

# THE EIGHT CLASSES OF FACTORS FAVORABLE TO THE NOBLE PATH & TWOFOLD EMPTINESS

Selected Sections from Chapters XXVIII, XXXII-XXXIV and XLVIII

of

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A.

## CHAPTER XXVIII: THE PERFECTION OF MEDITATION (DHYĀNA); F 984-1057

[k. 17, p. 180b]

### SŪTRA:

It is necessary to fulfill the perfection of meditation by basing oneself on the non-existence of distraction and of enjoyment (*dhyānapāramitā paripūrayitavya avikṣepaṇatām anāsvādanatām upādāya*).

AA.

### NECESSITY FOR MEDITATION; F 984-987

**ŚĀSTRA:** Question. – The rule for the bodhisattvas is to save all sentient beings; why do they keep out of the way in forests and swamps, solitudes and mountains, preoccupied only with themselves and abandoning sentient beings?

Answer. – Although the bodhisattvas keep out of the way of sentient beings physically, their mind never abandons them. In solitude (*śantavihāra*), they seek concentration (*samādhi*) and gain true discrimination (*bhūtaprajñā*) to save all sentient beings. When one takes a drug (*bhaiṣajya*) for health reasons, one temporarily interrupts family affairs; then when one's strength has been regained, one resumes one's affairs as before. The peace and quiet that the bodhisattvas take is of that nature. Through the power of meditation (*dhyāna*), they swallow the medicine of discrimination (*prajñā*); when they have obtained the power of the super-knowledges (*abhiññābala*), they return to people and, amongst them, become a father, mother, spouse or child, master, servant or leader of a school, god, human or even an animal; and they guide them with all sorts of teachings (*deśana*) and skillful means (*upāya*).

Furthermore, the bodhisattvas practice generosity (*dāna*), morality (*śīla*) and patience (*kṣānti*), three things that are called 'doors of merit' (*punṇadvāra*). For innumerable lifetimes they became [Brahmā], the king of gods [of the form realm] (*devarāja*), Śakra, the chief of gods [of the desire realm] (*devendra*), wheel-turning king (*cakravartin*), king of Jambudvīpa, and ceaselessly gave sentient beings garments made of the seven jewels (*saptaratnamaya vastra*). In the present birth and in <985> future births, they abundantly enjoy the five objects of desire (*pañcabhīḥ kāmaguṇaiḥ samarpito bhavati*). It is said in the *sūtra*: "The wheel-turning king<sup>1</sup> who [180c] has taught his people the ten good [actions], is later reborn in heaven." From birth to birth they work for the good (*hita*) of sentient beings and lead them to happiness (*sukha*). But this happiness is transitory (*anitya*); afterwards, one is again subject to suffering (*duḥkha*). Therefore the bodhisattvas produce a mind of great compassion (*mahākaruṇācittam utpādayati*), they want to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rājasūttanta* (*Saṃyutta*, V, p. 342; *Tsa a han*, T 99, no. 835, k, 30, p. 214a): *Rājā cakkavatti catunnaṃ dipānaṃ issariyādhipaccaṃ rajjaṃ kāretvā kāyassa bhedā parammaraṇā sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati devānaṃ Tāvatiṃsānaṃ sahaavyataṃ*: "At the dissolution of his body after death, a wheel-turning king who has exerted his sovereign power and his royalty over the four continents is reborn in a good destiny, in the god realm in the company of the Trāyastriṃśa gods."

benefit sentient beings by assuring the eternal happiness of *nirvāṇa* (*nityasukhanivāṇa*). This *nirvāṇa* of eternal happiness is the result of true discrimination (*bhūtaprajñā*), and true discrimination is the result of one-pointedness of the mind (*cittaikāgrya*) and of meditation (*dhyāna*). Light a lamp (*dīpa*): as bright as it may be, you cannot use it if you leave it in the full wind; put in a sheltered place, it will be very useful to you. It is the same for discrimination in a distracted mind (*vikṣiptacitta*): if the shelter of meditation (*dhyāna*) is absent, the discrimination may exist, but its usefulness will be very restricted. It is necessary to have meditation so that true discrimination can occur. This is why the bodhisattvas, while separating themselves from sentient beings and withdrawing into solitude (*śāntavihāra*), seek to obtain meditation. It is because meditation is pure that the discrimination is pure also. When the oil (*taila*) and the wick (*vartī*) are pure, the light of the lamp is equally pure. This is why those who want to attain pure discrimination practice meditation.

Moreover, when one is pursuing worldly business (*laukikārtha*) but one does not apply one's whole mind to it, the business does not succeed; then how [would one reach] very profound (*gambhīra*) Buddhist discrimination if one neglected meditation? Meditation is the collecting of the distracted mind (*vikṣiptacittasaṃgrahaṇa*). Distractions (*vikṣiptacitta*) whirl about more easily than the down-feathers of the wild goose (*sārasaloman*); if their flight is not restrained, their speed exceeds that of a hurricane; they are harder to contain than <986> a monkey (*markaṭa*); they appear and disappear more [quickly] than lightning (*vidyut*). If the characteristic of the mind is so incompressible, those who want to control it will not succeed in it without meditation. Some stanzas say:

Meditation (*dhyāna*) is the treasury (*kośa*) in which discrimination is kept.

It is the field of merit (*puṇyakṣetra*) of the qualities (*guṇa*).

Meditation is the pure water (*viśuddhajala*)

That can wash away the dust of desire (*rāgarajas*).

Meditation is the diamond armor (*vajravarmā*)

That stops the arrows of the defilements (*kleśeṣu*).

Even if one has not attained *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*),

One has already partially obtained it.

When one has the adamant concentration (*vajrasamādhi*),<sup>2</sup>

One breaks the mountain of the fetters (*saṃyojanagiri*),

One obtains the power of the six super-knowledges (*abhijñā*),

One is able to save innumerable sentient beings.

A heavy rain can penetrate

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<sup>2</sup> This concentration is produced when the practitioners abandon the ninth and last category of the defilements that ties them to the highest sphere of existence, the fourth formless absorption (*ārūpyasamāpatti*), also called *bhavāgra*.

The whirlwind of dust that hides the sun;

[Likewise,] meditation can dissipate

The wind of initial inquiry-investigation (*vitarka-vicāra*) that distracts the mind.

Finally, meditation is hard to obtain (*durlabha*); it is by means of sustained attention (*ekacitta*) and special effort, without slackening, that the meditator will succeed in acquiring it. If gods and seers (*ṛṣi*) do not succeed in obtaining it, what can be said then of ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) with lazy minds (*kusīdacitta*)?

[section omitted]

AB.

### **METHODS OF ACQUIRING MEDITATION; F 987-1023**

Question. – By what methods (*upāya*) is the perfection of meditation (*dhyānapāramitā*) attained?

Answer. – (1) By eliminating five objects, [namely, the five sensual pleasures or objects of desire], (2) by removing five things, [namely, the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*)], and (3) by applying five practices, [namely, the five factors (*dharma*)].

ABA.

### **FIRST METHOD: ELIMINATING THE SENSUAL PLEASURES;<sup>3</sup> F 987-1012**

How to eliminate the five objects? The five objects of desire (*pañcakāmaguṇanigarhaṇa*) should be condemned by saying: Alas! <988> Sentient beings are always tortured by the five objects of desire and nevertheless they seek them endlessly. Once obtained, the five objects of desire develop and progress like fever or an itch. The five objects of desire are useless like the bone gnawed by a dog; they foment contention (*vivāda*) like the meat over which birds are contending; they burn a man like the torch held against the wind; they harm a man like treading on a poisonous snake; they are futile (*abhūta*) like profit made in a dream; they are as short as a short-term loan.<sup>4</sup> Foolish people attach themselves to the five objects of desire and will arrive at their death without having rid themselves of them; because of them they will undergo

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is just an elaboration of canonical facts. For the early Buddhists, the practitioners who truly strive for perfection must banish from their mind all attachment to the five objects of desire. The passage “*Panc’ ime bhikkhave kāmaguṇā...*” that defines gratification (*assāda*) of the sensual pleasures, their danger (*ādinava*) and the means of escaping from them, is found in many places in the scriptures: cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 85-87, 92, 454; II, p. 42; III, p. 114; *Āṅguttara*, III, p. 411; IV, p. 415, 430, 449, 458; *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 25, p. 584c; *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 12, p. 604c.

<sup>4</sup> To the *bhikṣu* Ariṭṭha, the Buddha compared the desires to a skeleton (*aṭṭhikaṅkala*), a piece of rotting meat (*maṃsapesi*), a grass torch (*tiṇ’ ukkā*), a pit of glowing charcoal (*aṅḡarakāsu*), a dream (*supina*), borrowed goods (*yācita*), a poisonous fruit tree (*rukkhaphala*), a slaughterhouse (*asisūna*), a sword stake (*sattisūla*), a snake’s head (*sappasira*): cf. *Vinaya*, II, p. 25; *Majjhima*, I, p. 130; *Āṅguttara*, III, p. 97. – The Chinese sources also mention this conversation with Ariṭṭha: *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 54, p. 763c; *Wou fen liu*, T 1421, k. 8, p. 56c; *Mo ho seng k’i liu*, T 1425, k. 17, p. 367a; *Sseu fen liu*, T 1428, k. 17, p. 682a; *Che song liu*, T 1435, k. 15, p. 106a; *Ken pen chouo...* *p’i nai ye*, T 1442, k. 39, p. 840b.



immense sufferings in their future birth. A madman who coveted a beautiful fruit climbed up a tree, ate the fruit and refused to come down; the tree was cut down, and when he fell out of it, he broke his head and died painfully. [The same fate is reserved for those who covet the five objects of desire]. – Besides, these five objects of desire last only an instant: when the pleasure [that they bring] has disappeared, there is great suffering. These objects are like a knife coated with honey (*madhvāliptaśāstra*): those who lick it covet the sweetness [of the honey] and are unaware of the knife that cuts their tongue. The five objects of desire brings man close to the level with the animals; the wise man who knows them can remove them.

[omitted section]

Those people are wise who condemn the sensual pleasures and are not attached to the five objects of desire, i.e.,

- (1) agreeable colors (*rūpa*), F 990-993
- (2) agreeable sounds (*śabda*), F 994
- (3) agreeable perfumes (*gandha*), F 994-998
- (4) agreeable tastes (*rasa*), F 998-1000
- (5) agreeable tangibles (*spraṣṭavya*), F 1000-1012.

It is through seeking meditation (*dhyāna*) that one must reject all of that.

ABA.1.

### REJECTING AGREEABLE COLORS; F 990-993

How to reject colors [taken here in the sense of female or male beauty]? By considering the damage (*upaghāta*) done by color. When one becomes attached (*abhiniviśate*) to colors, the fire of the fetters (*saṃyojana*) burns one completely and consumes one's body like a fire that consumes gold and silver. Boiling broth and hot honey have color and taste, but they burn the body and burn the mouth; one must hurry to reject them: it is the same for attachment to beautiful colors and exquisite tastes.

Furthermore, the fact of loving or detesting depends on the person; color in itself is undetermined (*aniyata*). How do we know that? When we see a man or a woman whom we like at a distance, we experience feelings of joy and affection; when we see an enemy or adversary at a distance, we experience feelings of hatred and hostility; when we see a man who is indifferent to us, we experience neither joy nor hatred. If we want to expel this joy or this hatred, it is necessary to reject bad feelings and colors, abandon them together at the same time. When molten gold burns your body and you want to get rid of it, it is not possible just to want to remove the fire while keeping the gold; you must remove both the gold and the fire.

[omitted section]

It is for all these reasons that the objects of desire, 'colors' (*rūpakāmaguṇa*), are condemned.

ABA.2. **REJECTING AGREEABLE SOUNDS; F 994**

Why condemn sounds (*śabda*)? The characteristic of sounds is instability; once heard, they vanish. The madman (*mūḍha*) who does not know that sound is characterized by impermanence (*anityatva*), change (*pariṇamatva*) and disappearance (*hāni*), finds a futile pleasure in sounds (*ghoṣa*) and, when the sound has disappeared, he remembers it and becomes attached to it.

[omitted section]

The wise ones consider that sound arises and ceases from moment to moment (*kṣaṇakṣaṇam utpannaniruddha*), that the previous moment is not joined to the later moment and that there is no continuity (*prabandha*): knowing that, they do not experience any attachment (*abhiniveśa*) to sounds. If the music of the gods cannot trouble such wise ones, how could the human voice succeed in doing so?

It is for all these reasons that the objects of desire ‘sounds’ (*śabdakāmaguṇa*) are condemned.

ABA.3. **REJECTING AGREEABLE SMELLS; F 994-998**

Why condemn odors (*gandha*)? Some claim that to become attached to odors is a slight fault; but attachment to odors opens the door to the fetters (*saṃyojana*). Even if one has maintained discipline (*śīla*) for a hundred years, one moment is enough to violate it.

[omitted section]

It is for all these reasons that the objects of desire ‘perfumes’ (*gandhakāmaguṇa*) are condemned.

ABA.4. **REJECTING AGREEABLE TASTES; F 998-1000**

Why condemn tastes (*rasa*)? One must reason with oneself [and say]: Just by coveting exquisite tastes I will undergo all the sufferings; they will pour molten copper (*kvāthitatāmra*) into my mouth, I will swallow balls of burning iron (*ādiptāyoguḍa*). If I do not consider the nature of foods, feelings of gluttony will be established in me and I will fall into the level of the impure insects (*aśucikṛīma*).

[omitted section]

It is for all these reasons that objects of desire ‘tastes’ are condemned.

