat down cross-legged under a tree, straightened body and mind and conscientiously (lit. 'being present in front') cultivated mindfulness (*smṛti*). The venerable one wisely reflected on what the Exalted One had taught him. So he did continually, without an instant of interruption, while he was staying at a secluded, quiet place. [In due course] he attained (*bhāvita*) that unsurpassed [goal] of the holy life for whose sake, out of faith and resolution, a son of good family goes forth into homelessness in order to follow the way [leading to Nirvāṇa]. He knew in accordance with fact: Birth and death have come to an end, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, and there will be no more coming into existence. At that time Venerable Nanda became an Arhat and, after his realisation of arhatship, he rose from his seat, adjusted his robes and went to the Exalted One's whereabouts. [There] he

25 Cf., though from a different context, Ōkubo Yūsen, 'The Ekottara-āgama Fragments of the Gilgit Manuscript', in *Bukkyō Gaku Seminā* No.35, Kyoto 1982, pp.98, 99, 101: *dvau dharmmau . . samathaṃ ca vipaśyanā ca*. Cf. also A I, 61, 95, 100.

bowed down. . . took his seat at one side and said to the Exalted One: Sometime ago the Exalted One promised his disciple five hundred apsaras. Now there is no need of them anymore. — For you, replied the Exalted One, birth and death have come to an end now, and the holy life has been lived. So I am quit of this [promise]. — Then he uttered these verses:

Now I see that Nanda has attained the ascetic's goal
[(*dharma*),

Has put an end to all evil, is pure and without blemish. —

Thereafter the Exalted One announced to the bhikkhus: Now it is Bhikkhu Nanda who has realised arhatship, and it is he who is rid of [desiring] sexual intercourse, of aversion and delusion. — Having heard the Buddha's words, the bhikkhus were pleased and applied themselves to practice.'

Additional Abbreviations

- Foguang = *Fóguāng dàcǐdiǎn*, The Fo Kuang Shan Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Kaohsiung 1989.
 Dhp = Dhammapada, ed. S. Sumaṅgala, London 1914 (PTS).
 Ud = Udāna, ed. P. Steinthal, London 1885 (PTS).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I have read with interest Laurence C.R. Mills' 'A Contemporary Buddhist Debate' (BSR 12, 2, 1995). As a former bhikkhu of thirty years standing, the author is well qualified to join in such a debate, and I welcome his contribution. I should like, however, to make the following points:

(1) In writing *Forty-Three Years Ago* it was not my intention to start a debate, least of all with Brahmavamso, of whom I had not even heard. I was simply reflecting on my past experience and drawing a few conclusions. Consequently, I do not regard myself as an 'opponent' of Brahmavamso, even after the hard things he has said about me in his review.

(2) While my emphasis is indeed on the spirit of the Dharma, that emphasis is 'in keeping with the Triyana (three vehicles) approach' only in the sense that I respect, and draw inspiration from, *all* forms of Buddhism. I do *not* regard the Mahayana as superior to the so-called Hinayana (at least as represented by what appear to be the oldest portions of the Pali Canon), or the Vajrayana as superior to the Mahayana.

(3) The fact that at least one of the teachers present at Laurence Mills' bhikkhu ordination was known to have the knowledge of others' minds (*paracittañāṇa*) and would not have sat in an impure Sangha is not sufficient to prove that the ordination was technically valid. At most it proves that the members of the ordaining Sangha were observers of the sikkhāpadas.

Sangharakshita

Sir,

Concerning Laurence Mills's review article on the Sangharakshita-Brahmavamso debate, let me say at once that, with minor reservations, I am wholly on the side of Ajahn Brahmavamso, who has not only studied Vinaya but *lived* it in a way that Sangharakshita clearly felt unable to do. For it is really with Vinaya that we are concerned. I myself only 'tasted the mango' for three months, but I know that I benefited greatly from it, and am certain that if I had had the guts to stay on longer, I would have received even greater benefits.

I now turn to the six points made by Ajahn Brahmavamso:

- i. Bhikkhu ordination is regarded with awed inspiration by most Buddhists.
- ii. Bhikkhu ordination was established by the Buddha.
- iii. The Buddha was a bhikkhu.
- iv. The bhikkhu ordination has survived unchanged for over 2500 years.
- v. What has survived so long is deserving of respect.
- vi. Bhikkhu ordination was and is praised by the Arahants.

It seems to me that:

- i. is still true in the important sense that many people at least know a good bhikkhu when they see one. There is more open criticism of bad bhikkhus now just as there is of bad priests in Ireland.
- ii. Whatever its *form*, surely bhikkhu ordination *was* established by the Buddha.
- iii. The Buddha was a *samana* in the sense of the Brahmajāla Suttas. Let us not quibble.
- iv. Technically wrong, but largely true in spirit — in Tibet as in Thailand!
- v. The reference to *suttee* &c. is rubbish. We all know what was meant.

vi. I don't *know*, and nor does Laurence Mills, whether the late Ajahn Chah was an Arahant or not. But it is not out of the question, and those who have better judgement than I believe so. I think he would have passed the test of the Chabbisodhana Sutta (M 112). And he ordained Ajahn Brahmavamso. There seems to be little more to be said.

Maurice Walshe

Sir,

Having just read Laurence Mills' review-article, I thought you might be interested in the following, which I wrote some time ago.

The Buddha and the Bhikkhu Ordination

The Buddha never actually ordained anyone as a bhikkhu nor, naturally, was he ever ordained by anyone himself, but one could say he was 'self-ordained'. When he uses the formula *ehi bhikkhu*, 'Come, monk', this amounts to self-ordination also on the part of the person concerned. They say to him: 'I wish to go forth in this Dhamma-Vinaya', and he replies, 'Come, monk, lead the holy life for the complete ending of suffering'. Here he is in fact just saying, 'So be it', and by addressing them as 'bhikkhu' showing that he now agrees to regard them as bhikkhus from that moment.

The later institution of the ceremony of ordination was devised for the bhikkhu-community, the Sangha, to perpetuate itself. When this procedure was introduced and persons came to the Buddha asking for ordination he usually turns to someone like Ānanda and says, 'Ordain them'. The Buddha probably did not take an active part, although he may have been present. As the texts often say, 'Then so-and-so received

ordination in the Fortunate One's (*bhagavanta*) presence'. However, in exceptional cases such as, for instance, that of the bandit Aṅgulimāla (M 86), he may still have used his prerogative of saying '*ehi bhikkhu*', which is, in effect, a bypassing of the ordination process.

This is a somewhat different explanation to that of the commentarial tradition, for there the *ehi bhikkhu* formula is regarded as an actual early form of ordination-ceremony devised and used by the Buddha. There are other instances that demonstrate that the Buddha was not subject to the Vinaya he created for the Bhikkhu-Sangha in the same way as his bhikkhu followers. For example, his robe was of a different dimension to that of the bhikkhu (cf. Vin IV 173) and he did not participate in the *pātimokkha*-recitation enjoined on the bhikkhus. In the Udāna (5.5) he is represented as saying that it is inappropriate that the Tathāgata should participate in the *uposatha*-observance and recite the *pātimokkha* within a gathering that is not pure and therefore he shall discontinue to do so.

John D. Ireland.

NEWS AND NOTES

UK — The Sharpham College for Buddhist Studies and Contemporary Enquiry offers a broad education on traditional Buddhist values critically applied to contemporary needs.

The educational programme is divided between Buddhist Studies of the Theravāda, Indo-Tibetan, Zen and Chinese traditions, Buddhist history and philosophy; and Contemporary Enquiry including Right Livelihood, ecology and the environment, Western philosophy and psychology, the new sciences, arts and culture in general.

Regular weekly classes, four weekend Seminars, one Colloquium and one guided week-long retreat are offered each term, ending with an Arts Festival where the work of students and others is exhibited and performed.

The courses are taught by the members of the College, as well as by other teachers who are invited to give lectures and seminars on an occasional basis. The teachers come from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and have a longstanding commitment to Buddhist values. They supervise the students' work and offer personal tuition and guidance.

The Sharpham College unites the communal, rural and meditative way of life of a Buddhist monastery with Western traditions of critical analysis, imaginative self-expression and engagement with the world. During their year's stay, residential students commit themselves to a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity grounded in ethical awareness.

The College can accommodate up to eight residential students, who live together as a community for one year under the supervision of a manager.

Non-residential students are welcome to participate fully in the College's educational programme and join the residential

community in their activities, which are open to anyone with an established meditation practice and familiarity with Buddhist ideas.

The Sharpham College also offers a year-round programme of talks and workshops to the public.

The College is located in a Georgian mansion set in a five hundred acre diverse farming estate on the banks of the River Dart, in Devon, England.

For further information please contact:

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Sharpham House, Ashprington, Totnes
Devon TQ9 7UT England
Fax: + 44 (0)1803 732 037
e-mail: 101364.537@comp.

France — With the collaboration of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, the Université Bouddhique de Paris (UBP) has recently been inaugurated by the *Dharma-Orient-Occident* charitable association. The planned three-year course includes an extensive programme of studies covering the various Buddhist traditions with an academic and multi-disciplinary approach. Lecturers include university teachers, researchers, translators and eminent representatives of various traditions. It is hoped to promote a knowledge of the different philosophical, cultural and artistic Buddhist traditions, along with being a meeting-place for transdisciplinary exchange, and that the publication of works of reference favouring further research will ensue (transcriptions of lectures will be available on request).

Lectures are held twice monthly during the academic year and are open to students and researchers who are paid-up members of the *Dharma-Orient-Occident* association. The programme of courses covers philosophy, psychology, history, traditional texts and languages, as well as the arts of various

civilisations. Courses are held at the Université Paris 9 - Dauphine, Place du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, F-75016 Paris, and further details may be obtained from:

Frédéric La Combe & Christine Arnould

Dharma - Orient - Occident

26 rue Véron

F-75018 Paris — France

tel: 16 (1) 42 23 23 17

fax: 16 (1) 42 23 27 66

Japan — The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, has announced the establishment of the related International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies. Further details from the new President of the Institute, Dr Tsugunani Kubo, 5-3-23 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105. A list of English-language publications is also available.

China — The retrievable compartment of a research space satellite, which was supposed to fall to Earth last November, but only in fact did so on 12 March this year, contained amongst other items a four-inch gold statue of the Buddha.

The ruins of what archaeologists reckon to be the oldest Buddhist temple in the country have been excavated at Luoyang, a former imperial capital. Given the name Yongning, it has been dated to 516 and included a pagoda that stood an estimated 147 m.

OBITUARIES

Mireille Bénisti(-Monié) (10 October 1909 - 11 December 1993)

Born in Algiers, this specialist in the monumental art of India and Cambodia finally succumbed to the effects of a protracted illness in Paris.

She enrolled at the École du Louvre and became a pupil of Philippe Stern (with whom she wrote on the 'Evolution du stūpa figuré dans les sculptures d'Amarāvati', *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indo-chinoises* LXIX, Saigon 1952), obtaining her Diploma in 1950 for a study of early Indian sculpture. From the Sorbonne she was, in 1958, awarded a diploma for her thesis, 'Étude sur le stūpa dans l'Inde ancienne', published in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (Vol. LX, 1960) with her allied article on 'Le construction et le culte du stūpa d'après les Vinayapīṭaka'. Thereafter she concentrated her attention on Indian Buddhist architectural remains, as evidenced by her study on the *Evolution du style indien d'Amarāvati* (PUF, 1961).

In 1960 she visited Cambodia and, two years later, instigated a course in Indian archaeology at the University of Phnom Penh. She took this opportunity to examine the distinctive Khmer sculptures which were the subject matter of several papers, terminating with a general overview, *Rapports entre le premier art khmer et l'art indien* (EFEO 1970). India and Sri Lanka were included in the 'grand tour'. In the former she joined the Archaeological Survey of India with a view to making a field study of the Buddhist monuments in Orissa, the outcome of which was a *Contribution à l'étude du stupa bouddhique indien: les stupa mineurs de Bodh-Gaya et de Ratnagiri* (2 vols, EFEO 1981).

Michel Strickmann (24 November 1942 - 11 August 1994)

With his sudden death at the Atlantic resort of Taussat (30 miles from Bordeaux where he had been teaching since 1991), the West has lost a promising, if idiosyncratic, Sinologist.

Born, of Belgian descent, in Fall River, Massachusetts, from 1962 he studied at Bruges and Leiden (Tibetology under D. Seyfort Rugg). Invited to lecture at the Sorbonne by Kristofer Schipper, he gained his doctorate for Taoist studies. He continued his Chinese studies under Erik Zürcher at Leiden, and Rolf Stein and Max Kaltenmark in Paris.

After a five-year stay in Japan, during which he familiarised himself with Shingon at the Shinnyōdō temple opposite his apartment in Kyoto, he was appointed to the Far Eastern Faculty at the University of California in Berkeley. There he taught an enthusiastic student following but fell foul of the authorities who terminated his position in 1991.

Despite his obvious erudition in the fields of Asian religion and philosophy (spanning the whole geographical region from India to Japan), surprisingly few writings were published. The bulk was connected with Taoism, whilst those pertinent to Buddhism comprised 'A Survey of Tibetan Buddhist Studies' (*The Eastern Buddhist*, N.S. X, 1977), 'India in the Chinese Looking-Glass' (*The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes*, ed. D. Klimburg-Salter, Los Angeles 1982), 'The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells' (*Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Honolulu 1990, Delhi 1994) and *Mantras et mandarins: le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (which includes a discussion of 'The Book of Consecration' in the opening chapter on spells and eschatology — Gallimard, Paris 1995). Chapter 7 of 'The Book of Consecration' was translated for 'The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing' (*Asia Major*, N.S. VI, 1993

— published Princeton 1995) and intended to form part of his edition of *Classical Asian Rituals and the Theory of Ritual* (scheduled for publication by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin). He also introduced and edited *Tantric and Taoist Studies* in honour of R.A. Stein (3 vols, Brussels 1981-5).

Relevants manuscripts included 'Buddhist Eschatology and Chinese Sovereignty' (University of Columbia, 1978), 'Dhāraṇī-Sūtras in the Formation of Chinese Buddhism' (University of Southern California, 1978), 'Chinese Views of the End of the World' (Harvard, 1980), and 'Heralds of Maitreya' (Princeton, 1983). Chapter 10 of 'The Book of Consecration' was translated for 'Chinese Oracles in Buddhist Vestments' (Berkeley, 1983).

Sir Harold Bailey (16 December 1899 - 11 January 1996)

With the passing of the doyen of Iranian philologists, Khotanese Buddhist studies has suffered an severe loss. Born in Devizes, Wiltshire, he emigrated with his family to Australia ten years later. From 1921 he read Classics at Perth University, obtaining his M.A. for a thesis on the religious thought of Euripides. This work facilitated his acceptance by Oxford in 1927 where he studied Sanskrit, Avestan and Indo-European comparative philology. Two years later he was appointed as the first Lecturer in Iranian Studies at the School of Oriental Studies, London University, and in effect initiated the serious, sustained academic study of this discipline in the UK. Having obtained a D.Phil. from Oxford in 1933 for a partial edition and annotated translation of the Pahlavi *Bundahišn*, three years later he was invited to occupy the Chair of Sanskrit at Cambridge, a position he held until his retirement in 1967. Elected Fellow of the British Academy in 1944, there followed Membership of the Scandinavian Academies and Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities, SOAS, Queens College,

Cambridge, St Catherine's College, Oxford, and President of the Philological Society (1948-52), Royal Asiatic Society (1964-7), Mithraic Society (1971) and Society of Afghan Studies (1972-9). In addition, honorary doctorates were awarded by Perth, Australian National University (Canberra), Oxford and Manchester. He was knighted in 1960 for 'services to Oriental studies'.

A natural born linguist who was widely read in classical; and epic literature in the original languages, he also mastered the intricacies of all those Oriental scripts and grammars deemed essential for the comprehension and exposition of his speciality — the eastern Iranian language Khotanese which had produced its own distinctive literature and culture prior to the Muslim 'holocaust'. Bailey set the scene in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge in 1938: *The Content of Indian and Iranian Studies* (published by Cambridge University Press †), 'Saka Studies: The Ancient Kingdom of Khotan' (*Papers on Far Eastern History* 4, 1971), 'The Culture of the Iranian Kingdom of Ancient Khotan in Chinese Turkestan' (*Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 19, Tokyo 1971), and his only full-length work of a general nature, *The Culture of the Sakas in Ancient Iranian Khotan* (Delmar, New York 1982) in which Chapter 4 is devoted to 'A Survey of Excerpted Texts of Khotanese Literature'.