ABA.5. **REJECTING AGREEABLE TANGIBLES; F 1000-1012**

Why condemn tangibles (*sparṣṭavya*)? Tangibles are a flame that gives rise to all the fetters (*saṃyojana*); they are the root (*mūla*) that binds the mind. Why? The other four instincts [the need to see, to hear, to smell and to taste] are each limited to a part [of the body], but the instinct [for tangibles] is spread over the entire body consciousness (*kāyavijñāna*); its place of arising (*utpattisthāna*) being vast (*viśāla*), it produces a lot of passions (*saṅga*), and the attachment to which it leads is tenacious. How do we know that? If those who become attached to beauty [of

the body] contemplate the body's impurities which are thirty-six in number, they experience minds of disgust (*nirvedacitta*); on the other hand, if they become attached to [agreeable] tangibles, however much they know impurity, they will covet no less the gentleness or sweetness [of the tangibles]: to consider the impurity of the tangibles is of no use; this is why this instinct is so tenacious.

Furthermore, since it is so difficult to renounce it, one is always committing grave offenses because of it and one will fall into the hells (*niraya*). There are two kinds of hell, namely, cold water and burning fire. In these two kinds of hell, one will undergo punishment because of these kinds of bodily touch; the poison of the pain will take ten thousand forms. The tangibles are called the place of great darkness (*mahātamas*), the most dangerous path of all.

[omitted section]

It is for all these reasons that subtle objects of desires are condemned. <1013>

ABB.

## SECOND METHOD: REMOVING THE HINDRANCES;<sup>5</sup> F 1013-1020

Having thus condemned the five sensual pleasures, it is necessary to remove the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*):

- (1) the inclination for the objects of desire (*kāmacchanda*), F 1013-1015
- (2) malice (*vyāpāda*), F 1015-1017
- (3) lethargy-sleepiness (*styāna-middha*), F 1017
- (4) excitedness-regret (*auddhatya-kaukrtya*), F 1018
- (5) afflicted doubt (*vicikitsā*), F 1019-1020.

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<sup>5</sup> In order to succeed in the first stage of meditation, it is not enough to remove desires (*vivicc' eva kāmehi*). It is also necessary to distance oneself from bad factors (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*): the latter constitute the five hindrances to meditation (*dhyāna*), which are inclination for the objects of desire, malice, lethargy-sleepiness, excitedness and regret, afflicted doubt. Cf. *Digha*, I, p. 71, 246; II, p. 300; III, p. 234; *Majjhima*, I, p. 144; *Saṃyutta*, V, p. 60; *Āṅguttara*, III, p. 92; IV, p. 437; V, p. 207: *Pañca nīvaraṇāni: kāmacchandanivaraṇaṃ, vyāpādanīvaraṇaṃ, thinamiddhanivaraṇaṃ, uddhaccakukkuccanivaraṇaṃ vicikicchānīvaraṇaṃ*. – A canonical passage, endlessly repeated, praises the complete freedom of mind which the practitioners who have destroyed these hindrances, enjoy: cf. *Digha*, I, p. 71; *Majjhima*, I, p. 181, 269, 274, 347; III, p. 136; *Āṅguttara*, III, p. 92; IV, p. 437; V, p. 207: *So abhijjhaṃ (= kāmacchandaṃ) pahāya vigatābhijjhena cetasā viharati, abhijjhāya cittaṃ parisodheti. Vyāpādapadosaṃ pahāya avyāpānnacitto viharati, sabbapāṇabhūtahiitānukampī vyāpādapadosā cittaṃ parisodheti. Thinamiddhaṃ pahāya vigatathinamiddho viharati, ālokasaññi sato sampajāno thinamiddhā cittaṃ parisodheti. Uddhaccakukkuccaṃ pahāya anuddhato viharati, ajjhataṃ vūpasantacitto uddhaccakukkuccā cittaṃ parisodheti. Vicikicchāṃ pahāya tiṇṇavicikiccho viharati akathaṃkathī kusalesu dhammesu vicikicchāya cittaṃ parisodheti*.

It is these ideas that the Mppś develops here. They will be found in *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 38, p. 194c; k. 48, p. 249c; cf. *Kośa*, V, p. 98-100, a more scholarly explanation. For the Pāli sources, consult *Dhammasaṅghaṇi*, p. 204-205; *Atthasālini*, p. 380 seq.; S. Z. Aung, *Compendium*, p. 172.

ABB.1.

### REMOVING THE INCLINATION FOR THE OBJECTS OF DESIRE; F 1013-1015

Those in the grip of the inclination for the objects of desire (*kāmacchanda*) stray far from the noble path. Why? Because the inclination for the objects of desire is the basis for all sorts of troubles and disturbances. If the mind becomes attached to the inclination for the objects of desire, it is not possible to come near the noble path. In order to remove this inclination for the objects of desire, some stanzas say:

How can monastics (*māgapraviṣṭa*), modest and reserved,  
Carrying the begging-bowl and beneficial to sentient beings,  
Still tolerate impure inclination for the objects of desire  
And be immersed into the five affections?

The soldier wearing armor, bearing a sword and a club,  
But who retreats and flees from the enemy, <1014>  
This soldier is only a coward,  
Despised and ridiculed by everyone.

The monastics (*bhikṣu*) who, as mendicants,  
Have cut their hair and put on the robes (*kāṣāya*),  
But still let themselves be led by the horses of the five affections,  
They too gather only mockery. [184a]

If a person of distinction,  
Richly dressed and with body adorned  
Went to beg for clothes and food,  
He would gather only mockery from the people.

If monastics who have renounced ornaments,  
Scorning the body and concentrating their mind,  
Would nevertheless seek sensory pleasures,  
They too would gather only mockery.

Having renounced the five sense pleasures or objects of desire,  
Having rejected them, by refusing to pay attention to them,  
Why would they pursue them again  
Like a fool who returns to his own vomit?

Those who have inclination for the objects of desire  
Ignore their earlier vows;  
They no longer distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly;  
They throw themselves drunkenly into craving (*tṛṣṇā*).

Shame (*hri*), modesty (*apatrāpya*) and other respectable qualities,  
All of that has disappeared all at once;

They are no longer respected by the wise  
And are visited only by fools.

[Objects of] desire provoke suffering when one searches for them,  
Fear when they are possessed,  
Vexation and sorrow when they are lost;  
They do not entail a moment of happiness.

Such are the torments of [the objects] of desire!  
How can one escape them?  
By acquiring the happiness of meditation (*dhyāna*) and equipoise (*samāpatti*):  
Then one will no longer be deceived. <1015>

Attachment to sensual pleasures is insatiable,  
How can one put an end to them?  
If one acquires the meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*),  
These minds [of inclination for the objects of desire] disappear by themselves.

Attachment to [objects of] desire is unconscious;  
How can one become aware of it?  
By considering old age, sickness and death;  
Then one succeeds in getting out of the four abysses (??).

It is difficult to reject [objects of] desire;  
How can one remove them?  
If one can delight in the good factors (*dharma*)  
These [objects of] desire disappear by themselves.

[Objects of] desire are difficult to undo;  
How can one let go of them?  
By considering the body and perceiving its true characteristic;  
Then one is no longer bound by anything.

Considerations such as these  
Can extinguish the fire of the cravings:  
The jungle fire  
Cannot withstand a heavy rain.

It is for all these reasons that one removes the hindrance of inclination for the objects of desire (*kāmacchandanivaraṇa*).

#### ABB.2. REMOVING MALICE; F 1015-1017

The hindrance of malice (*vyāpādanivaraṇa*) is the origin of the loss of all good factors (*kuśaladharmahāni*), the cause of retrogressing into the unfortunate destinies (*durgati*), the enemy of all happiness (*sukha*), the great abductor of good minds (*kuśalacitta*), the reservoir of all kinds

of harmful talk (*pāruṣyavāda*). Therefore the Buddha addressed the following stanzas to a malicious disciple:

You must think and reflect  
On the obscene and vicious [character] of conception, [184b]  
On the dark suffering of the stay in the womb,  
On the hardships that accompany birth. <1016>

Those who, thinking about all that,  
Would not pacify their wrath [toward people],  
Are rightly considered  
As thoughtless individuals.

If the retribution for wrongs did not exist  
And if they were free of all reproach,  
People would still to be pitied.  
How much more so if they are struck by painful punishment?

In considering old age, sickness and death  
Which nobody can avoid,  
It is necessary to experience loving-kindness and compassion.  
Why should you distress them as well with your hatred?

Those who hate, rob and beat one another  
Undergo the poison of suffering.  
Why would a good man  
Further add to their torment?

One must always practice loving-kindness and compassion,  
Cultivate the good in a concentrated mind,  
Not nourish bad dispositions,  
Not torment anyone.

If one practices the law of the noble path diligently  
One will commit no harm.  
Good and bad are two opposing forces  
That clash with each other like water and fire.

When malice covers the mind  
One no longer distinguishes the beautiful from the ugly,  
One no longer separates good deeds from offences,  
One no longer fears the bad destinies.

One does not take into account the sufferings of others,  
One pays no attention to physical or mental fatigue.

The suffering that one has at first undergone oneself,  
One then extends it to others.

Those who want to destroy malice  
Should meditate on the minds of loving-kindness. <1017>  
Alone, a refugee in retreat,  
Stopping all activity, they will destroy the causes and conditions.

One should fear old age, sickness and death,  
Exclude the nine kinds of hatred.  
By meditating thus on loving-kindness  
One will succeed in destroying the poison of hatred.

It is for all these reasons that one removes the hindrance of malice (*vyāpādanivaraṇa*).

ABB.3.

### REMOVING LETHARGY-SLEEPINESS; F 1017

The hindrance of lethargy-sleepiness (*styānamiddha*) can destroy the threefold benefit of the present world: (i) the happiness of the sense pleasures or objects of desire (*kāma*), (ii) the happiness of wealth (*artha*) and (iii) merit (*punya*); it can destroy the definitive happiness (*niṣṭhāsukha*) of the present and the future life; it differs from death only by the presence of breath alone. Here are the stanzas that a Bodhisattva recited in order to rebuke a lazy disciple:

Get up! Don't keep on sleeping, cosseting your fetid body! It is impurities of all kinds that are called a person. If you were struck by serious illness, if an arrow was shot into your body, if all the sufferings were piled upon you, would you be able to sleep in peace?

If the entire world were burning with the fire of death and you were trying to escape from it, would you be able to sleep in peace? When a man, laden with chains, is led to his death and when misfortune menaces him, could he sleep in peace? [184c]

The chains, your enemies, are not destroyed; the torments have not been removed. If you were spending the night with a poisonous snake in the same room, or if you were going to engage in battle with a knife, would you then sleep in peace?

Sleep is this deep darkness where nothing is seen. Each day it falls [upon us] and robs one's clear-sightedness. When sleep covers the mind, nothing more is known. In the face of such a great loss, could you sleep in peace?

It is for all these reasons that one removes the hindrance of lethargy-sleepiness (*styānamiddhanivaraṇa*). <1018>

ABB.4.

### REMOVING EXCITEDNESS AND REGRET; F 1018

The hindrance of excitedness (*auddhatya*) and regret (*kaukr̥tya*). – Excitedness is a factor (*dharma*) that harms the mind of those who have gone forth from home (*pravrajyācitta*): if a person with

collected mind (*saṃgrhitacitta*) cannot remain faithful, then what can be said of a person with a distracted mind (*vikṣiptacitta*)? The excited persons are as uncontrollable as a wild elephant in rut (*gandhagaja*) without a hook or as a camel (*uṣṭra*) whose nose has just been pierced. Some stanzas say:

You have shaved your head; you have put on robes (*kāṣāya*); holding the clay begging-bowl (*pātra*), you go to beg your food. Why do you still delight in excitedness? You will lose the profits of the religious life after having [already] renounced the joys of the world.

Those who are prey to regret (*kaukrtya*) are like a great criminal always tortured by fear (*bhaya*). When the arrow of regret has entered the mind, it is implanted there and cannot be pulled out. Some stanzas say:

If they have done what they should not do,  
If they have not done what they should have done,  
They are burned by the fire of regret.  
Later, they will fall into the bad destinies.

A man can regret his mistake;  
After having regretted it, he [should] forget it.  
In this way his mind will find peace.  
He should not think [about his mistakes] incessantly.

There are two kinds of regrets,  
Depending on whether there is an omission or an action.  
To attach one's mind to such remorse  
Is the mark of a fool.

One must not give oneself up to regrets,  
Because [the good] that one has omitted doing one can always do;  
And the bad that one has committed,  
One cannot not have done it.

It is for all these reasons that one removes the hindrance of excitedness and of regret (*auddhatyakaukrtyanivaraṇa*). <1019>

ABB.5.

### REMOVING AFFLICTED DOUBT; F 1019-1020

The hindrance of afflicted doubt (*vicikitsānivarāṇa*). – When afflicted doubt covers the mind, one does not succeed in fixing one's mind on the good factors (*dharma*). Lacking a concentrated mind (*samāhitacitta*), there is nothing to be gained from the Buddhist doctrine. Thus the man who makes his way to a mountain of jewels (*ratnagiri*) is unable to gather any if he has no hands. Speaking of afflicted doubt, some stanzas say:

Those who come to a crossroad



And hesitate, go nowhere.

It is the same for afflicted doubt

With regard to the true characteristic of factors (*dharma*).

As a result of afflicted doubt, one does not diligently seek

The true characteristic of factors.

Afflicted doubt stems from ignorance (*avidyā*);

It is the worst of all that is bad.

In regard to good and bad factors,

*saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, [185a]

Suchness (*tathatā*) and the nature of factors (*dharmatā*).

One should not conceive any afflicted doubt.<sup>6</sup>

If you conceive afflicted doubts,

The king of death and his jailers will enchain you;

Like the gazelle caught by the lion,

You will not find a way out.

Although here below there may always be afflicted doubts,

It is important to follow the Holy Dharma.

Those who come up to a junction

Should take the good path. <1020>

It is for all these reasons that it is necessary to remove the hindrance of afflicted doubt (*vicikitsānivarāṇa*).

Removing these five hindrances is like escaping from the debt that burdens one, curing a serious illness, finding an oasis in the desert, leaving prison, running away from the hands of brigands and finding safety (*yogaḥṣema*) free of torment. Thus the meditator who has removed the five hindrances has a pacified (*ḥṣema*), pure (*viśuddha*) and joyful (*sukha*) mind. The sun and moon (*candrasūrya*) are hidden by five things: when smoke (*dhūma*), clouds (*abhra*), dust (*rajas*), fog (*mahikā*) or the hand of the *āsura* Rāhu intercepts them, they can no longer shine;<sup>7</sup> likewise,

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<sup>6</sup> We know that every word taught by the Buddha is recognizable by four characteristics: (1) it is useful and not harmful; (2) it conforms to (moral) law and is not contrary to the law; (3) it destroys the defilements and does not increase them; (4) it inspires love for *nirvāṇa* and not for *saṃsāra*. See the passage of the *Madhyāśāyasaṃcodanasūtra* cited in *Traité*, I, F 82 as note. On the other hand, the speech of the Buddha does not contradict the nature of factors (*dharmatāṃ na vilomayati*), i.e., *pratityasamutpāda* (ibid., p. 81 as note). These essential truths are not to be doubted by Buddhists.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Upakkilesasutta* (*Āṅguttara*, II, p. 53; *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 20, p. 650a: *Cattāro 'me bhikkhave candimasuriyānaṃ upakkilesā yehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhā candimasuriyā na tapanti na bhāsanti na virocanti. Katame cattāro? Abhaṇi... mahikā... dhūmarajo... Rāhu asurindo hena upakkilesena upakkiliṭṭhā candimasuriyā na tapanti na bhāsanti na virocanti*, – This sūtra plays a role in the accounts of the second council: *Vinaya*, II, p. 295; T 1421, k. 30, p. 192c; T 1428, k. 54, p. 969a-b; cf. Hofinger, *Concile de Vaiśālī*, p. 34, 36, 39.

when a person's mind is covered by the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), it can be of no use either to oneself or to others.

ABC. **THIRD METHOD: PRACTICING THE FIVE FACTORS (DHARMA); F 1020-1023**

If they have been able to reject the five objects of desire (*kāmaguṇa*) and remove the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), the practitioners practice the five factors (*dharma*):

- 1) inclination (*chanda*),
- 2) diligence (*vīrya*),
- 3) mindfulness (*smṛti*),
- 4) introspection (*saṃprajñāna*),
- 5) one-pointedness of mind (*cittaikāgratā*);

by practicing these five factors, they acquire the first meditation (*dhyāna*) endowed with five members (*pañcāṅgasamanvāgata*).

- 1) Inclination (*chanda*) is zeal in Kāmadhātu; when it is produced, the first meditation (*dhyāna*) is obtained.
- 2) Diligence (*vīrya*) is the observance of morality (*śīla*) when going forth from home, concentrated zeal without laziness (*kausīdya*) during the two watches of the night, eating moderately (*mitabhojana*) and the collecting of the mind (*cittasaṃgrahaṇa*) without distraction (*vikṣepa*).<sup>8</sup> <1021>
- 3) Mindfulness (*smṛti*) is the mindfulness applied towards attaining the happiness of the first meditation (*dhyāna*). The practitioners know that Kāmadhātu is impure, deceptive, contemptible, whereas the first meditation is respectable and estimable.
- 4) Introspection (*saṃprajñāna*) is a pure awareness, appreciating and measuring the happiness of Kāmadhātu and the happiness of the first meditation, their importance and their respective benefits.
- 5) One-pointedness of mind (*cittaikāgratā*) consists of always placing the mind one-pointedly on an object-support (*ālambana*) and preventing scattering.

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<sup>8</sup> This diligence is expressed in the pursuit of the four qualities that make a monk incapable of retrogressing (*abhabbo parihānāya*) and close to *nirvāṇa* (*nibbānass' eva santike*): observance of morality (*śīlasaṃpatti*), guarding of the doors of the sense-faculties (*indriyeṣu guptadvāratā*), moderation in eating (*bhojana mātrājñutā*) and effort in the watch or in staying awake (*jāgaryām anuyoga*). These qualities are defined in *Aṅguttara*, II, p. 39-40; see also *Saṃyutta*, II, p. 219; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 113; *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 12, p. 603c; *Mahāniddesa*, II, p. 483-484.

Furthermore, by pursuing the first meditation (*dhyāna*), one rejects the sense pleasures (*kāmasukha*) because it is by incessantly trying to conquer one's enemies that one is not tormented by them. The Buddha said to a brahman attached to [objects of] desire:

At the start, I had precise vision (*samanupaśyāmi*) of the [objects of] desire (*kāma*); the [objects of] desire are the cause and condition (*hetupratyaya*) of fear (*bhaya*), discontentedness (*daurmanasya*) and suffering (*duḥkha*); the [objects of] desire provide little enjoyment (*alpāsavāda*), but much suffering (*bahuduḥkha*).<sup>9</sup>

[The object of] desire is the net (*javāla*) and shackle (*kāśa*) of Māra from which it is difficult to escape; [the object of] desire is a burning sensation that dries out all the pleasures; it is like a forest burning on all four sides; [the object of] desire is as dreadful as falling into a fire pit or as handling a venomous snake; it is like a brigand brandishing a sword, like a malicious Rakṣasa, like dangerous poison poured into the mouth, like molten copper (*kvathitatāmra*) poured down one's throat, like a mad elephant, like falling off a cliff, like a lion barring the road, <1022> like the Makara fish (sea-monster) opening its mouth: [objects of] desires are as [185b] formidable as all of those. Attachment to [the object of] desire is man's misfortune. The person attached to [the object of] desire is like a prisoner in jail, a deer in a pen, a bird caught in the net, a fish that has taken the bait, the wolf battling with a dog, a crow among kites, a snake in the presence of a wild boar, a mouse in the claws of a cat, a blind man on the edge of a ditch, a fly above boiling oil, a sick man in the army, a lame man in a fire. [Being attached to (the object of) desire] is entering into a river of salt water, licking a knife coated with honey. [The object of] desire is meat cut up at a crossroad, the slicing forest hidden under a thin cover, excrement covered with flowers, a poisoned jar coated with honey, a chest full of poisonous snakes, the illusion of a dream, the loan that must be repaid, the magic show that fools little children, the flame lacking in consistency. [Giving oneself up to (the objects of) desire] is like diving into deep water, being swallowed by the gullet of the Makara fish. [The object of] desire is the hail that destroys the grain, the lightning that strikes men. [The objects of] desire are all of that: deceptive, unreal, without consistency or vigor, they provide little pleasure but much suffering. [The object of] desire is the army of Māra that destroys all good qualities. Since it torments sentient beings unceasingly, it lends itself to these many comparisons (*upamāna*).

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Cūladukkakhandhasutta* in *Majjhima*, I, p. 91-92; *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 25, p. 586b22: *Mayhaṃ pi kho, Mahānāma, pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattass' eva sato "appassādā kāmā bahudukkhā bahupāyāsā, ādinavo ettha bhiyyo" ti etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṃ ahosi*: "Mahānāman, before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisattva, I too clearly saw as it actually is with proper wisdom how sensual desires provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them" (transl., Bhikku Bodhi). The same condemnation: *appassādā kāmā*. etc., is repeated for the *bhikkhu Aritṭha* in *Vinaya*, II, p. 25; *Majjhima*, I, p. 130; *Aṅguttara*, III, p. 97. – The present passage of the Mppś precedes this verdict with a statement on [objects of] desire (*kāma*), the cause of fear and suffering: it occurs in *Aṅguttara*, IV, p. 289: *Bhayan ti bhikkhave kāmānaṃ etaṃ adhivacanaṃ, dukkhan ti bhikkhave kāmānaṃ etaṃ adhivacanaṃ*, etc.

By rejecting the five sensual pleasures, by removing the five hindrances and by practicing the five factors (*dharma*), one arrives at the first meditation (*dhyāna*).

Question. – The equipoises and concentrations, such as the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāvāyatana*), the ten perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*) and the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) are never described as perfections (*pāramitā*). Why is meditation (*dhyāna*) the only one to be qualified as the ‘perfection’ of meditation (*dhyānapāramitā*)?

Answer. – (1) The qualities (*guṇa*) of all these equipoises are of the order of reflecting (*cintā*) and meditating (*bhāvanā*). In the language of the *Ts’in*, meditation (*dhyāna*) means reflecting and meditating. By speaking of the perfection of meditation, all the qualities are in fact included.

(2) Moreover, meditation (*dhyāna*) ranks first, like a king. Speaking of meditation (*dhyāna*) does include all the other equipoises; speaking of the other equipoises does not include meditation (*dhyāna*). Why? <1023> Because in the four meditations, cognition (*jñāna*) and the equipoises (*samāpatti*) are equal and balanced. In the preparatory meditation (*anāgāmya*, preceding the first meditation), cognition (*jñāna*) outweighs equipoise (*samāpatti*), whereas, in the formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti* following after the meditations), it is equipoise that outweighs cognition: these states are thus not balanced. When a chariot (*ratha*) has one wheel that is more stronger than the other, it is not safe (*kṣema*) to drive; it is the same when cognition and equipoise are unequal.

(3) Finally, in the four meditations there are the four equivalences of mind (*samacitta*), the five super-knowledges (*abhiññā*), the liberations (*vimokṣa*), the perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāvāyatana*), the perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*), the concentration of being without conflict hindering the arising of the defilements of another (*araṇāsamādhi*), the cognition resulting from a resolve (*prañidhānajñāna*) the extreme-limit meditation (*prāntakoṭīdhyāna*), the sovereign concentration (*īśvarasamādhi* ?), the meditation brought to its maximum (*varddhikāṣṭhāgata dhyāna*), the fourteen minds of supernatural emanation (*nirmāṇacitta*), the *Pan tcheou pan* (*pratyutpannasamādhi*),<sup>10</sup> all the concentrations (*samādhi*) of the Bodhisattva, the Hero’s Walk (*śūraṅgama*), etc., which number 120, all the concentrations (*samādhi*) of the Buddha, the Immovable (*akśobhya*), etc., which number 108,<sup>11</sup> the attainment of discrimination by the Buddhas and their renouncing of life (*āyuhparityāga*): all these various equipoises occur in the meditations (*dhyāna*); this is why meditation is qualified as perfection (*pāramitā*), whereas the other equipoises are not.

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<sup>10</sup> All these qualities will be defined below, F 1041 seq. The *pratyutpannasamādhi* is the subject of the *Bhadrupālasūtra*; cf. *Traité*, I, F 430, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> On these 108 concentrations (*samādhi*), see references in *Traité*, I, F 324, n. 1

AC.

## DEFINITION OF THE VARIOUS MEDITATIONS (DHYĀNA) AND EQUIPOISES (SAMĀPATTI);<sup>12</sup> F 1023-1034

<sup>12</sup> This section is limited to commenting on a very old *Dhyānasūtra* where the nine successive equipoises (*navānupūrovasamāpatti*) are defined in precise terms. This is a topic repeated tirelessly in the canonical texts: cf. *Vinaya*, III, p. 4; *Digha*, I, p. 37, 73, 172; II, p. 313; III, p. 78, 131, 222, 265; *Majjhima*, I, p. 21, 40, 89, 117, 159; II, p. 15, 204, 226; III, p. 4, 14, 25, 36; *Samyutta*, II, p. 210, 216, 221; III, p. 235; IV, p. 225, 236, 263; V, p. 10, 198, 213; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 53, 163, 182, 242; II, p. 126, 151; III, p. 11, 119; IV, p. 111, 176, 229, 410; V, p. 207, 343; *Kathāvatthu*, II, p. 484; *Milinda*, p. 289. – For the Chinese sources, see, e.g., *Tch'ang a han*, T 1, k. 8, p. 50c; *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 47, p. 720a; *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 47, p. 720a; *Tsa a han*, T 99, 41, p. 302a.