Linguistic studies began with an overview of 'Handschriften aus Chotan und Tunhuang' (ZDMG XC, 1936 †), an introduction to the facsimiles of *Codices Khotanenses: India Office Library* (Copenhagen 1938), and a descriptive survey of the 'Languages of the Saka' (*Handbuch der Orientalistik* I, 4, Leiden 1958), culminating in his *Dictionary of Khotan Saka* (Cambridge 1979). Related studies included 'Gāndhārī' (BSOAS XI, 1946 †) and 'Buddhist Sanskrit' (JRAS 1955). Items relevant to Buddhism comprised 'A Fragment of the Uttaratantra in Sanskrit' (with E.H. Johnston, BSOS VIII, 1, 1935 †), 'Vajra-prajñā-Pāramitā' (ZDMG XCII, 1942 †),

'The Jātaka-stava of Jñānayaśas' (BSOS IX, 1939 †), 'Hvatanica IV' (text and translation of Khotanese devotional literature, BSOAS X, 1942 †), 'The Colophon of the Jātaka-stava' (*Journal of the Greater India Society* XI, Calcutta 1944 †), 'Khotan Dharmapada' (BSOAS XI, 1945 †), 'The Tumshuq Karmavacana' (BSOAS XIII, 1950 †), 'The Profession of Prince Tcūṃ-Ttehi' (*Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman-Brown*, New Haven 1962), 'The Sudana Poem of Rddhiprabhāva' (BSOAS XXIX, 1966), 'The *Pradaḥṣiṇā-Sūtra* of Chang Tsiang-Kuin' (*Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, ed. L. Cousins et al., Dordrecht 1974), and 'Khotanese Saka Literature' (*The Cambridge History of Iran* 3, 2, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, 1983). (All items marked † were reprinted in M. Nawabi, ed., *Opera Minora*, 2 vols, Shiraz 1981.)

However, Bailey will be best remembered for his patient and painstaking editions of (romanised) *Khotanese Texts* (7 vols, Cambridge 1945-85), and *Khotanese Buddhist Texts* (London 1951, Cambridge 1981) from which he edited in Sanskrit and translated the 'Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra' (*Prajñāpāramitā and Related Studies*, Studies in honor of Edward Conze, ed. Lewis Lancaster, Berkeley 1977). He collaborated in establishing, at Cambridge, the Ancient India and Iran Trust which he chaired from 1978. There, in the twilight of his life, he was finally able to live amidst the congenial surroundings of his vast library and a garden which he took delight in tending.

BOOK REVIEWS

Historical Dictionary of Buddhism (Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies and Movements, No. 1). Charles S. Prebish. The Scarecrow Press Inc., Metuchen, N.J., 1993. xxxv, 387 pp. \$42.50. Distributed by Shelwing Ltd, Folkestone, at £42.50; Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi 1995. Rs 300.

The editor announces that this is 'a comprehensive guide for readers and initiates alike . . . which should make it easier than before to initiate and expand one's knowledge of Buddhism'. Other historical dictionaries are to follow to cover all the world's major religions, so it is gratifying to see Buddhism being the first one to appear. But while the usefulness of a religion cannot be doubted, one cannot help wondering how comprehensive it really can be on 250 pages, especially in the case of Buddhism with all its schools and developments in so many countries.

Besides the dictionary proper the book has a few auxiliary sections: a short 'Pronunciation Guide' which points to several recommended specialised publications for further study, an overview of the three Canons (Pāli, Chinese and Tibetan) which is useful to have in one volume, and an 'Introduction' which provides a brief hint about the author's approach, a sketch of the Buddha's life and brief characterisations of the history of Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and Nepal, and in the West, followed by an elementary description of the developments of the Buddhist doctrine and a note on Buddhist community life. At the end is a large Bibliography, arguably the most useful part of the work, which is divided into sections on historical development, texts, religious thought, practices and beliefs, soteriology, biographies, sacred places, social order, and arts, and arranged within the sections into thematic subsections, respecting also geographic areas where appropriate.

There are over 500 entries in the dictionary, besides a few dozen cross-references which provide factual data about some

places, persons and writings and explanations of important doctrinal terms. They are well selected, but by this very fact one can again question the editor's claim of comprehensiveness. Rather it can be regarded as a good guide for beginners in Buddhism and for readers and students of comparative religion or history of religions who are not specialists in any Oriental religion.

Indian Buddhist terms are entered exclusively in their Sanskrit form with only one or two Pāli cross-references, which may cause some problems for some users, so perhaps adding bracketed Pāli expressions in the next edition might be worth considering. Some problems might also result from the fact that Tibetan terms are entered in their transliteration letter for letter, with the pronunciation in brackets, but they are not cross-referenced. Looking for information on, say, Chenrezi, one may not realise that one should look him up under SPYAN-RAS-GZIGS. The complete capitalisation of entries in the dictionary is not really suitable for Tibetan names, the spelling in this case should be, in fact, sPyan-ras-gzigs. So perhaps the editor should rethink the method and give preference to the usual normal lower case letters in bold, with capitals only where appropriate. The customary use of *italics* for titles of books and for non-English terms has not been adopted and this is, no doubt, another point to be reconsidered for a possible future reprint and for other dictionaries in this series.

The style of the entries is easy and readable, sometimes a bit chatty perhaps, but this is a matter of personal taste. A few inaccuracies have crept in which can be easily corrected next time, e.g., the Jātakas are not canonical, only the verses are: the stories illustrate them and are regarded as commentaries. Japanese Zen (= Chinese Ch'an) was more likely derived from the Pāli *jhāna*, rather than Sanskrit *dhyāna*. Lama (*bLama*) is hardly a Tibetan translation of Sanskrit *guru*, it is rather a corruption of *brāhman* ('Brahmin' of *The Oxford Concise Dictionary*), the Hindu priest (few *lamas* are *gurus*, although many perform communal, one might say 'priestly', functions).

On the whole this is a useful dictionary, but one cannot escape the feeling that the editor may not have thought out its conception beforehand with sufficient care. It is unlikely that it

will replace *A Popular Dictionary of Buddhism* by C. Humphreys which has over a thousand entries and is still in print, although it does sorely need revision and updating. The U.K. pricing of the book may also hinder its sales which is a pity, because it is the type of book which the average reader of religious literature should have at home for constant reference, while visitors to libraries would usually go for larger encyclopaedias when seeking information.

Karel Werner

Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden. Begonnen von Ernst Waldschmidt. Im Auftrage der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen herausgegeben von Heinz Bechert. 8. Lieferung: Nachträge zu *avidyābhisamcetana-hetoh / audārika*, Titelei, Einleitung und Verzeichnisse zu Band I — bearbeitet von Michael Schmidt und Siglinde Dietz. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1994. I-LXXX, 561-617 pp. DM 62.

With the publication of this eighth fascicle of the Göttingen Sanskrit Dictionary is brought to a close volume I of SWTF, covering the entries beginning with vowels and diphthongs. In the general editor's preface (p.VI f.), H. Bechert states that by now the lexicographical work on SWTF 'goes beyond the bounds of the so-called Turfan texts of the Berlin collection to encompass the totality of preserved canonical and paracanonical literature of the Sarvāstivāda school of Hīnayāna Buddhism' and that for this reason the title of SWTF 'has been expanded by the clarifying addendum. . . und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule (. . . and the Canonical Literature of the Sarvāstivāda School)'. The general editor also refers to problems specified in the introductory part of the present fascicle concerning the reception of the dictionary in some countries that have prompted him and his collaborators, on the recommendation of the SWTF advisory committee, to add English translations of the German title, preface, introduction and guide for the users of the dictionary. The reader is further informed that the 'history and aims of the project are reported in the Introduction, in which the user

may also learn how this long-term scholarly work developed from modest beginnings, and how it is being carried on even now with comparatively quite modest means. According to current projections, the whole work will comprise five volumes and be completed within approximately 25 years from now on'.