Here is the Pali text of this *sutta*:

- (1) *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu vivicc' eva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi, savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamañ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*
- (2) *Vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ duttiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*
- (3) *Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisamvedeti; yaṃ taṃ ariyā acikkhanti "Upekkhako satimā sukhavihāriti" tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*
- (4) *Sukhasa ca pahānā dukkhasa ca pahānā, pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthagamā adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ upekkhāsatiparisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*
- (5) *Sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamma, paṭighasaññānaṃ atthagamā, nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā "Ananto ākāso ti" ākāsaññāyātanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*
- (6-9) *Sabbaso ākāsaññāyātanaṃ samatikkamma "Anantaṃ viññānaṃ ti" viññānaññāyātanaṃ upasampajja viharati. – Sabbaso viññānaññāyātanaṃ samatikkamma "N'atthi kiñciti" ākiñcaññāyātanaṃ upasampajja viharati. – Sabbaso ākiñcaññāyātanaṃ samatikkamma nevasaññānāsaññāyātanaṃ upasampajja viharati. – Sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyātanaṃ samatikkamma saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

The Sanskrit version of this *sūtra* has been handed down to us in the *Lalitavistara*, p. 129; *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 167, *Daśasāhasrikā*, p. 98-99; *Mahāvīyūtpatti*, no. 1478-1481, 1492-1495; extracts in *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 665, 666, 673:

- (1) *Viviktaṃ kāmair viviktaṃ pāpakair akuśalair dharmair savitarkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītisukhaṃ prathamaṃ dhyānaṃ upasānpadya viharati.*
- (2) *Vitarkavicārānaṃ vyupaśamād adhyātmaṃ samprasādāc cetasa ekotibhāvād avitarkam avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dvitīyaṃ dhyānaṃ upasānpadya viharati.*
- (3) *Priter virāgād upekṣako viharati smṛtimān saṃprajānaṃ sukhaṃ ca kāyena pratisaṃvedayati yat tad āryā ācakṣate "Upekṣakaḥ smṛtimān sukhavihāriti" niṣprītikaṃ tṛtīyaṃ dhyānaṃ upasānpadya viharati.*
- (4) *Sukhasya ca prahāṇād duḥkhasya ca prahāṇāt pūroam eva saumanasyadaurmanasyayor astaṃgamād aduḥkhasukham upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddhaṃ caturthaṃ dhyānaṃ upasānpadya viharati.*
- (5) *Sa sarvaśo rūpaṃ jñānaṃ samatikramāt pratighasaññānāṃ astaṃgamān nānātvasaññānāṃ amanasikārād "Anantaṃ ākāśaṃ iti" ākāśanantyāyātanaṃ upasānpadya viharati.*

Question. – You have said up to now that the first meditation is obtained by condemning the five sensual pleasures (*kāma*), by removing the five hindrances (*nivāraṇa*) and by practicing the five <1024> factors (*dharma*). But by what method and what path can the first meditation be obtained? <1025> [185c]

Answer. – By basing oneself on the doors of equipoise, such as the meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvana*) and mindfulness in regard to breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti*), etc.<sup>13</sup>

[omitted section]

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(6-9) *Sa sarvaśa ākāśānantyāyatanam samatikramya “Anantaṃ vijñānam” iti vijñānānantyātanam upasaṃpadya viharati. – Sa sarvaśo vijñānānantyāyatanam samatikramya “Nāsti kiṃcid iti” ākiṃcanyāyatanam upasaṃpadya viharati. – Sa sarvaśa ākiṃcanyāyatanam samatikramya naivasamjñānāsaṃjñāyatanam upasaṃpadya viharati. – Sa sarvaśo naivasamjñānāsaṃjñāyatanam samatikramya saṃjñāvedayitanirodham upasaṃpadya viharati.*

In order to establish the vocabulary, I [Lamotte] present here the translation of this *sūtra*:

- (1) Here, the monastics having removed the [objects of] desire, having removed the bad factors (*dharma*), enter into the first meditation (*dhyāna*), endowed with initial inquiry, endowed with investigation, arisen from detachment, and which is joy and satisfaction.
- (2) By suppressing initial inquiry and investigation, they enter into the second meditation, personal serenity, one-pointedness of mind or application of the mind to a single object, without initial inquiry, without investigation, arisen from concentration, and which is joy and satisfaction.
- (3) By renouncing joy, they abide in equanimity, mindfulness and introspection; they experience satisfaction in their body; they enter into the third meditation that the noble persons call ‘being in equanimity, mindful and abiding satisfied’.
- (4) By abandoning satisfaction and by abandoning suffering, by the previous suppression of contentedness and discontentedness, they enter into the fourth meditation, free of suffering and satisfaction, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.
- (5) Having gone beyond any conception of form or matter, suppressing any conception of resistance, disregarding any conception of multiplicity, they cry out: “Infinite space” and penetrate into the perception-sphere of infinite space.
- (6-9) Going beyond the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’, they penetrate successively into the (6) ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’, (7) the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’, (8) the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ and, finally, into (9) the ‘equipoise of the cessation of conception and of sensation’.

For this technique of meditation (*dhyāna*), see the remarkable explanation of Mircea Eliade, *Techniques of Yoga*, 1948, p. 158-164.

<sup>13</sup> These two ‘doors’ have been studied at length in *Kośa*, VI, F 148-158.

ACA.

**[PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST MEDITATION]; F 1027**

Through the purity of morality (*śīlavīśuddhi*), solitude in retreat, guarding of the sense-faculties, intensive meditation during the first and last watch of the night,<sup>14</sup> the practitioners remove the external joys and delight in meditation. They remove the [objects of] desire (*kāma*) and the bad factors (*akuśaladharmā*, i.e., five hindrances). Relying on the preparatory meditation (*anāgamyā* preceding the first meditation),<sup>15</sup> [186a] they acquire the first meditation.

ACB.

**[FIRST MEDITATION]; F 1027-1029**

The first meditation is defined in the Abhidharma: There are four types of meditation (*dhyāna*):

1. meditation associated with enjoyment (*āsvādanasaṃprayukta*);
2. clean (*śuddhaka*) meditation;
3. meditation free from fluxes (*anāsrava*);
4. the five aggregates (*skandha*) obtained by retribution (*vipākaja*) and contained in the first meditation.<sup>16</sup>

Here the practitioners enter [into the clean (*śuddhaka*) meditation and the meditation free from fluxes (*anāsrava*); it is the same for the second, third and fourth meditation.

According to the Buddha's definition:

Having removed (i) [the objects of] desire and (ii) the bad factors, the monastics enter into the first <1028> meditation, endowed with initial inquiry, endowed with investigation, arisen from detachment, and which is joy and satisfaction.

(*Dhyānasūtra*, l.c.: *Viviktaṃ kāmaṃ viviktaṃ pāpakair akuśalair dharmaiḥ savitarkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pritisukhaṃ prathamam dhyānam upasaṃpadya viharati*).

(i) 'Desires' (*kāma*) are the five sense objects or objects of desire (*pañca kāmagaṇa*), colors (*rūpa*), etc., to which one becomes attached. Through reflection and analysis, these [objects of] desire are condemned, just as has been said above.

(ii) The 'wicked and bad factors' (*pāpaka*, *akuśaladharmā*) are the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*), inclination for the objects of desire (*kāmacchanda*), etc.

<sup>14</sup> See above, F 1020, n. 2.

<sup>15</sup> For this term, see *Kośa*, VIII, F 179, n. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 144. – (1) The meditation of enjoyment is defiled by craving (*tṛṣṇā*); (2) the clean meditation is of mundane order and practiced by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*); (3) the meditation free from fluxes is of supramundane order and practiced by the noble persons (*ārya*); (4) the meditation 'of the five aggregates' designates the realms of Rūpadhātu inhabited by the seventeen classes of gods, from the Brahmakāyikas up to the Akaniṣṭhas (see *Kośa*, III, F 2): the gods of Rūpadhātu are still constituted of five aggregates; those of Ārūpyadhātu have only four of them because form (*rūpa*) is absent there.



By detaching oneself from these two categories, of which the one is external (*bāhya*) and the other internal (*ādhyātmika*), one acquires the first meditation.

The [five] characteristics of the first meditation are: (1) initial inquiry (*vitarka*), (2) investigation (*vicāra*), (3) joy (*prīti*), (4) satisfaction (*sukha*) and (5) one-pointedness of mind (*cittaikāgrata*).<sup>17</sup>

It is ‘endowed with initial inquiry (*savitarka*) and with investigation (*savicāra*)’: by acquiring, in the first meditation, the good factors (*kuśaladharma*) and the qualities (*guṇa*) not previously acquired, the mind experiences great [coolness or joy (?)<sup>18</sup>]. When [those] who have ceaselessly been burned by the fire of the [objects of] desire attain the first meditation, it is as if they were entering a pool of cool water. Furthermore, they are like a poor man (*daridra*) who suddenly finds a treasure: the practitioners, who have reflected on and analyzed the disadvantages of Kāmadhātu and who see the importance of the benefits and qualities of the first meditation, experience great joy (*prīti*): this is why it is called ‘endowed with initial inquiry (*savitarka*) and with investigation (*savicāra*)’.

Question. – Are initial inquiry and investigation one and the same factor or are they two different factors?

Answer. – They are two different factors.<sup>19</sup> Initial inquiry is the <1029> first moment of a coarse mind (*sthūlaprathamakṣaṇa*), investigation is a more subtle (*sūkṣma*) analysis. Thus, when a bell is struck, the first sound is strong: this is initial inquiry, the subsequent sound is fainter: this is investigation.

Question. – In the Abhidharma it is said that, from Kāmadhātu up to the first meditation, the same mind is associated with initial inquiry and investigation; why do you say here that initial inquiry is the first moment of a coarse mind whereas investigation is a more subtle analysis?

Answer. – Although the two factors reside in the same mind, their characteristics are not simultaneous: at the moment of initial inquiry, investigation is not sharp (*apaṭu*); at the moment of investigation, initial inquiry is not sharp. Thus, when the sun rises, the stars disappear. All minds (*citta*) and all mental events (*caitasikadharma*) receive their name on the basis of time: it is

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 294: *Paṭhamam jhānam pañcaṅgikam; idh’ āvuso paṭhamam jhānam samāpannassa bhikkhuno vitakko ca vattati vicāro ca pīti ca sukhañ ca cittekaggatā ca*. – See also *Kośa*, VIII, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> **LS**: Lamotte has “grand effroi”: great terror, which should be a misprint. In terms of the context of the paragraph he might have meant ‘coolness’ or ‘joy’.

<sup>19</sup> On the difference between initial inquiry and investigation, cf. Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaka*, cited in *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 64: *Vitarkaḥ katamaḥ? Paryeṣako manojalpaḥ cetanāprajñāviṣeṣaḥ yā cittasyaudārikatā. Vicarāḥ katamaḥ? Pratyavekṣako manojalpaḥ, tathaiṣa yā cittasya sūkṣmatā*. – Here the Mppś acknowledges a specific difference (*jātibheda*) between initial inquiry and investigation; this is the thesis of the Vaibhāṣikas; the Sautrāntikas are of the opposite opinion, cf. *Kośa*, II, p. 174 seq.; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 139. For their part, the Pāli sources had a go at definitions: cf. *Dhammasaṅgani*, p. 10; *Atthasālini*, p. 114-115; *Milinda*, p. 62-63; *Visuddhimagga*, I, p. 142-143; S. Z. Aung, *Compendium*, p. 17, 40.



the same here: [initial inquiry and investigation are distinct moments of the same mind]. Thus the Buddha said:

If you cut one single factor, I claim that you will become a never-returner (*anāgāmin*); this single factor is selfishness (*mātsarya*).<sup>20</sup>

In actual fact, he should say that the five lower fetters (*avarambhāgiya saṃyojana*) must disappear in order that one may become a never-returner.<sup>21</sup> Why did he say that it is only necessary to cut one single factor? Because selfishness was over-abundant in the person he was speaking to and because all other fetters come from that; therefore it sufficed for that person to destroy selfishness in order to cut through the other fetters at the same time. Likewise here, initial inquiry and investigation receive their name on the basis of time.

ACC. **[SECOND MEDITATION]; F 1029-1030**

The practitioners know that initial inquiry and investigation, good though they may be, disturb the concentrated mind (*samāhitacitta*); <1030> through mental detachment (*cittavairāgya*), they condemn initial inquiry and investigation and have this thought: “Initial inquiry and investigation disturb the mind of meditation; just as when clear water is disturbed by waves, nothing can be seen any more.” When a weary and tired man regains his breath and wants to sleep, when his neighbor calls him, [186b] he feels all kinds of problems. It is for all these reasons that they condemn initial inquiry and investigation.

[According to the definition given by the Buddha, the practitioners]

by suppressing initial inquiry and investigation, enter into the second meditation which is personal serenity, one-pointedness of mind or application of mind to a single object, which is without initial inquiry, without investigation, arisen from concentration, and which is joy and satisfaction.

(*Dhyānasūtra*, l.c.: *Vitarkavicārāṇaṃ vyupaśamād adhyātmaṃ saṃprasādāc cetasa ekotibhāvam avitarkam avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pritisukhaṃ dvitīyaṃ dhyānaṃ upasaṃpadya viharati*).

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<sup>20</sup> See a passage in *Aṅguttara*, III, p. 272, where it is said that, in order to attain the four meditations (*dhyāna*) and realize the four fruits of the noble path (the fruit of stream-enterer [*srotaāpatti*phala], etc.), it suffices to have cut the fivefold selfishness: selfishness (*macchāriya*) as to one's lodging (*āvāsa*), family (*kula*), gains (*lābha*), fame (*vaṇṇa*) and Dharma (*dhmma*)

<sup>21</sup> By saying that it is sufficient to cut one single fetter, selfishness, in order to become a never-returner, the Buddha was simplifying things for the benefit of those he was speaking to; strictly speaking, it is “by the disappearance of the first five fetters that persons become apparitional beings, [i.e., in the specific sense of non-returner,] that they attain *nirvāṇa* in the world of the gods and are not prone to coming back from that world”: cf. *Dīgha*, I, p. 156; II, p. 92; III, p. 132; *Majjhima*, I, p. 436: *Pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tatthaparinibbāyi anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā*.

In possession of the second meditation, they obtain the joy and satisfaction of the second meditation, incomparable joy and satisfaction not previously acquired until then.

‘By suppressing initial inquiry and investigation’ (*vitarkavicāraṇāṃ vyupaśamāt*): they have disappeared because the meditators know their defects. This meditation is ‘personal serenity’ (*adhyātmasaṃprasāda*)<sup>22</sup> for, by entering this profound equipoise, the practitioners have renounced the initial inquiry and investigation of the first meditation by means of confidence (*prasāda*): the benefit is important, the loss minimal and the gain considerable. This meditation is called ‘personal serenity’ because of ‘one-pointedness of mind or application of mind to a single object’ (*cetasa ekotibhāva*).

ACD.

### [THIRD MEDITATION]; F 1030-1031

The practitioners see the defects of joy (*prīti*) just as they have seen those of initial inquiry and investigation: according to the place occupied by the object of enjoyment, sometimes it is joy (*prīti*), sometimes discontentedness (*daurmanasya*) that dominates. Why is that? Thus, for example, when a poor man (*daridra*) finds a treasure, his joy is immense; but, as soon as he loses it, his discontentedness is deep. The joy evolves and changes into discontentedness.

This is why [according to the definition of the Buddha], the practitioners

by renouncing joy, abide in equanimity, mindfulness and introspection; they experience this satisfaction in their body which [only] the noble persons are capable of <1031> renouncing; mindful and abiding satisfied, they enter into the third meditation.

(Lamotte comments that this citation of the *Mppś* is a free and faulty translation of the *Dhyānasūtra*, l.c.: *Priter virāgād upekṣako viharati smṛtimān saṃprajānan sukhaṃ ca kāyena pratisaṃvedayati yat tad āryā ācakṣate “Upekṣakaḥ smṛtimān sukhavihārīti” niṣprītikaṃ tṛtīyaṃ dhyānam upasaṃpadya viharati*).

[Lamotte’s translation of the *Dhyānasūtra*:

*By renouncing joy, they abide in equanimity, mindfulness and introspection; they experience satisfaction in their body; they enter into the third meditation which the noble persons call ‘being in equanimity, mindful and abiding satisfied’.*]

They abide ‘in equanimity’ (*upekṣaḥ*), for they abandon any feeling of joy (*prīti*) and experience no regret; they abide in ‘mindfulness’ (*smṛtimān*) and ‘introspection’ (*saṃprajānan*), for, having obtained the satisfaction of the third meditation, they prevent this satisfaction from arousing torments; they ‘experience satisfaction in their body’ (*sukhaṃ kāyena pratisaṃvedayati*), for they

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<sup>22</sup> On ‘personal serenity’ (*adhyātmasaṃprasādhā*) which is faith (*śraddhā*), see *Kośa*, VIII, F 158.

experience, with their entire body, the satisfaction of the third meditation;<sup>23</sup> ‘this satisfaction in their body which [only] the noble persons are capable of renouncing’: this satisfaction being the foremost in the world gives rise to the clinging of the mind (*cittābhiniveśa*), and ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) renounce it only rarely. Also the Buddha said that the ripened effect for the practice of loving-kindness is the foremost [satisfaction] there is in the pure stages.

ACE.

#### [FOURTH MEDITATION]; F 1031-1032

The practitioners see the defects of satisfaction (*sukha*) as they have seen those of joy (*priti*), they know that immovability of the mind (*cittāniñjyatā*) is much superior to everything, for wherever there is agitation, there is suffering (*duḥkha*). Since they are agitated by the satisfaction (*sukha*) of the third meditation, the practitioners seek non-agitation.

[According to the definition of the Buddha]

by abandoning satisfaction and by abandoning suffering, by the previous suppression of contentedness and discontentedness, the practitioners enter into the fourth meditation, free of suffering and satisfaction, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

(*Dhyānasūtra*, l.c: *Sukhasya ca prahāṇād duḥkasya ca prahāṇāt pūrvam eva saumansyadaurmansyayor astamgamād aduḥkḥāsukham upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddhaṃ caturthaṃ dhyānam upasampadya viharati*).

In the fourth meditation, there is no longer any suffering or satisfaction, but only immovable discrimination (*āniñjyaprajñā*); this is why the fourth meditation is called ‘with pure equanimity <1032> and mindfulness’.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the third meditation is called suffering because of the agitation aroused by satisfaction. Therefore the fourth meditation is ‘free of suffering and satisfaction’ (*aduḥkḥāsukha*).

ACF.

#### [FIRST EQUIPOISE]; F 1032

According to the definition of the Buddha, the practitioners

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<sup>23</sup> The third meditation thus has five members: 1) equanimity (*upekṣā*), 2) mindfulness (*smṛti*), 3) introspection (*saṃprajñāna*), 4) satisfaction (*sukha*), 5) concentration (*samādhi*); they are defined in *Kośa*, VIII, F 148. But, whereas the satisfaction present in the first two meditations is simply pliancy or the good physical state (*prāśrabdhi*), the satisfaction of the third meditation is the sensation of satisfaction (*sukha vedanā*); cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 150.

<sup>24</sup> *upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddhi*: 1) *upekṣāpariśuddhi* is equanimity towards whatever the object may be (*anābhogalakṣaṇa*); 2) *smṛtipariśuddhi* consists of not losing sight of the *nimitta* (the motive, the reason) for this equanimity (*upekṣānimittasaṃpramoṣa*): cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 148.

having gone beyond any conception of form or matter, neglecting any conception of multiplicity, suppressing any conception of resistance, cry out: “Infinite space” and enter into the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’.

(*Dhyānasūtra*, l.c.: *Sa sarvaśo rūpasamjñānāṃ samatikramān, nānātvasamjñānāṃ amanasikārāt, pratighasamjñānāṃ astamgamād “Ānantam ākāśam iti” ākāśānantyāyatanam upasamṇapadya viharati*).

The practitioners have this thought: “Wherever matter is absent, there one escapes from the sufferings of hunger (*kṣudh*) and thirst (*pipāsā*), cold (*śīta*) and heat (*uṣṇa*); physical matter is coarse, bad, deceptive and unreal: it is because of the collocation of causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*) of the former life that we inherit this body, the receptacle of all sorts of suffering. How can these bodily torments be avoided? The space (*ākāśa*) present in the body must be considered.” The practitioners then ceaselessly consider the empty spaces of the body like that in a cage or a pot; by always and ceaselessly thinking about them, they free themselves from matter and no [186c] longer see the body. And the same applies to external matter (*bāhyarūpa*) as for internal bodily empty space. Then the practitioners can contemplate the measureless and infinite space (*apramāṇānantākāśa*). When they have mastered this contemplation, they feel neither suffering nor satisfaction, and their mind progresses: they are like a bird closed up in a cage that finds its freedom when the cage is broken. This is the ‘equipoise of space’ (*ākāśasamāpatti*).

ACG.

## [SECOND EQUIPOISE]; F 1032-1033

This immeasurable and infinite space is seized (*ālambate*) by the intellect; this vast object distracts the practitioners and can even destroy their equipoise. Contemplating space, the practitioners perceive sensations (*vedanā*), conceptions (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousnesses (*viññāna*)<sup>25</sup> which seem to them to be a disease (*roga*), a tumor (*gaṇḍa*), a blow (*āghāta*) and an arrow (*śālya*), impermanent (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), empty (*śūnya*) and nonself (*anātman*), an accumulation of deceits without true reality.<sup>26</sup> Thinking in this way, they abandon the space-object and seize the consciousness (*viññāna*) only. Do they seize only the present (*pratyutpanna*), past (*atīta*) and future (*anāgata*) consciousness, or the immeasurable and infinite consciousness (*apramāṇānantaviññāna*)? They seize the immeasurable and infinite consciousness.<sup>27</sup> Since this consciousness is immeasurable and infinite, as with space (*ākāśa*), the equipoise is

<sup>25</sup> Whereas the meditations (*dhyāna*) are accompanied by the five aggregates (*skandha*), the [formless] equipoises (*samāpatti*) consist of only four (*vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *saṃskāra* and *viññāna*), for all form (*rūpa*) is absent; cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 134.

<sup>26</sup> This phrase which will be repeated below, for the second and third equipoise, is of canonical origin; cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 436: *So yad eva tattha hoti vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññānagataṃ te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhatto parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati*.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Vibhaṅga*, p. 262: *Anantaṃ viññānaṃ ti, taṃ yeva ākāśaṃ viññāneṇa pluṭtaṃ manasikaroti anantaṃ pharati tena vuccati anantaṃ viññānaṃ ti*. – Commentary in *Visuddhimagga*, I, p. 332.

called the ‘equipoise of the perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ (*viññānānantyāyatanaśamāpatti*).

ACH. **[THIRD EQUIPOISE]; F 1033**

This immeasurable and infinite consciousness (*viññāna*) is seized by the intellect; this vast object distracts the practitioners and can destroy their equipoise. Contemplating this consciousness, the practitioners perceive sensations (*vedanā*), conceptions (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousnesses (*viññāna*) which seem to them to be a disease (*roga*), a tumor (*gaṇḍa*), a blow (*āghāta*) and an arrow (*śalya*), impermanent (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), empty (*śūnya*) and nonself (*anātman*), an accumulation of deceits without true reality. Thinking in this way, they destroy the image of consciousness (*viññāna*), condemn the perception-sphere of consciousness (*viññānāyatana*) and praise the perception-sphere of nothingness (*ākīṃcanyāyatana*). Destroying the images of the consciousness, they fix their mind on nothingness, and this is what is called the ‘equipoise of the perception-sphere of nothingness’ (*ākīṃcanyāyatanaśamāpatti*).

ACL. **[FOURTH EQUIPOISE]; F 1033-1034**

In this perception-sphere of nothingness, they perceive sensations (*vedanā*), conceptions (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousnesses (*viññāna*) which seem to them to be a disease (*roga*), a tumor (*gaṇḍa*), a blow (*āghāta*) and an arrow (*śalya*), impermanent (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), empty (*śūnya*) and nonself (*anātman*), an accumulation of deceits <1034> without true reality. While they are meditating in this way, the perception-sphere of non-conception (*asaṃjñāyatana*) seems to them to be a tumor (*gaṇḍa*), and the perception-sphere of conception (*saṃjñāyatana*) seems to them to be a disease, a tumor, a blow and an arrow: [for them], the perception-sphere par excellence is the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naivasaṃjñānāśaṃjñāyatana*).

Question. – But the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ involves sensations (*vedanā*), conceptions (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousnesses (*viññāna*); why then do you call it ‘neither conception nor non-conception’?

Answer. – In this perception-sphere, there is conception (*saṃjñā*) but since the latter is subtle (*sūkṣma*) and hard to perceive (*duravabodha*), we speak of ‘non-conception’; on the other hand, since there is conception, we add ‘nor non-conception’.<sup>28</sup> Ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) claim to attain the true characteristic of factors (*dharma*) in this perception-sphere and identify it with *nirvāṇa*; but in the system of the Buddha, although it is known that this perception-sphere

<sup>28</sup> In regards to knowing whether or not there is conception (*saṃjñā*) in the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’, cf. *Anguttara*, IV, p. 427: *Kathāvatthu*, I, p. 263 (tr. Rh. D., p. 155); *Kośa*, VIII, p. 144.

includes conception, the old name is retained and it is called the 'perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception'.

Question. - What is non-conception?

Answer. – There are three kinds of non-conception:

1. the equipoise of non-conception (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti*),<sup>29</sup>
2. the equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation (read *Mie siang cheou ting* = *saṃjñāvedayitanirodhasamāpatti*),<sup>30</sup>
3. the gods without conception (*asaṃjñīdeva*).<sup>31</sup>

The ordinary person (*prthagjana*) who wants to destroy his mind enters into the 'equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation'. <1035>

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<sup>29</sup> The equipoise of non-conception (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti*), its preparation, conditions and fruit are studied in *Kośa*, II, p. 132, 200, 211, 310; IV, p. 200.

<sup>30</sup> On the 'cessation of conception and sensation' (*saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*), which is practically one and the same with *nirvāṇa* on earth, see *Majjhima*, I, p. 160, 301; III, p. 45; *Saṃyutta*, II, p. 212; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 41; IV, p. 454; *Kathāvatthu*, I, p. 202; *Kośa*, II, F 203-214; VII, F 96; VIII, F 193, 207, 215. – Lav., *Nirvāṇa*, p. 77, 80, 157.

<sup>31</sup> The gods without conception (*asaṃjñīsattva*) are defined in *Kośa*, II, F 199-200; VIII, F 136.

AD.

## QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE MEDITATIONS; F 1035-1043

ADA.

### [PURE AND IMPURE PATH];<sup>32</sup> F 1035-1038

<sup>32</sup> Since the explanation that follows is somewhat abstruse, it may be helpful to recall the facts of the problem. The path of the equipoises consists of liberating oneself from the defilements inherent to Kāmadhātu through the four meditations (*dhyāna*) and the first three [formless] equipoises (*samāpatti*) such as they have been defined in the preceding section. Each sphere involves nine categories of defilements: strong-strong, strong-medium, strong-weak, medium-strong, etc. In order to move from one sphere to another, it is therefore necessary to liberate oneself from nine categories of defilements. The process involves for each stage (i) nine mental actions by means of which one detaches oneself from the defilements: this is the path of immediate succession (*ānantaryamārga*), and (ii) nine mental actions by means of which one takes possession of this detachment: this is the path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*). The process thus involves eighteen mental actions for each sphere, and 144 mental actions for the entire eight spheres. In order to attain *nirvāṇa*, it is also necessary to liberate oneself from the inherent defilements of the ninth sphere, the fourth [formless] equipoise (*samāpatti*), also called either the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana*) or the ‘summit of cyclic existence’ (*bhavāgra*).

The equipoises can be practiced according to the mundane path (*laukikamārga*) or the supramundane path (*lokottaramārga*).

1. The mundane path, also called impure path (*sāsravamārga*), is followed by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) who have not ‘envisioned’ the Buddhist truths as taught by the Buddha. If they liberate themselves from the defilements, it is in a provisional manner only. Then, and this is essential, the practitioners can liberate themselves from the defilements of one sphere only by practicing the preliminary concentrations of the immediately higher sphere.