In the introduction by the general editor, topics such as 'Sanskrit Texts from the Turfan Finds and their Analysis', 'Selectional Criteria for Utilized Text Material' or 'Lexicographical Questions' are dealt with. In respect of selectional criteria, as the general editor says, an attempt had to be made to select as homogeneous a corpus of texts as possible as a basis of the dictionary. This seems feasible, for the recension of the canonical writings belonging to the Turfan collection is mainly that of the Sarvāstivādins. However, whilst formerly there was assumed a general agreement between the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda recensions of Sūtras and Abhidharma texts, more recently scholars have become aware of a rather marked difference between both recensions. In some places though, where the difference in diction is not really pronounced, the problem is faced of how to draw a demarcation line between Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda versions of canonical texts other than those belonging to the Vinaya versions of the two schools. According to the general editor, it can nevertheless be maintained now that the two traditions used different recensions of all parts of the Canon in which the Vinaya texts of both schools reveal the most prominent divergencies and the Abhidharma works the least. Since, as adumbrated above, the present dictionary is designed for complete lexicographical coverage of all canonical, paracanonical and expository works of the Sarvāstivāda school available so far, for lexicographical exploitation canonical texts of the Mūlasarvāstivādins are not taken into account save Mūlasarvāstivādin texts belonging to the Berlin Turfan collection, those texts and especially fragments where it is next to impossible to distinguish the two recensions of the said schools from one another, not to mention some older editions of Turfan texts representing a kind of mixed recension. As it is assumed that on the whole the Abhidharma works of both schools, due to their distinctive style peculiar to this corpus of scholastic works, are well nigh identical, not only the few

Abhidharma texts among the Central Asian fragments are lexicographically exploited, but also quotations from Abhidharma works and old commentaries on them found in later Buddhist texts such as the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Abhidh-k-bh*).

In section 4 of the introduction on 'Lexicographical Questions', it is highlighted that SWTF I has been compiled according to the thesaurus principle which means that 'the entire vocabulary of the source texts has been recorded and note taken of all citable passages. . . Consequently', it is further stressed that the present lexicon 'is the only dictionary of a post-Vedic form of Sanskrit compiled according to the so-called thesaurus method, as all other instances of full coverage being given to source passages relate only to single texts. . . or to anthologies' (p.XXVIII). In the same section (p.XXIX), the reader can also find a word of explanation as to why such a comprehensive dictionary project in the field of Buddhist Sanskrit literature has been embarked upon after the publication of F. Edgerton's to date indispensable research tool that is his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*.

'The Format of the Dictionary' by M. Schmidt, which includes manuscript notes and communications by G. v. Simson, redactor of the first fascicle of the dictionary published in 1973, is of much help to the dictionary user. In this essay the scheme is set forth according to which individual entries of the dictionary are arranged. Then each of the items of the scheme such as 'entry word(s), resolutions of vocalic sandhi, deviant spellings, grammatical category, definition, references to other dictionaries, grammatical form etc.' are fully explained one by one. Another important feature in the present fascicle are the lists of abbreviations which comprise in fact an exhaustive bibliography pertaining to a) Source Texts of the Dictionary, and to b) Other Texts and Secondary Literature.

Slightly more than one third of fascicle 8, pp.561-617, contains the remaining corrigenda and addenda up to the entry *audārika* 2. On p.561 under *avidyā-saṃcetanā-hetoḥ*, and again on p.573 under *asambhinnā lambana-dharma-smṛtyupasthā(na)-samanantara*, two places in *Abhidh-k-bh* are referred to, that is in P. Pradhan's edition; in each case there seems to be a slight error with the abbreviation of the work cited: *Abhidh-k-bh(?)* instead of

Abhidh-k-bh(P). As for definition, by and large the German renderings of Sanskrit words are precise and, with many important terms, felicitous. In one instance, however, one cannot help disagreeing. On p.561, *a-vipratīṣāra* and *a-vipratīṣārin* are respectively translated as 'Reuelosigkeit' and 'reuelos; ohne Reue'. Three fragments are quoted in which *a-vipratīṣāra* occurs. The first and third fragments have parallels in the *Aṅguttara* as indicated respectively by Sander / Waldschmidt and by Wille in SHT V and VI. In his German translation of these Pāli parallels, Nyanatiloka offers two different renderings of *avippaṭṭisāra*, namely 'Gefühl der Unschuld' and 'Reuelosigkeit'. A passage in the *Kūṭadantasutta* of the *Dīgha* parallels the second fragment in which again *a-vipratīṣāra* figures. Sander / Waldschmidt also translate this word as 'Reuelosigkeit' at SHT V, p.207, n.35. Thanks to the Pāli parallels in each case the context is clear, and *avippaṭṭisāra* always conveys a positive meaning as in Nyanatiloka's 'Gefühl der Unschuld' (sense of innocence). 'Reuelosigkeit', according to dictionaries of synonyms, signifies and connotes something altogether negative for which should be substituted 'Gefühl der Unschuld' or synonymous translations such as 'freedom from remorse' or 'no regret' in English. 'Reuelosigkeit' would correspond to *nirvipratīṣāra / niṣkaukrītya* at *Abhidh-k-bh(P)* 271 (IV.120).

A final remark on the above-mentioned decision to add an English translation of some items in SWTF. This is a happy idea, because specialists who do not know German may also be encouraged to use the dictionary; by the full documentation of all Sarvāstivāda sources and since German translations of entry words are just one feature among many others in this dictionary, SWTF can be regarded as a universally accessible research tool. On p.XXXII, the general editor gives his reason as to why the German language should be further employed for the present dictionary. One more reason should be put forward, that is to say — with an absolute minimum of exceptions — the reliability and appositeness of the German renderings, as hinted at above.

Bhikkhu Pāsādika

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Psychology and Soteriology



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According to Buddhist texts what we call a "person" can be understood in terms of five aggregates. Although only a "convenient fiction," the Buddha made frequent use of the aggregate scheme to explain the elements at work in the individual.

Mathieu Boisvert presents a detailed analysis of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*) and establishes how the Theravāda tradition views their interaction. He clarifies the fundamentals of Buddhist psychology through a rigorous examination of the nature and interrelation of the aggregates and by establishing, for the first time, how each of these aggregates chains beings to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth — the theory of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Boisvert contends that without a thorough understanding of the five aggregates, we cannot grasp the liberation process at work within the individual.



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Myōe the Dreamkeeper, Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism. George Tanabe, Jr. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992. xiv, 291 pp. \$35.

The great age and diversity of the Buddhist tradition inevitably give rise to differences of scholarly interest and interpretation, often with the result that we may tend to ignore, and even denigrate — consciously or by default, what is not in our immediate area of concern. These differences have their origin in the centuries-old divide between the northern and southern schools of Buddhism resulting from major variations not only in the scriptural canon, but in the cultural traditions of widely-separated societies.

While in theory we attempt to recognise a common ground between the Buddhisms of north and south, in practice those on either side of the divide are conspicuously unsuccessful in effecting a genuine accommodation. Some time ago, in an electronic discussion group, I suggested that we tend to understand Buddhism using two guiding models. One might be called the 'Golden Age' view which seeks the pure, genuine teaching in the words of the founder. The second might be called the 'Evolutionary' view, according to which the ideas put forward by a founder are necessarily extended and refined by later generations.

Those on the northern side of the divide lean to the 'evolutionary' model in viewing the Sino-Japanese sūtras, commentaries and popular manifestations of these ideas — often, even unconsciously, seeing the earlier tradition as somehow tentative and undeveloped, '... Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution, / Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.'

Meanwhile, those on the southern side often appear to hold that the further the northern varieties diverge from early Buddhism, the more suspect they become — a stance probably reinforced by traditional Western attitudes about the crucial importance of a single divine historical revelation handed down centuries ago. (Generally unfavourable reactions in the discussion group to a third view proposing that 'the original Buddha's teaching is not captured in the most "traditional" teachings, . . . while

later developments actually represent the original teachings more accurately' included charges of 'revisionism' and concluded with a citation from the Pāli Canon: 'Whatever is well-said was said by the Lord.')

It is well to raise this issue from time to time, especially when discussing Japanese Buddhism in the south-tilting *Buddhist Studies Review*. Myōe Shōnin (Kōben, 1173-1232), the subject of Professor Tanabe's *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, is a fascinating enigma in the history of Japanese religion and perhaps the cleric most respected in his own day as the embodiment of Buddhist practice even by those outside his small group. He was recluse, dreamer, poet, theoretician, and perhaps the most outspoken polemicist against the 'sole-practice' (*senju*) *nembutsu* movements of his day. In later centuries his fame was gradually eclipsed by those affiliated with sects with more resources and political influence, such as Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen, Nichiren and Ikkyū. Although he was commissioned by the emperor to restore the flagging fortunes of the old, prestigious Kegon (Hua-yen) sect, based largely on the ideas of the *Garland Sūtra*, Myōe was no charismatic prophet, and his efforts resulted in no significant institutional developments¹.