Thus in this way, in the impure path, the practitioners successively enter into the eight preliminary concentrations (*sāmantaka*) which serve as threshold for the four meditations and the four [formless] equipoises, in order to eliminate, in turn, the defilements of Kāmadhātu, of the four meditations and of the first three [formless] equipoises. Since there is no preliminary concentration above the fourth [formless] equipoise into which the practitioners can enter in order to destroy the defilements of the fourth [formless] equipoise, the practitioners are unable to liberate themselves from the defilements of the fourth [formless] absorption by means of the impure path. We may note that there are only eight preliminary concentrations: the first, serving as the threshold into the first meditation, is called preparatory meditation (*anāgamyā*); the other seven bear the generic name of preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*). The impure (*sāsrava*) concentrations of the mundane path are qualified as clean or pure (*śuddhaka*) as they oppose the equipoises associated with enjoyment (*āsvādanasamprayukta*), tainted by the [objects] of desire; this is a regrettable terminology liable to trouble the reader.

2. The supramundane path (*lokottaramārga*), also called pure path (*anāsravamārga*), is followed by the noble persons (*ārya*) endowed with pure discrimination who have “envisioned” the four noble truths (*āryasatya*) and have understood the sixteen aspects (*ṣoḍaśākāra*) made up of the four aspects for each truth (see above, F 641). This path assures the definitive liberation of the defilements and, whereas in the impure path the practitioners must enter into the preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) of the immediately higher sphere in order to liberate themselves from the defilements of their own sphere, the noble persons who follow the pure path cut the defilements of their stage directly without resorting to any preliminary concentration whatsoever. Thus in this way, having reached the fourth and last [formless] equipoise (*samāpatti*), the noble



The meditations (*dhyāna*) and [formless] equipoises (*samāpatti*) are of two types:

- (i) impure (*sāsrava*),
- (ii) pure (*anāsrava*).

(i) The impure type is <1036> practiced by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*), as has already been said above; (ii) the pure type is the sixteen aspects of the noble [truths] (*ṣoḍaśāryākāra*).

(i) When one is following the impure path, one relies on the preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) of the stage immediately above in order to abandon the defilements of the lower stage. (ii) When one is following the pure path, one abandons the defilements of one's own stage and those of the higher stage. This is why, when ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) [187a] are in the summit of cyclic existence, [i.e., fourth and last (formless) equipoise,] they do not succeed in freeing themselves from the defilements of this sphere, because [beyond it] there is no preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) leading to a higher sphere.

When the disciples of the Buddha wish to abandon the [objects of] desire (*kāma*) of Kāmadhātu and the defilements (*kleśa*) of Kāmadhātu by means of meditation, they cut the nine categories of the strong (*adhimātra*), medium (*madhya*) and weak (*mṛdu*) defilements, namely: 1) strong-strong, 2) strong-medium, 3) strong-weak, 4) medium-strong, 5) medium-medium, 6) medium-weak, 7) weak-strong, 8) weak-medium, 9) weak-weak.

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persons can eliminate the defilements of this sphere by nine actions of detachment and nine actions of taking possession: which was impossible for the ordinary persons following the impure path.

3. The practitioners can combine the impure and the pure path if they so wish. This was the case for Śākyamuni. When he arrived in Bodh-Gayā, under the Bodhi tree, he was still an ordinary person (*prthagjana*), a man who had not yet envisioned the truths. But, by means of the impure path, he had eliminated all the defilements of Kāmadhātu, of the four meditations and of the first three [formless] equipoises. Only the defilements of the fourth and last [formless] equipoise remained in him, for, as we have seen, they cannot be destroyed by the impure path. When enlightenment took place, Śākyamuni saw, in sixteen moments, the sixteen aspects (*ṣoḍaśākāra*) of the Buddhist truths: this pure discrimination gave a definitive characteristic to his liberation from the lower desires. It remained for him to eliminate the nine categories of defilements relating to the fourth [formless] equipoise (*samāpatti*) or summit of cyclic existence (*bhavāgra*): this he did by the nine mental actions of the path of immediate succession (*ānantaryamārga*) that detached him from these defilements and by the nine mental actions of the path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*) that put him in possession of this detachment. Śākyamuni obtained thus the state of a perfected being (*arhat*), devoid of any defilements, in 34 moments of mind: 16 moments for envisioning the truths, 9 for the path of immediate succession (*ānantaryamārga*) of the summit of cyclic existence, 9 for the path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*) of the same summit of cyclic existence. At the same time, he became a Buddha because of his meritorious works.

See a study on the path of the equipoises in L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Kośa*, V, pp. iv-xi; *Morale bouddhique*, pp. 71-97.



(i) Having cut these nine categories, the disciples of the Buddha can attempt to obtain the first meditation (*dhyāna*) by way of the impure path (*sāsravamārga*). In this case, in the preparatory meditation (*anāgamyā*, preceding the first meditation), during the nine paths of immediate succession (*ānantaryamārgas*, of the nine categories of the defilements of the lower stage) and eight paths of liberation (*vimuktimārga*, taking possession of these successive abandonings),

- they first practice the impure path,
- then the impure or pure path.

During the ninth path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*), in the preparatory meditation,

- they first practice the impure path;
- then the impure or pure path of the preparatory meditation (*anāgamyā*), and the impure path of the preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) of the first meditation.

(ii) If [the disciples of the Buddha] wish to attain the first meditation by way of the pure path (*anāsravamārga*), they will do the same.

(i) If [the disciples of the Buddha] abandon the defilements of the first meditation by way of the impure path (*sāsravamārga*), in the preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) of the second meditation, during nine paths of immediate succession and eight paths of liberation,

- they first practice the impure path of the preliminary concentration of the second meditation,
- then the impure path of the preliminary concentration of the second meditation as well as the first meditation 'free from fluxes' (*anāsrava*) and its sequel.

During the ninth path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*), in the preliminary concentration of the second meditation,

- they first practice the impure path of the preliminary concentration of the second meditation,
- then the preliminary concentration of the second meditation,
- then the preliminary concentration of the second meditation, the pure path of the first meditation and its sequel, the second clean (*śuddhaka*) meditation or meditation 'free from fluxes' (*anāsrava*).

(ii) If [the disciples of the Buddha] abandon the defilements of the first meditation by way of the pure path (*anāsravamārga*), during nine paths of immediate succession and eight paths of liberation,

- they first practice the pure path of their own stage,
- then the impure and pure path of the first meditation and its sequel.

During the ninth path of liberation,

- they first practice the pure path of their own stage,
- then the impure and pure paths of the first meditation and its sequel.

It is the same in the practice of the other equipoises from the second clean (*śuddhaka*) meditation or meditation 'free from fluxes' (*anāsrava*) up to the detachment (*vairāgya*) that characterizes the perception-sphere of nothingness (*ākāśañāyatana*). In the detachment that characterizes the perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception (*naīvasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana*), during the nine paths of immediate succession and eight paths of liberation,

- they practice only the universal pure path.

During the ninth path of liberation,

- they practice the good roots of the three realms (*traiḍhātukakuśalamūla*) <1038> and the pure path;

they expel in this way the equipoise without mind (*acittakasamāpatti*).

ADB.

### [CULTIVATION OF THE MEDITATIONS]; F 1038

There are two types of cultivation:

1. cultivation of acquisition (*pratilambha*),
2. cultivation of practice (*niṣevaṇa*).

(1) Cultivation of acquisition is to acquire now what has not been acquired initially; later one will cultivate the thing itself and its following equally.

(2) Cultivation of practice is to cultivate at present what has already been acquired earlier; but later one will not cultivate the following. These are the different cultivations during the meditations (*dhyāna*) and [formless] equipoises (*samāpatti*).

ADC.

### [TYPES OF EQUIPOISE]; F 1038

In brief, the characteristic features (*nimitta*) of the meditations and the [formless] equipoises are twenty-three in number:

- (1-8) eight equipoises of enjoyment (*āsvādana*),
- (9-16) eight clean (*śuddhaka*) equipoises,
- (17-23) seven pure (*anāsrava*) equipoises.

ADD.

### [CAUSES AND CONDITIONS IN THE EQUIPOISES]; F 1038-1040

There are six kinds of causes (*hetu*):

1. associated cause (*saṃprayuktaka*),
2. simultaneous cause (*sahabhū*),
3. homogeneous cause (*sabhāga*),

4. pervasive cause (*sarvatraga*),
5. ripening cause (*vipāka*),
6. nominal cause (*nāmahetu*).<sup>33</sup>

Taken one by one, (i) the seven pure (*anāsrava*) equipoises are homogeneous causes; [187b] (ii) the associated and simultaneous causes: the previous ‘meditation of enjoyment’ and its causes, the subsequent ‘meditation of enjoyment’ and its causes, progress in the same stage. (iii) It is the same for the clean (*śuddhaka*) meditations.

The four conditions (*pratyaya*) are:

1. the causal condition (*hetupratyaya*),
2. the immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*),
3. the supporting object condition (*ālambanapratyaya*).
4. the dominant condition (*adhipatiprataya*):<sup>34</sup> <1039>

(1) The causal condition has been explained above [in the examination of the six causes].

(2) [In regard to the immediately antecedent condition, we will make the following comments].<sup>35</sup>

The first pure (*anāsrava*) meditation can produce six equipoises after itself:

- 1-2. clean (*śuddhaka*) and pure (*anāsrava*) equipoise of the first meditation;
- 3-6. clean and pure equipoise of the second and third meditation.

The second pure meditation can produce eight concentrations after itself:

- 1-2. clean and pure concentration of the same stage;
- 3-4. clean and pure concentration of the first meditation;
- 5-8. clean and pure concentration of the third and fourth meditation.

The third pure meditation can produce ten equipoises after itself:

- 1-2. two equipoises of the same stage
- 3-6. four equipoises of the two lower stages;
- 7-10. four equipoises of the two higher stages.

The fourth [pure] meditation and the [pure] perception-sphere of infinite space (*ākāśānanatyāyatana*) too [can produce ten equipoises after themselves.]

The pure perception-sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññānānanatyāyatana*) can produce nine equipoises after itself:

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<sup>33</sup> The six causes in *Kośa*, II, F 245 seq.

<sup>34</sup> The four conditions in *Kośa*, II, F 299 seq.

<sup>35</sup> The successive arisings of the equipoises is treated in the same way in *Kośa*, VIII, F 167-168.

- 1-2. two equipoises of the same stage;
- 3-6. four equipoises of the two lower stages;
- 7-9. three equipoises of the two higher stages, [namely, clean (*śuddhaka*) and pure (*anāsrava*) equipoise of nothingness (*ākīṃcanya*), clean (*śuddhaka*) equipoise of the perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception (*naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana*)].

The pure perception-sphere of nothingness (*ākīṃcanyāyatana*) can produce seven equipoises after itself:

- 1-2. two equipoises of the same stage;
- 3-6. four equipoises of the two lower stages;
7. one equipoise of the higher stage, [namely, the clean (*śuddhaka*) equipoise of the perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception].

The [pure] perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception (*naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana*) can produce six equipoises after itself:

- 1-2. two equipoises of the same stage;
- 3-6. four equipoises of the two lower stages.

It is the same for the clean (*śuddhaka*) equipoises.

Moreover, these equipoises increase all the enjoyment (*āsvādana*) of their own stage: immediately after the enjoyment of the first meditation, there follows the enjoyment of the second, and so on up to the perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception. <1040>

(3) [In regard to the supporting object condition,<sup>36</sup> we may note that] the clean (*śuddhaka*) meditation and the meditation ‘free from fluxes’ (*anāsrava*) always have the meditation of enjoyment as object-support (*ālambana*); they concern the enjoyment of their own stage; they also concern the clean craving (*viśuddhatṛṣṇā*). As they do not have a stainless object-support, they do not concern pure factors (*anāsrava*).<sup>37</sup>

The fundamental formless equipoises (*maulārūpyasamāpatti*), clean (*śuddhaka*) or free from fluxes (*anāsrava*), do not concern the impure [factors] of the lower stages.

(4) As nominal cause (*nāmahetu*) and dominant condition (*adhipatipratyaya*), the meditations penetrate:

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<sup>36</sup> For the object-support of the meditations and the [formless] equipoises, see detail in *Kośa*, VIII, p. 176-177.

<sup>37</sup> **LS:** *Mpps* seems to differ here from *Kośa*, viii. 20 d, which states: “The good (*śubha*) meditation (*dhyāna*), [i.e., ‘clean equipoise’ and ‘equipoise free from fluxes’,] has all that exists, [i.e., the conditioned and unconditioned factors,] for its object-field (*sadviṣaya*).

- a. the four immeasurable minds (*apramāṇacitta*),<sup>38</sup>
- b. the [first] three liberations (*vimokṣa*),<sup>39</sup>
- c. the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*),<sup>40</sup>
- d. the [first] eight perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*), those that concern the Kāmadhātu,<sup>41</sup>
- e. the [first] five super-knowledges (*abhijñā*) which concern the Kāma- and Rūpadhātu.<sup>42</sup>

The other equipoises each adapt themselves to their object-support; the 'equipoise of the cessation of conception and sensation' (*saṃjñāvedayitanirodhasamāpatti*) has no object-support.

<1041>

ADE.

### [PERFECTING THE MEDITATIONS]; F 1041

In all four meditations (*dhyāna*), there is the principle of perfecting or strengthening (*vardhanadharmā*). By perfecting the impure (*sāsrava*) [meditations] by means of the pure (*anāsrava*) [meditations], mastery of the mind (*cetovaśita*) of the fourth meditation is obtained. By means of the fourth pure (*anāsrava*) meditation, the fourth impure (*sāsrava*) meditation can be perfected. Likewise the third, second, and first meditation can perfect the impure [meditation] of their own stage by means of the pure [meditation] of the same stage.

Question. – What is needed for the perfecting or strengthening of the meditation?

Answer. – The noble persons (*ārya*) delight in the pure equipoise and do not like the impure [equipoise]; at the time of the detachment from the defilements (*vairāgya*), the clean and impure meditations displease them and, as soon as they obtain them, they attempt to eliminate the impurities: they resort to the pure [equipoise] to perfect them. Just as melting rids the gold ore

<sup>38</sup> The four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) are the four 'abodes of Brahmā' (*brāhmvihāra*) mentioned above, *Traité*, I, F 163. – Detailed study in *Kośa*, VIII, F 196-203.

<sup>39</sup> There are eight gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*), explained in detail in a *sūtra* quoted in full in the *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 688; only the first three come under the meditations, the other five fall within the [formless] equipoises (*samāpatti*); cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 204-210.

<sup>40</sup> All eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*) belong to the meditations (*samāpatti*); cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 212-213.

<sup>41</sup> There are ten perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*), the first eight concerning, respectively, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red and white, come under four meditations (*dhyāna*); the ninth and the tenth, concerning, respectively, space and consciousness (*vijñāna*), fall within the first and second equipoise (*samāpatti*); cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 214.

<sup>42</sup> There are six super-knowledges (*abhijñā*); the first five, which have been studied in detail above (*Traité*, F 328-333), rely on the four meditations (*dhyāna*); the sixth, called 'super-knowledge of the destruction of fluxes' (*āsravakṣayaññāna*), belongs only to the perfected being (*arhat*); cf. *Kośa*, VII, F 97-126.

from its dross, so the pure [ equipoise ] perfects the impure [ equipoise ]. From the pure meditation one enters into the clean meditation, and the repetition of this practice constitutes a kind of melting.

ADF. **[THE EXTREME-LIMIT MEDITATION (PRĀNTAKOṬIKA DHYĀNA)];<sup>43</sup> F 1041**

Among the meditations (*dhyāna*), there is one that reaches the extreme limit (*prāntakoṭik*). What is meant by ‘extreme limit’? There are two kinds of perfected beings (*arhat*): (i) the perfected beings who are susceptible of retrogressing (*parihāṇadharmā*) and (ii) the perfected beings who are not susceptible of retrogressing (*aparihāṇadharmā*). The perfected beings who are not susceptible of retrogressing, who have attained mastery (*vaśita*) over all the profound meditations and [formless] equipoises can produce the extreme limit meditation (*prāntakoṭidhyāna*); possessing this meditation, they can transform [187c] their longevity into wealth and wealth into longevity.

ADG. **[COGNITION RESULTING FROM A RESOLVE (PRAṆIDHIJÑĀNA), ETC.];  
F 1041-1042**

Among the equipoises, the ‘cognition resulting from a resolve’ (*praṇidhijñāna*), the four special knowledges (*pratisaṃvid*) and the ‘concentration of being without conflict’ preventing others to harm you (*araṇāsamādhī*) are also included.

**Cognition resulting from a resolve.**<sup>44</sup> – If they wish to know the objects of the threefold world, they cognize as they wish. The cognition resulting from a resolve is of two stages: Kāmadhātu and the fourth meditation

**The four special knowledges.**<sup>45</sup> – The special knowledge of the doctrine (*dharmaṃpratisaṃvid*) and the special knowledge of expression (*niruktiṃpratisaṃvid*) are of two stages, Kāmadhātu and the first meditation; the other two special knowledges, [of the meaning (*artha*) and of eloquence (*pratibhāna*),] are of nine stages: Kāmadhātu, four meditations (*dhyāna*) and four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*).

**Concentration of being without conflict.**<sup>46</sup> – The ‘concentration of being without conflict’ hinders others to be able to harm you. It is of five stages: Kāmadhātu and four meditations.

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<sup>43</sup> The extreme limit (*prāntakoṭika*) is none other than the fourth meditation (*dhyāna*) taken to its extreme limit. It is defined in *Kośa*, VII, F 95-96.

<sup>44</sup> Cognition resulting from a resolve (*praṇidhijñāna*), in *Kośa*, VII, F 88-89.

<sup>45</sup> Special knowledge (*pratisaṃvid*), in *Kośa*, VII, F 89-94.

<sup>46</sup> Concentration of being without conflict (*araṇāsamādhī*), see above, *Traité*, I, F 4, n. 1; *Kośa*, VII, F 86-87.

ADH.

**[ACQUIRING THE MEDITATIONS];<sup>47</sup> F 1042**

Question. – Does the acquisition of the meditations involve other modalities?

Answer. – The equipoises of enjoyment (*āsvādanasamāpatti*) are acquired by birth (*upapatti*) or by retrogressing (*hāni*). The clean (*śuddhaka*) meditations are acquired by birth (*upapatti*) or by detachment (*vairāgya*). The equipoises ‘free from fluxes’ (*anāsrava*) are acquired through detachment (*vairāgya*) or by retrogressing (*hāni*).

The equipoises ‘free from fluxes’ of nine stages, namely, (1-4) the four meditations (*dhyāna*), (5-7) the [first] three formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*), (8) the preparatory meditation (*anāgamya*) and (9) the intermediate meditation (*dhyānāntara*) are able to cut the fetters (*saṃyojana*). Indeed, the preparatory meditation and the intermediate meditation are associated with the sensation of equanimity (*upekṣendriya*).

ADL.

**[MINDS OF SUPERNATURAL EMANATION (NIRMĀṆACITTA)];<sup>48</sup> F 1043**

When persons possess a meditation (*dhyāna*), they possess as well the mind of supernatural emanation (*nirmāṇacitta*) of the lower stages. In the first meditation they possess thus two minds of supernatural emanation: that of the first meditation and that of Kāmadhātu; in the second meditation, three; in the third, four; in the fourth, five minds of supernatural emanation.

If the practitioners who are in the second, third or fourth meditation wish to understand, see or touch something, they must resort to a consciousness of Brahmāloka [i.e., of the first meditation]; when this consciousness disappears, the perception stops.

The four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), the five super-knowledges (*abhijñā*), the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāvāyatana*), the ten perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*), the nine successive equipoises (*anupūrvasamāpatti*), the nine conceptions (*saṃjñā*) [of the meditation of the repulsive (*aśūhabhāvanā*)],<sup>49</sup> the three concentrations (*saṃādhi*),<sup>50</sup> the three liberations (*vimokṣa*), the three pure faculties (*anāsravendriya*), the thirty-seven factors of

<sup>47</sup> The three modes of acquiring the meditations are: (1) birth (*upapatti*) or the transfer from one stage to another after death; (2) detachment (*vairāgya*) which makes one move from a lower stage to a higher stage; (2) retrogressing (*hāni*) which makes one move from a higher equipoise to a lower equipoise of the same stage. The ideas developed here occur in the *Vibhāṣā* (cited by the *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 678); *Kośa*, VIII, F 164-167, summarizes them in the following *kārikās*: *Atadvān labhate śuddhaṃ vairāgyeṇopapattitaḥ; anāsravaṃ tu vairāgyat; kliṣṭaṃ hānyupapattitaḥ*.

<sup>48</sup> The minds of supernatural emanation (*nirmāṇacitta*) have been studied above (*Traité*, I, F 381-382); see also *Kośa*, VIII, F 115-116.

<sup>49</sup> They are listed in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, no. 1156-1164.

<sup>50</sup> The concentrations (*saṃādhi*) of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), wishlessness (*apraṇihita*) and signlessness (*ānimitta*) defined above, *Traité*, I, F 321-324.

the aids of enlightenment (*bodhipākṣikadharma*) and all the qualities of this type arise from the perfection of meditation (*dhyāna*); they should be explained here fully.

AE.

***DHYĀNAPĀRAMITĀ; F 1043-1057***

[Omitted section]



B.

## CHAPTER XXXII: THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS AND THE FOUR MEDITATIONS; F 1209-1238

First Section:	The Eight Supplementary Classes of Factors ( <i>dharma</i> ); F 1209-1212
Second Section:	The Three Concentrations ( <i>samādhi</i> ); F 1213-1232
Third Section:	The Four Meditations ( <i>dhyāna</i> ); F 1233-1238

BA.

## FIRST SECTION: THE EIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY CLASSES OF FACTORS (DHARMA); F 1209-1212 PRELIMINARY NOTE; F 1209

The thirty-seven factors of the ‘aids of enlightenment’ (*bodhipākṣikadharmā*), [i.e.,

- (1) four ‘applications of mindfulness’ (*smṛtyupasthāna*),
- (2) four ‘right efforts’ (*samyakpradhāna*),
- (3) four ‘footings of supernatural power’ (*ṛddhipāda*),
- (4) five ‘praxis-oriented faculties’ (*indriya*),
- (5) five ‘powers’ (*bala*),
- (6) seven ‘members of enlightenment’ (*saṃbodhyaṅga*),
- (7) eight ‘members of the noble path’ (*mārgāṅga*),]

are not the only ones that are essential for the bodhisattvas; an infinite number of other factors (*dharma*) favorable to the noble path must also be completely fulfilled (*paripūrayitavya*) or cultivated (*bhāvitavya*) by them.

Having mentioned the seven classes of the ‘aids of enlightenment’ (*bodhipākṣika*), the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* is now going to point out eight new classes of factors favorable to the noble path and the *Traité* will study them in detail in the three following chapters.

Chapter XXXII will deal with the first two groups:

- (1) the three ‘concentrations’ (*samādhi*),
- (2) the four ‘meditations’ (*dhyāna*).

Chapter XXXIII will deal with the third and fourth group:

- (3) the four immeasurables (*apramāna*),
- (4) the four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*).

Chapter XXXIV will deal with the next four groups:

- (5) the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*),
- (6) the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāvāyatana*),
- (7) the ten perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*)
- (8) the nine successive equipoises (*anupūrvasamāpatti*).

Except for the three concentrations (*samādhi*) which, as ‘gates of liberation’ (*vimokṣamukha*), mark the result of the noble path, the other classes are inferior to the seven classes of the factors of the

‘aids of enlightenment’ (*bodhipākṣikadharmas*) dealt with in the preceding chapter. In general, it may be said that they prepare for and facilitate the practice of the ‘aids of enlightenment’.

From the Abhidharma point of view, the seven classes of the ‘aids of enlightenment’ have an objective value as they are based on the fourth noble truth, that of the noble path, and as they share its efficacy. On the other hand, except for the three concentrations, the classes of supplementary factors in question in the following are subjective practices having no other purpose than rendering the practitioner’s mind relaxed or supple and making it capable of traveling on the noble path.

<1210>

**SŪTRA [206a]** (cf. *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 19, l. 15-18); *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 57, l. 10-58, l. 9) – [The Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva must completely fulfill]:<sup>51</sup>

1. the ‘concentration of emptiness’ (*śūnyatāsamādhi*), the ‘concentration of signlessness’ (*ānimittasamādhi*), the ‘concentration of wishlessness’ (*apraṇihitasamādhi*),
2. the four ‘meditations’ (*catvāri dhyānāni*),
3. the four ‘immeasurables’ (*catvāry apramāṇāni*),
4. the four ‘formless equipoises’ (*catasra ārūpyasamāpattayaḥ*),
5. the eight ‘liberations’ (*aṣṭau vimokṣāḥ*),
6. the eight ‘perception-spheres of mastery’ (*aṣṭāv abhivhāvāyatanāni*),
7. the nine ‘successive equipoises’ (*navānupūrvasamāpattayaḥ*),
8. the ten ‘perception-spheres of totality’ (*daśa kṛtsnāyatanāni*).

**ŚĀSTRA:**

Question. – After the thirty-seven aids (*pakṣa*), why does [the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*] still speak of these eight classes of factors?

Answer. –

1. [Class 1: Concentrations (*samādhi*):]

The thirty-seven aids are the path (*mārga*) leading to *nirvāṇa*. When one follows this path, one reaches the city of *nirvāṇa* (*nirvāṇanagara*). The city of *nirvāṇa* has three gates (*dvāra*), emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*ānimitta*) and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*). Thus, after having spoken about the path [in chapter XXXI], it is necessary here to speak of the gates through which [the path] succeeds [to reach *nirvāṇa*].

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<sup>51</sup> These eight supplementary classes must be ‘completely fulfilled’ (*pūrayitavya*) according to the *Śatasāhasrikā*, or ‘cultivated’ (*bhāvitavya*) according to the *Pañcaviṃśati*, but they cannot be ‘realized’ (*sākṣātkartavya*) by the Bodhisattva for then they would contribute to ushering him into *nirvāṇa* straight away, preventing him therefore from continuing his salvific activity in *saṃsāra*.

2. [Classes 2-3: Meditations (*dhyāna*) and formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*):]

The four meditations (*dhyāna*), etc., are factors (*dharma*) helping to open these gates.

Moreover, the thirty-seven aids are superior and admirable factors, but the mind is distracted (*vikṣipta*) in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*); then on what stages (*bhūmi*) and on what means (*upāya*) will the yogins rely in order to obtain them? He will rely on the meditations (*dhyāna*) of the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and on the equipoises (*samāpatti*) of the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). <1211>

3. [Classes 4-8: Immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), liberations (*vimokṣa*), perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*), successive equipoises (*anupūrvavivāhasamāpatti*) and perception-spheres of totality (*krtsnāyatana*):]

In the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*), the nine successive equipoises (*anupūrvavivāhasamāpatti*) and the ten perception-spheres of totality (*krtsnāyatana*), the yogins are testing their mind to see whether it is supple (*mṛdu*), powerful (*vibhu*) and docile (*yatheṣṭa*). It is like the leader of his troops (*sārvavāha*) who tests his horse (*aśva*) to see whether it is supple and docile and who, only afterwards, goes into battle.