On the other hand, Tanabe's 'dreamkeeper' was no mere eccentric given to delusions. He was an individual whose behaviour exemplifies a crucial difference between the northern and southern traditions of Buddhism, and this study is as much an exercise in comparative religion as the story of the monk's fantasies. Tanabe lays out his agenda unequivocally on the first page:

'... in calling him primarily a dreamkeeper, I have chosen to emphasize a particular aspect, one that is most impor-

1 Additional translations and analyses of Myōe and his 'Dream Diary' (*Yume no ki*) may be found in (1) Frédéric Girard, *Un moine de la secte Kegon à l'époque de Kamakura: Myōe (1173-1232) et le 'Journal de ses rêves'* (Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient 160) Paris 1990; (2) Hayao Kawai, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams*, trans. and ed. Mark Uno, Venice, Ca, 1992. (Dr Kawai is a Japanese Jungian.)

tant not only for an understanding of this man, but of what I will argue to be the central characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism as well. The usual approaches of modern scholars of Buddhism are important but severely limited to examining a secondary level of Buddhist discourse, that is, the area of philosophy and doctrine. Buddhists have long insisted that the primary experience — and experience is primary — is that of meditation and practice; but scholars have been reluctant to examine the resulting visions *as visions* rather than as ideas, in part because of a lack of adequate terminology by which an examination may be carried out. The central focus of this study is on the role of fantasy, dreams, and visions, terms which in ordinary usage have a certain pejorative nuance. In order to clarify what I mean when I say that Mahāyāna Buddhism is a fantasy, and that Myōe was a keeper of dreams, it is necessary to begin with the definitions of key terms' (p.1).

Professor Tanabe defines his key terms partly in reference to the *Lotus Sūtra* (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, *Myōhōrengekyō*), the scripture most influential in the history of East Asian Buddhism, and one on which he and his wife have already written extensively². But the focus of Chapter One is the *Garland Sūtra*, the basic scripture of Myōe's Kegon sect and 'primarily an account of fabulous visions backed by an ancient legacy of visions going back to Śākyamuni himself' (p.11). The version is presumably the eight fascicle Chinese translation (p.23) by Śikṣānanda, tr. ca 695-704 (T 279).

Here is probably as good a place as any to voice one of my few reservations about a book which I think is a splendid contribution to Buddhist studies. Actually, it is not so much a reservation about this particular work as my belief that scholars would significantly further our understanding of Buddhism if they

² George J. Tanabe, Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds. *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (Honolulu 1989); Willa J. Tanabe, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra* (New York and Tokyo 1988).

were to strive for a more-or-less common vocabulary of vernacular equivalents for titles and technical terms. Some words resist easy translation — *nirvāṇa*, and (for many) *dharma*. Others present less of a problem. And there is the related issue of a generally-accepted system of identification, such as we have for every musical composer of note. For many titles in the Sino-Japanese Canon the numbering system of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (T), or *Issaikyō*, is useful, although it could be extended and improved.

What I think could easily enough be referred to as the *Garland Sūtra* — just as we refer to the *Lotus Sūtra* — is known to us in three Chinese translations of the Avatamsakasūtra: 1. T 278 in 60 fascicles tr. by Buddhahadra, ca 418-420; 2. T 279 in 80 fascicles tr. by Śikṣānanda, ca 695-704; and 3. T 293 in 40 fascicles (sometimes known as the Gaṇḍavyūha) tr. by Prajñā, ca 795-810. Leaving aside the alternative titles for these in both the Chinese and Japanese readings, they are commonly known as the *Hua-yen ching* (C., *Hua Yan Jing* in the Pinyin romanisation) and *Kegonkyō* (J.). English renderings range from the *Flower Wreath Sūtra*, *Flower Garland Sūtra*, *Flower Ornament Scripture* (Cleary), and now the *Sūtra of Miscellaneous Flowers* (Tanabe, p.27). Moreover, many authors refuse to identify specifically which translation is under discussion. Is it any wonder that the casual reader in Buddhism is totally bewildered before even getting started? Could we perhaps arrive at some consensus on, say, *Garland Sūtra* — since a garland is more-or-less a 'flower wreath', a 'flower garland', a 'flower ornament' and also 'miscellaneous flowers'? In any case, neither the *Lotus* nor the *Garland* sūtras are part of the southern canon, however prominent they may be in the north, and the lack of communication between the two areas may be conspicuous, but perhaps not all that surprising.

Tanabe's defence of Myōe as 'dreamkeeper' of the 'fabulous visions' of the *Garland Sūtra* and of the 'fantasy' which is Mahāyāna Buddhism has antecedents in earlier analyses of the northern tradition which are easily dismissed or forgotten by those of us raised in religious traditions which generally stress the historical, literal, 'concrete' fact. Dr Johnson was neither the first

nor the last to kick stones. But almost half a century ago Conze remarked on differing modes of belief within Buddhism which are consonant with Tanabe's argument:

'Aksobhya [J. Ashuku] and Amitabha [Amida], Avalokitesvara [Kannon] and Manjusri [Monju], all the celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of this [new Mahāyāna] school are, however, obviously productions of the mind, and without any historical or factual basis. It is not easy to understand that the Mahayanists could admit this, as they did, and yet deny that these new saviours were mere creatures, nay figments, of the imagination, subjective and arbitrary inventions. It is impossible to explain their attitude by the absence of an historical sense generally found among Hindus, since we know that the Indian Buddhists of the Hinayana used to argue that they could not believe in the celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana because there was no evidence of their actual existence.

... in religion, one type of mind requires an actual historical fact to base its belief on, while another regards the productions of the creative mythological imagination as in no way inferior to the products of human history. . . The mythological school regards the mythological concept as the essential thing. Whether it is embodied, or not, in a person in history appears as a quite incidental and trivial detail. The names of Amitabha, etc., may be invented, but the reality behind them, the Absolute, is there all the time³. [For those concerned with the reification issue, may I propose substituting Dharmakāya for 'Absolute'.]

The period of social and political upheaval from late Heian through early Kamakura also saw the beginning of a major re-orientation within Japanese Buddhism which defined the in-

3 Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Oxford 1951, and later reprints), pp.150-1; see also pp.184-5, for the same notion in his discussion of Tantra — represented in Japan by Shingon esotericism, which Myōe incorporated into his religious practice.

stitution as we know it today. But only gradually would the new Pure Land, Zen and Nichiren movements supplant the old schools of Nara, as well as Heian's Tendai and Shingon, in spite of the dramatic break described by sectarian histories, which also tend to extol the new at the expense of the old.

Hōnen's promulgation of the 'sole practice' invocation of the name of Amida Buddha (*senju nembutsu*) in 1175 is commonly recognised as marking the decisive shift from traditional Pure Land practice to the new focus of what would become the powerful Jōdo and Jōdo Shinshū sects. Hōnen's 'Collection of Passages [bearing on the Original Vow of Amida]' (*Senchaku- [Hongan nembutsu]shū*), written ca 1198 but not made public until after his death in 1212, is his basic position paper. Myōe immediately criticised the *Senchakushū* with his 'Attack on the Bad Vehicle' (*Zaijarin*, 1212), followed by the 'Record of Moral Adornment' (*Shōgonki*, 1213). Obviously, crucial issues were at stake.

Those interested in the fundamental issues underlying Hōnen's clash with the established sects will be fascinated by Professor Tanabe's detailed analysis of Hōnen's argument in the *Senchakushū*, Myōe's violent reaction in the *Zaijarin*, and additional counter-replies, including Shinran's landmark *Kyōgyō-shinshō* ('Doctrine, Practice, Faith, Realisation', 1224) in Chapter Four, 'In Defense of Vision'. Neither the *Senchakushū* nor the *Zaijarin* have been translated as yet into English, and Tanabe's is the most lucid and balanced discussion I have seen of this major confrontation in the reshaping of Kamakura Buddhism.

'From start to finish, the *Senchakushū* reiterates a single theme through the process of moving from traditional texts to bold interpretations, the radicality of which lay not in what he recommended (the *nembutsu*) but in what he rejected (all other practices). To support his exclusive teaching, Hōnen drew upon scriptures which praised the *nembutsu* as best and concluded that choosing it necessarily meant rejecting all others. To pass from praise to exclusion could be seen as a smooth and plausible transition of meaning from "best" to "no other". Or that same movement in the argument could be regarded as a rough leap in logic, unjustifiable for supposing that

choosing (*chaku*) is a synonym of rejecting (*sha*). Given this range of different understandings, it is not surprising that Hōnen's arguments struck some as convincingly sound and others as outrageously faulty' (Tanabe, p.95).

Myōe's rebuttal is based mainly on his defence of the traditional Mahāyāna notion of the need for the 'aspiration for enlightenment' (*bodaishin*), which he criticised Hōnen for rejecting. For Myōe, '... aspiration to enlightenment is absolutely necessary not only as the cause of rebirth⁴ [in Amida's Pure Land] but as the cause for the mind's perception, even more, *the mind's creation, of the pure land, which is nothing but a product of transformed and transforming consciousness. . . The pure land is not a far away place to go after death, but a reality of the mind created by the force of fantasy. . .*' (pp.97-8; parentheses and italics mine; cf. the Conze citation above). The *nembutsu* meditation is not the exclusive way, but merely one of a variety of possible devices used to achieve this. In this contention Myōe was perfectly consistent with Kegon, Shingon, Tendai and the other schools of the older Buddhism. And Myōe's fantasies, far from being symptoms of a diseased mental state, are part and parcel of a coherent system of religious thought and practice.

Chapter Five discusses Myōe's activities in his later years, his views on Kegon thought, examples of his poetry and a discussion of his writings. Finally, in Chapter Six (pp.159-98), we arrive at the 'Dream Diary' (*Yume no ki*) itself, a rather slight work

4 Having been admonished some years ago by a distinguished scholar that one should speak of 'rebirth' (*rinne*) within the Six Paths of transmigration but of 'birth' (*ōjō*) in Amida's Pure Land, I cannot resist calling attention to this distinction whenever the occasion arises. Throughout *Dreamkeeper* Tanabe employs the older usage of 'rebirth' for *ōjō* and, in his defence, I should point out that Nakamura's *Bukkyōgo daijiten* does give examples in which *ōjō* is simply used as the equivalent of *rinne*. But since one of the characteristics of Amida's Pure Land is that there is no backsliding, no re-birth from there to the Six Paths, it may be a distinction worth encouraging. And, indeed, English translators seem increasingly to choose 'birth' for *ōjō*.

considering that it was composed over a period of three decades until a few years before Myōe's death. These 'dreams' are not the products of sleep but of a meditative state of mind, and so might also be called visions or dream-visions (p.12). They were experiences which he valued for their own sake, rather than to be probed for some ulterior message or other. Myōe himself seldom interpreted his dreams, and Tanabe is content to restrict his own comments to the rationale for such experience without attempting to second guess his author. Let the reader make of them what he will.

I think that most readers will find this study as intriguing as I did, somewhat to my surprise, since I opened the book expecting a straightforward, contemporary, psychological profile of an eccentric Kamakura recluse. Instead, Professor Tanabe has skilfully used Myōe to introduce us to any number of provocative ideas about the very nature of religious discourse and understanding.

But I wonder what Buddhaghosa would have made of Myōe?

Robert E. Morrell

Wisdom Beyond Words: Sense and Non-Sense in the Buddhist Prajnaparamita (sic) Tradition. Sangharakshita. Windhorse Publications, Glasgow 1993. 295 pp. £9.95.

This work consists of edited transcripts of seminars held at various times by Sangharakshita for members of the FWBO on three of the Prajñāpāramitā texts: the *Heart Sūtra* (Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra), the *Diamond Sūtra* (Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra) and the *Ratnagaṇa-saṃcayagāthā*. (We may note in passing Sangharakshita's erroneous assertion (p.17) that all the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras were composed in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit¹.) The versions of the texts referred to are in each case Ed-

1 Conze remarks in the Preface to his translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (*The*

ward Conze's translations; and use is made also of Conze's commentarial material. The bibliography refers to a number of other works, including Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's *Heart of Wisdom* and Donald Lopez's *The Heart Sutra Explained*, but the exegesis is very much in the Conzean tradition.

The book itself is well produced, although one might have expected Windhorse, as a branch, presumably, of the FWBO's 'Right Livelihood' movement, to prefer something more environmentally friendly than rather glossy stock used here.

The work is light on scholarly apparatus: the index runs to five pages and the bibliography to two (omitting the works of a number of authors referred to in the text); while the notes are for the most part references, which are not cited with any rigour.

Sangharakshita cannot resist attacking his *bête noire*, the Theravāda: 'Zen and Tibetan practitioners are just as likely to be narrow-minded, dogmatic, bigoted and literalistic as any Theravādin' (p.35); and 'The Theravādins are quite willing to teach you, but only on their own rigid terms' (p.226). Buddhist literature of virtually all periods, of course, provides ample precedent for the belittlement of practitioners of other schools; and Western Buddhists have already shown themselves adept at preserving this tradition. It is distressing to see a Western Buddhist teacher encouraging rather than censuring such tendencies which, moreover, sit poorly with the text's subject matter.

Less offensive, although no less irrelevant to the book's subject, are lightweight asides such as 'Tibetan Buddhists tend to be rather intellectual' (p.34); '. . . Mongolian monks . . . tend to be hot-tempered', whereas 'the Sinhalese are always good company — jolly good fellows, you might say', and 'the Chinese and Japanese monks . . . are often very cold' (p.226). While such observations are unexceptionable in the less demanding types of discussion, they hardly merit preservation in print, and do not contribute to an understanding of *prajñāpāramitā*. They are not unrepresentative,

Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary (Bollinas 1975, p.xi), 'In its language our Sutra is almost pure Sanskrit'.

however, of the intellectual tenor of the work.

As an edited transcript, the text is not couched in the meticulously elegant prose which is Sangharakshita's hall-mark, although echoes of his style can be heard, and the English is for the most part of a reasonable standard. There are, however, occasional solecisms, such as 'orientated' (p.71), and the unreflecting reproduction of Conze's ungrammatical 'Thus have I heard at one time' (p.67). More objectionable is the patronising tone which appears from time to time: the reader is reminded, for example, that the Buddha did not hire a hall when he wanted to give a talk (p.67) and that there were no televisions in ancient India (p.67); a definition is given of the word 'pseudonymous' (p.68), and so on — the effect is reminiscent of a Sunday-school teacher addressing a class of ill-educated and slightly backward pre-adolescents.

The language of the book is open to more serious criticism in another respect, namely Sangharakshita's use of the word 'wisdom'. Sangharakshita himself broaches this topic:

The word *prajñā* has a precise and quite distinctive meaning. . . [it] is not just knowledge; it is supreme and even superlative knowledge, knowledge *par excellence*, knowledge with a capital K. . . *Prajñā* means knowledge of reality; it means knowledge of things as they really are, in their ultimate depth, their ultimate transcendental dimension (p.11).

In view of that 'precise and quite distinctive meaning', and given the well-stocked vocabulary at his disposal and the care with which he generally employs it, one might reasonably have expected Sangharakshita to dispense with the vague and woolly 'wisdom', which is not entirely inadequate, but also commonly used to 'translate' other terms, notably *jñāna*. Sangharakshita is clearly aware of at least some of the fora in which the term has been discussed, for on p.186, he refers to Guenther's definition of *prajñā* as 'analytical appreciative understanding' (although the source is not acknowledged)². As used in an earlier non-practising

2 Guenther's terminology, of course, is characterised by a high degree of dynamism — in one of his more recent publications, *Meditation Differently*

generation of Buddhist scholars to whom the experiential dimension of Buddhist terminology was a closed book, 'wisdom' is perhaps forgivable; but it is time, particularly in the climate of search for adequate English equivalents of Buddhist lexis, to abandon the word.

Another linguistic difficulty concerns mantra. Although Sangharakshita is at pains to point out (p.31) that mantras are untranslatable, he offers in full Conze's woeful 'translation' of the *prajñāpāramitā* mantra (pp.31-2). He resists, however, any explanation of what a mantra actually is: 'A mantra is a sort of sacred utterance — one can't really offer any more explanation of it than that' (p.31). This is lame indeed. While the essence of mantra is certainly as closed to definition as a mantra itself, some notion of what is involved is not so entirely beyond the reach of language that the attempt at explanation must be renounced altogether. Tarthang Tulku, for example, writes in 'healing through Mantra', *Gesar* IV, Winter 1987, p.2):

'Some mantras have no conceptual meaning, they do not call forth predetermined responses. When we chant a mantra our mind and senses are freed from the need to respond in certain restrictive ways; we are open to new, exceptional experiences; we are free to transcend habitually oriented reflexes. Mantra may seem as a door which opens the depth of experience'.

While not a definition of mantra, this is at least a viable description of the experience of mantra practice. One is tempted to conclude that Sangharakshita has here confused the term with its referents.

(Delhi 1992), he renders *shes rab* (= *prajñā*) as 'appreciative acumen' (p.40), while in earlier works (e.g. *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*, Boulder 1969), he has 'intelligence' (p.40 [on the same page, he describes the translation 'wisdom' as 'a sort of wishful thinking']). 'Analytical appreciative understanding' appears in what might be called 'middle Guenther', e.g. 'The Levels of Understanding in Buddhism' in *Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective* (Emeryville 1977), p.63.

(Further incidental material on mantra appears later: the Padmasambhava mantra — which is given in the startlingly macaronic form *om āḥ hūm jetsun guru padma siddhi hūm* — is, we are told, 'usually recited more loudly' than the Tārā mantra. This 'does not make it weaker than the Padmasambhava mantra' although 'it is really a mistake to think you can express the spiritual vigour of the Padmasambhava mantra by shouting and roaring' (p.206; all of which can only be described as risible.)

On its ostensible subject matter, the text offers little worthy of note, consisting as it does largely of a restatement of standard *prajñāpāramitā* commentarial material, liberally illustrated by anecdote, asides of the calibre already noted, and curiously assorted references to the Bible and sundry works of English literature. The Editor's Preface warms us up by recalling that as a result of one of these seminars, '... it seemed that people could not even be persuaded to take the rubbish out without feeling personally inspired to do so' (p.3), but the text fails to live up to the implied promise — certainly this reviewer noted no decrease in his already strong disinclination to discharge his household duties.

All in all, this volume is remarkable only for its superficiality. It will be of no interest to the scholarly community; and the reader who seeks deeper understanding of the *prajñāpāramitā* teachings at a non-specialist level is already well — and far better — catered for elsewhere.

Hamish Gregor

Meditation. Sogyal Rinpoche. Rider, London 1994. 90 pp. (+ 2 pp. Notes). £6.99.

Mettā. Loving kindness in Buddhism. Khun Sujin Boriharnwanaket. Translated from the original Thai by Nina von Gorkom. Triple Gem Press, London 1995. 120 pp. £7.95.

The idea of reviewing these two books together came quite naturally to mind on reading them because, taken in conjunction, they highlight two current trends in the presentation of the Dhamma in the West: what one might call, respectively, the re-

assuring and the uncompromising approached.

Sogyal Rinpoche's *Meditation* exemplifies the former. Everything about it is designed to soothe and reassure the reader. Its format and make-up, to begin with: a handy pocket-size volume, with only 90 small pages of text (being in fact an extract from the author's major work *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*), printed in large, well-spaced type and handsomely bound in hard covers with a shiny, red and gold dust jacket bearing the, to my mind, rather twee proclamation: 'A Little Book of Wisdom'.

Then the contents: starting straight off with a comforting phrase about 'bringing the mind home' (p.1) and closing with the assurance that 'to embody the transcendent is why we are here' (p.90). In between, a clear, straightforward introduction to the basic conception and practice of meditation according to dzogchen, the primary teaching of the Nyingmapa school in Tibetan Buddhism. The essential tenet of which is that the mind is naturally pure, and that this needs only to be recognised for the meditator to realise his/her buddha nature, i.e. (according to the Mahāyāna) the true, immutable and eternal nature of all beings. As Sogyal Rinpoche puts it: 'we and all sentient beings fundamentally have the buddha nature as our incarnate essence' (p.14), and 'The very nature of the mind is such that if you only leave it in its unaltered and natural state, it will find its true nature, which is bliss and clarity' (p.57).

The meditative way to achieve this is to avoid trying too hard. Just 'bring your mind home, and release, and relax' (p.22 - some techniques to this effect are outlined). Attractive advice to presumably TV-conditioned, shopping-mall geared Western consumers with a minute attention span and a large dose of anxiety just below the surface.

But how far can it really get them? Not very, I would say. Of course, it *can* produce a psychotherapeutic effect in calming agitated minds and achieving degrees of mental peace and balance, but that, I would submit, is all. Far from negligible, certainly, but well short of the development of insight necessary to bring about the extinction of suffering.

Now this is not just a matter of bland fare for weak Western stomachs. The problem, and of course it is a major issue, is

inherent in the oldest Tibetan tradition itself, and indeed in manifestations of the Mahāyāna generally. The development in a variety of ways (some more radical, others less so) of the popular Mahāyāna concept of a universal, eternal buddha nature which is both immanent and transcendent results in something indistinguishable, to all practical purposes, from the God of theistic religions. This, in its turn, opens up the whole prospect of the operation of divine grace, the efficacy of prayer, the intercession of heavenly powers, and so on.

An extreme and, to my mind, comic, not to say pathetic, example of the easy-way-out reliance on the divine can be found on p.51 of Sogyal Rinpoche's book, where he approvingly quotes a statement by another master, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, to the effect that Padmasambhava (venerated as the founder of the Nyingmapa school in the eighth century CE) 'has the power to give his blessing instantly to whoever prays to him, and whatever we may pray for, he has the power to grant our wish immediately'. I fail to see any difference between this and, for instance, the Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Buddha called it *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*, clinging to mere rules and ritual, and classified it as one of the first three fetters to be got rid of on the way to enlightenment.

No doubt this kind of thing can be very reassuring and consoling to people in all sorts of trouble, but has little to do with the Enlightened One's constant injunction to strive with diligence to achieve liberating insight through one's own effort. And, as I said before, it is at best a palliative of suffering, but not the cure.

* * *

Let us now turn to the example of the uncompromising approach: *Mettā. Loving kindness in Buddhism* is *prima facie* a work of considerable interest, not only for its contents, which consist in an elucidation of the basic Buddhist virtue of *mettā* (loving kindness, or universal love) on the strict basis of the Pāli scriptures and their ancient commentaries, but also because of the manner in which it came into being.

The Thai author, Khun¹ Sujin Boriharnwanaket, is a laywoman who for over twenty-five years has been giving public lectures on the Dhamma with ever increasing success. People in all walks of life flock to her talks, which have been so popular (as the Introduction informs us) they are the subject of regular broadcasts, so that 'her lectures can be heard on the radio, morning and evening' and not only in all parts of Thailand, but also in neighbouring countries, such as Laos, Malaysia and Cambodia (p.2).

The present volume is a compilation of a series of lectures held at Wat Bovoranives in Bangkok, including also some question-and-answer sessions and followed by a brief anthology of texts from the Pāli Sutta Piṭaka and a glossary of Pāli terms. The lectures themselves include frequent references to, and quotations from, both the canonical texts and some of the commentaries, in particular the commentary to the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, and also from Buddhaghosa's comprehensive manual Visuddhimagga. The translation from Thai into English has been carried out by a well-known Western meditation teacher, Mrs Nina van Gorkom, who is herself a distinguished author of books on Theravāda Buddhism². Thus, all conditions seem to be present for a reliable handbook on *mettā* which could be truly helpful to the Western readers for whom it is specifically intended.

In fact, Khun Sujin does cover the subject with admirable thoroughness: the nature of loving kindness, how it is cultivated, how to practise it mentally, in one's action and in one's speech, its benefits to oneself and to others, and its inestimable value as 'the foundation of the world' (p.101) for all beings. And she does so in commendably sober language, free from all taint of inspirational rhetoric.

For all that, I fear many of the readers whom the translator

1 'Khun', we are told, is the Thai equivalent of 'Ms' or 'Mr'.

2 *Buddhism in Daily Life* (1989 and 1992), *Abhidhamma in Daily Life* (1992), *The World in the Buddhist Sense* (1993), *The Buddha's Path* (1994), all published by Triple Gem Press, London.

has in mind, and especially 'those who begin to study the Buddhist teachings' (p.2) may find this book rather discouraging. There is a culture gap which has not been satisfactorily bridged. Not that van Gorkom is not aware of the problem. On the contrary, in her Introduction she explains that the book is 'a free translation adapted to "Western people" with some changes, additions and footnotes' (*ibid.*), and proceeds 'in order to help the reader to understand this book', to 'explain a few notions . . . which are essential for understanding *mettā* and for its application in daily life' (*ibid.*). To this purpose she provides brief explanations of key Pāli terms, specifying that she uses these terms in the original throughout the book 'because it is useful to learn some of them', and because 'the English equivalents are often unsatisfactory since these stem from Western philosophy and therefore give an association of meaning different from the meaning they have in the Buddhist teachings' (p.10). This is certainly very true and, in fact, an accurate knowledge of terminology is essential for anyone seriously intending to study and practise the Dhamma³. The net result, however, is in this case an abundance of Pāli terms which can be rather bewildering to the newcomer. Let me quote an example at random:

'They [one's *cittas*] must be known as they really are. *Kusala citta* and *akusala citta* have different characteristics. Even if there is *akusla* of a slight degree, that moment is completely different from the moments of attachment. If *sati* and *paññā* do not arise one cannot know when there is *lobha* and when there is *mettā*. If one does not know their different characteristics one may unknowingly develop *akusala* instead of *mettā* since one takes for *kusala* what is in fact *akusala*. Therefore a precise knowledge of the different characteristics of *lobha* and *mettā* is necessary' (p.17).

The problem is compounded by frequent quotations from Pāli

3 Actually, the interests of serious study are best served by learning, not merely a string of terms, but the language (Pāli is not particularly difficult), thus gaining direct access to the whole wealth of original texts.

commentarial literature. As anyone who has delved into them knows, the old Pāli commentaries are heavy going. They usually take the form of word-for-word exegeses of the discourses (*suttas*) and of the philosophical texts (*abhidhamma*) in the Canon, each word being elucidated mainly by way of paraphrase and/or (often fanciful) etymology. Often, too — minute grammatical points are invested with elaborate philosophical meaning. By way of example, we may continue with the conclusion of the passage just quoted:

... is necessary. The *Atthasālinī* (Book II, Part II, Chapter 2) explains about the many aspects of lobha in the *Dhammasaṅgani*. We read about «delight»:

"Delight refers to this that by greed beings in any existence feel delight, or greed itself is delighting in. In «passionate delight» we get the first term combined with delight. Craving once arisen to an object is «delight»; arising repeatedly, it is «passionate delight» . . ." (p.17).

Now all this is certainly useful to the scholar working to perfect his understanding of an original text, but it is rather confusing and, consequently, off-putting to the ordinary person trying to assimilate the basics of the Dhamma. In the West, that is. In a country like Thailand, where Buddhist ideas and terminology are part of everyone's daily background, and formal recitation of the texts still the traditional way of conveying learning, it poses no or little problem. As proven by the popularity of Khun Sujin's talks precisely among ordinary people.

Mrs van Gorkom was clearly in a dilemma. Her efforts to adapt the talks would have needed to be rather more radical to be truly successful. But then, how much of Khun Sujin's original flavour would have remained? So, a compromise was painstakingly worked out, and it is unsatisfactory. Not helped, either, by van Gorkom's not very easy handling of the English language, which I suspect accounts for Khun Sujin's clearly unpretentious style sounding merely pedestrian in translation.

The result is a book which, in substance, is comprehensive and unexceptionable, and should be useful to seasoned students of the Dhamma who will not be put off by the difficulties just illustrated. Because of these difficulties of form, however, it is likely

to prove rather less attractive as an introduction for beginners.

* * *

So, in the end, neither of these two little books — both offered with the best of intentions — seems likely to be very effective in achieving its stated purpose. One is too attractive, the other not attractive enough. *Meditation*, because of its conceptual framework and its reassuring, this-won't-hurt-a-bit kind of tone, while initially very easy to get into, can hardly be conducive to anything more than, at best, partial or transitory mental relief. *Metā*, despite its undeniable qualities, is presented in a rigid, awkward manner, strongly conditioned by its original cultural context, and is therefore more likely than not to discourage the very readers for whom it is intended.

In terms of skilful means, both fall well short of the ideal.

But then the ideal, as the Buddha always said, is the middle way, which takes care to avoid both extremes. And that is not an easy path to follow.

Amadeo Solé-Leris

The Awakening of the West. The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture: 543 BCE - 1992. Stephen Batchelor. Aquarian (HarperCollins), London 1994. xvi, 416 pp. £12.99.

The author has already written several books about Buddhism and is also known as a translator and editor of other Buddhist works, steeped mainly in the Tibetan tradition. Some readers may know him from his televised visit to the Holy Island which is a project sponsored by the Tibetan centre Samye-ling based in Scotland.

Although conceived as an introduction to Buddhist thought and practice with an overview of the major Buddhist traditions active in the West, the book clearly reflects the author's Tibetan leaning, and it has the blessing of the Dalai Lama. It is unusual in that it presents its ideas through narratives about the lives of important or known personalities of the respective Buddhist traditions or schools, thereby enhancing its readability. The author

moves freely from historical times to contemporary scenes, thus demonstrating the diversity as well as continuity of Buddhist teachings and institutions and the forms they take in their encounters with the West.

These encounters started as early as in the time of the Buddha, since already then there were Greeks living in India and the Buddha mentioned them in one of his discourses as an example of a community without fixed castes when refuting the brahminical teaching about castes as divinely ordained. Then came Alexander's invasion, soon followed by Aśoka's patronage of Buddhism and his missions directed also to Western Greek territories, and later the establishment of Graeco-Indian kingdoms, a period which gave us the *Milindapañha*, the book of Menander's questions to Nāgasena. Greek Gnosticism bears clear traces of Buddhist influence (especially through Basilides) and so does Manichaeism whose perceptions 'affected the entire moral climate of Christianity, from the early Roman church to the puritanism of Calvin'. The first part of the book finishes with a chapter on the Bhikkhu Sangha with Ajahn Chah as its focus.

The second part has as its starting-point Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, proceeds to Padmasambhava and contrasts the Mongolian invasions of Europe with the internal tolerance of different religions at the Mongolian court and their eventual adoption of Buddhism from Tibet. In reviewing the history of Tibetan Karmapas and their schools, the author found the opportunity to relate the sad story of Chögyam Trungpa, the 'stray dog' in the *tulku* tradition, and his Vajradhātu organisation, with members infected with AIDS by his successor. Dōgen and the Sōtō Zen tradition as well as Nichiren also get an airing, with Jiyou Kennett and Soka Gakkai's Ikeda as their contemporary examples.

The third part surveys the Asian sojourn of Jesuits, Francis Xavier in particular; Tsongkhapa, and then Hakuin in connection with the Rinzai Zen tradition. The modern encounter of Buddhism with Europe in the fourth part, starting with Eugène Burnouf, lists a galaxy of early and later scholars, philosophers from Schopenhauer to Nietzsche to the deconstructionalist Derrida, Theosophists and Western Buddhist revivalists. But it maintains that Buddhism can truly flourish only where there is a

spiritual community, so the last part is dedicated again to the theme of the Sangha — the history of its Buryat branch and its persecution under the Soviets, Alexander David-Neel's encounters with its Tibetan branch and Sangharakshita's adaptation of it as the Western Buddhist Order, as well as with centres in the West disseminating the *satipaṭṭhāna* method of meditation.

The Epilogue contains an interesting description of the 1992 Congress of the European Buddhist Union in Berlin, and finishes at the Buddhist Retreat Centre in Ixopo, South Africa, not far from the first Buddhist stūpa on the African continent on a site overlooking Zululand and chosen by Lama Govinda during his visit in 1972.

This is an unusual book. It is packed with fascinating facts and stories which every reader will enjoy. It is not a scholarly work, but it does give references for many of its points, assertions, narratives and quotations, so it can be useful also to scholars wishing to pursue some of its casually thrown-up themes. The bibliography is quite extensive and the index reasonably helpful. My main objection is best expressed by the author's words, introducing his Glossary of Technical Terms: 'Since this book is intended for a non-specialist readership I have omitted all diacritical marks on Sanskrit, Pali and Japanese terms. Likewise Tibetan terms have been transcribed phonetically rather than scholastically. For uniformity and simplicity, I have tended to use Sanskrit rather than the Pali equivalent — even when discussing Theravada Buddhism'. When will authors of popular books stop underestimating the intelligence of non-specialist readers, their need for accuracy and their ability to absorb information on the correct spelling and pronunciation of Eastern religious terminology? Phonetic transcriptions in popular books differ widely and only the adoption of correct transliteration with pronunciation in brackets can lead to unified practice. It is also the only way to help those who wish to involve themselves in deeper studies.

Karel Werner

Ed. Possibly the first Western portrayal of the Buddha is reproduced on the book's front cover. Painted by Odilon Redon, c. 1905, the original hangs in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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