It is the same in the ten perception-spheres of totality: the yogins contemplate (*anupaśyati*) and seize (*udgrhṇāti*) a blue color (*nilavarṇa*), limited or small (*paritta*) or unlimited or big (*apramāṇa*); then they look at objects wanting them to be completely blue (*nila*), or else, completely yellow (*pīta*), completely red (*lohita*), completely white (*avadāta*).

Furthermore, in the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhvāyatana*), they reign supreme (*abhibhu*) over object-supports (*ālambana*).

In the first and the second liberation (*vimokṣa*), they consider the body as repulsive (*aśubha*), but in the third liberation, on the other hand, they consider it as beautiful (*śubha*).

In the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), by means of loving-kindness (*maitrī*), they [intentionally] see<sup>52</sup> all sentient beings as being happy (*sukhita*); by means of compassion (*karuṇā*), they [intentionally] see all sentient beings as being unhappy (*duḥkhita*); by means of joy (*muditā*), they [intentionally] see all sentient beings as being joyful (*mudita*); then setting aside with equanimity (*upekṣā*) the [preceding] three immeasurables, they [intentionally] see nothing more than simply sentient beings, without experiencing repugnance (*pratigha*) or affection (*anunaya*) [for them].

[Subjective or objective consideration:]

Furthermore, there are two types of consideration (*pratyaavekṣā*): 1. the subjective consideration (*adhimutipratyaavekṣā*); 2. the objective consideration (*bhūtapratyaavekṣā*).

<sup>52</sup> Or more exactly, 'intentionally see', for it refers to purely subjective considerations serving to purify the mind of the practitioners, but not exerting any influence on the happiness or misfortune of sentient beings.

The objective consideration is the thirty-seven factors of the ‘aids of enlightenment’ (*bodhipākṣikadharmā*). But since this objective consideration is difficult to acquire (*durlabha*), it is necessary in the following to talk about <1212> the subjective consideration. The mind, in the course of the latter,<sup>53</sup> becomes supple and it becomes easy to obtain the objective consideration. By using the objective consideration, one succeeds in crossing the three gates of *nirvāṇa*. <1213>

BB.

## SECOND SECTION: THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS (SAMĀDHI); F 1213-1232

### PRELIMINARY NOTE; 1213-1215

Here the *Traité* returns to a subject that has already been taken up above, F 321-323. It concerns the three concentrations of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*ānimitta*) and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*).

The canonical sources present them under various names:

1. The three concentrations (*samādhi*): *Vinaya*, III, p. 93; *Digha*, III, p. 219; *Saṃyutta*, IV, p. 360; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 299; *Tch’ang-a-han*, T 1, k. 8, p. 50b1-2; k. 9, p. 53a23-24; k. 10, p. 59c5-6; *Tseng-yi-a-han*, T 125, k. 16, p. 630b4; k. 39, p. 761a5-6.
2. The three liberations (*vimokṣa*), or gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*): *Paṭisambhidā*, II, p. 35; *Atthasālini*, p. 223; *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 564-565.
3. The three contacts (*sparśa*) which the practitioners experience when emerging from the equipoise of cessation: *Majjhima*, I, p. 302.
4. For at least two of them, the liberations of mind (*cetovimukti*): *Majjhima*, I, p. 297; *Saṃyutta*, IV, p. 296; *Tsa-a-han*, T 99, k. 21, p. 149c13-14.

Their importance cannot be overestimated: they are the factors (*dharma*) to be cultivated in order to understand and destroy the three poisons of attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*) (*Aṅguttara*, I, p. 299); they are the path of the unconditioned factor (*asaṃskṛta*) or of *nirvāṇa* (*Saṃyutta*, IV, p. 360, 363; *Tch’ang-a-han*, T 1, k. 10, p. 50c5-6), the gates of *nirvāṇa* (*Saddharmapuṇḍ.*, p. 136, l. 13).

But satisfactory definitions are rare in the early sources. The clearest occur in the *Ekottara* (*Tseng-yi a-han*, T 125, k. 16, p. 630b), the original Sanskrit of which is reproduced in the *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 208 (cf. T 223, k. 5, p. 254c14-18) and the *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 1440 (cf. T 220, k. 415, p. 80a18-28):

*Katame trayāḥ samādhayaḥ. śūnyatānimittāpraṇihitaḥ. tatra katamaḥ śūnyatāsamādhiḥ. svalakṣaṇena śūnyān sarvadharmān pratyavekṣamāṇasya yā cittasya sthitiḥ śūnyatāvimokṣamukham ayam ucyate śūnyatāsamādhiḥ. tatra katama ānimittasamādhiḥ. animitān sarvadharmān pratyavekṣamāṇasya yā cittasya sthitiḥ ānimittavimokṣamukham ayam ucyate*

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<sup>53</sup> In the course of the subjective consideration relating to the seven [eight?] classes of supplementary factors (*dharma*).

*ānimittasamādhiḥ. tatra katamo 'praṇihitasamādhiḥ. apraṇihitān sarvadharmān  
pratyaवेक्षमāṇasya (var. sarvadharmā anabhisaṃskārā ity anabhisaṃskurvato) yā cittasya sthitir  
apraṇihitavimokṣamukham ayam ucyate 'praṇihitasamādhiḥ.*

Transl. – What are the three concentrations? Those of emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness.

What is the concentration of emptiness? It is the position of a mind <1214> that considers all factors (*dharma*) as empty of specific characteristics, the gate of liberation “emptiness”.

What is the concentration of signlessness? It is the position of a mind that considers all factors as being without signs or characteristics, the gate of liberation “signlessness”.

What is the concentration of wishlessness? It is the position of a mind that considers all factors as unworthy of being wished for, the gate of liberation “wishlessness”. – Var. – It is the position of a mind that no longer makes any effort (or no longer has any contention) by claiming that all factors are unworthy of it.

The Pāli Abhidhamma gives only a relatively modest place to the three concentrations (cf. *Paṭisambhidā*, II, p. 35, 48; *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, p. 70-73; *Atthasālini*, p. 223; *Nettipakaraṇa*, p. 90. 119, 126; *Milinda*, p. 413; *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 564-565).

On the other hand, the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivādins-Vaibhāṣikas gives them an important role. Among the numerous sources, I [Lamotte] restrict myself to indicate the *Vibhāṣā* (T 1545, k. 104, p. 538a-541c), *Abhidharmāmṛta* (T 1553, k. 2, p. 975c1-9; reconstruction by *bhikṣu* Sastri, p. 90), *Kośa* (VIII, F 184-192), *Abhidharmadīpa* (p. 424), etc.

For these sources, the three concentrations are in fact discriminations, but discriminations of a category so perfect that they occur only in a concentrated mind: this is why they are called concentration (*samādhi*).

Indeed, they penetrate to the very depths of the four noble truths of which they represent the sixteen aspects (*ākāra*): this is why, in the pure (*anāsrava*) state, they constitute the three gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*).

According to whether they are mundane (*laukika*), i.e., still attached to the threefold world of existence, or supramundane (*lokottara*), they appear in eleven or nine stages (*bhūmi*).

The entire system is summarized admirably by Ghoṣaka in his *Abhidharmāmṛta* (l.c.):

The three concentrations are the concentration of emptiness (*śūnyatāsanādhi*), the concentration of wishlessness (*apraṇihitasamādhi*) and the concentration of signlessness (*ānimittasamādhi*). It is because the mind takes the pure (*anāsrava*) as object that they are called concentration (*samādhi*).

When concentrated, the practitioners see the five appropriative aggregates (*upādānaskandha*) as being empty (*śūnya*), without self (*anātman*) and without mine (*anātmiya*): this is the concentration of emptiness (*śūnyatāsamādhi*).

Having entered into this concentration, they no longer wish for attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*), delusion (*moha*) or new existence (*punarbhava*): this is the concentration of wishlessness (*apraṇihitasamādhi*).

There is a concentration the object (*ālambana*) of which is free of ten signs or characteristics (*nimitta*). What are these ten? The five object-fields, form, etc., (*rūpādipañcaviṣaya*), male (*puruṣa*), female (*stri*), birth (*jāti*), aging (*jarā*) and termination (*anityatā*). This is the concentration of signlessness (*ānimittasamādhi*).

The concentration of emptiness has two aspects (*ākāra*), empty (*śūnya*) and nonself (*anātman*).

The concentration of wishlessness has ten aspects: impermanent (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), and [the eight] aspects [of the truth] of the origin (*samudaya*) and [of the truth] of the path (*mārga*). <1215>

The concentration of signlessness has the four aspects [of the truth] of cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering.

After having objectively expounded the Sārvāstivādin system, the *Traité* will expound the Madhyamaka point of view regarding the three concentrations.

They must be interpreted not only from the perspective of the non-existence of persons (*pudgalanairātmya*) as do the hearers (*śrāvaka*), but also from the perspective of the twofold non-existence of persons and of factors (*pudgaladharmanairātmya*) as do the Mahāyānists.

By practicing the three concentrations, the bodhisattvas realize that persons and factors are empty (*śūnya*) of intrinsic nature and of characteristics, that this very emptiness is not a substantial sign (*nimitta*) and that consequently any resolution (*prañidhāna*) for the world of existence or non-existence is irrational.

The three concentrations are identical because they have as their sole object the true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) which is nothing other than what is. When the *śrāvakas* speak of the emptiness of factors, they hold it to be a real characteristic; on the other hand, the bodhisattvas refrain from hypostatizing this emptiness and from making a real entity out of it.

The true characteristic of factors constitutes the single object of the three concentrations but it is not a reality; it is only a method of purifying the mind which, freed of illusions, realizes that there is nothing to hypostatize, nothing to characterize and nothing to hope for. As a result, the world of becoming exists only in our imagination and, according to the accepted way of speaking, *saṃsāra* is one and the same [in nature] as *nirvāṇa*.

The *Traité*—in all of this and in the notes as we shall see—restricts itself to condensing the teachings of the early Mahāyānasūtras. <1216>

BBA. **THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHARMA;  
F 1216-1225**

BBA.1. **DEFINITIONS OF THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS; F 1216-1219**

BBA.1.1. **CONCENTRATION OF EMPTINESS (ŚŪNYATĀSAMĀDHI); F 1216**

Question. – What is the gate of *nirvāṇa* called emptiness (*śūnyatā*)?

Answer. – It considers factors (*dharma*) as being empty (*śūnya*), without ‘self’ (*ātman*) and without ‘mine’ (*ātmiya*). Since factors are produced from the collocation of causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagryutpanna*), there is [206b] neither agent (*kāraka*) nor that which is made known or acted upon (*vedaka*). This is what is called the gate of emptiness. Furthermore, on this gate of emptiness, see what has been said in the chapters on patience (*kṣānti*; F 912-926) and wisdom (*prajñā*; F 1104-1106)

BBA.1.2. **CONCENTRATION OF SIGNLESSNESS (ĀNIMITTASAMĀDHI); F 1216-1219**

Knowing that there is neither ‘self’ (*ātman*) nor ‘mine’ (*ātmiya*), why do sentient beings become mentally attached (*cittenābhiniiviśante*) to factors (*dharma*)? The yogins reflect and say to themselves: “Since factors are produced from causes and conditions, there is no real factor (*bhūta**dharma*); there are only signs or characteristics (*nimitta*),<sup>54</sup> and sentient beings, seizing these characteristics, become attached to ‘self’ and ‘mine’. Now I must see if these characteristics have a perceptible reality or not.” Having examined and considered them, they determine that they are all non-existent (*anupalabdhā*). Whether it is a matter of the characteristic of male (*puruṣanimitta*) or of female (*strinimitta*), of the characteristics of identity or difference (*ekatvānyatanimitta*), etc., the reality of these characteristics does not exist (*nopalabhyate*). Why? Being without self and mine, all factors are empty and, since they are empty, they are neither male nor female. As for the identity and difference, these are only names (*nāman*) that are valid in the hypothesis of ‘self’ and ‘mine’. This is why male and female, identity and difference, etc., are really non-existent.

BBA.1.2.1. **[THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE AND FEMALE; F 1216-1219]**

Furthermore, when the four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) and the derivative material form (*upādāyarūpa*) delimit [the elementary substance] ‘space’ (*ākāśa*), we say there is a body (*kāya*). Then—in a collocation of <1217> causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagri*) with the internal and external sense-sources of consciousness (*ādhyātmikabāhyāyatana*)—there arises the elementary substance consciousness (*vijñānadhātu*), and the body, having at its disposal this

<sup>54</sup> In this paragraph, the *Traité* basically confines itself to the classical definitions indicated above (F 1213f.) and which it has reproduced more faithfully on F 322. But in regard to the signs or characteristics (*nimitta*) of which the concentration of signlessness (*ānimitta*) is free, it adds to the ten traditional characteristics (*pañcaviṣaya-stri-puruṣa-trisaṃskṛtalakṣaṇāni daśa*) those of ‘identity’ (*ekatva*) and ‘difference’ (*anyatva*).



collocation of sense-elements (*dhātusāmagri*), performs various activities; it speaks, it sits, it stands, it goes and it comes. This collocation of six elementary substances which is empty [of intrinsic nature] is improperly qualified as a male, or improperly qualified as a female.<sup>55</sup>

If each of these six elementary substances were male, there would have to be six males, for it is impossible that *one* equals *six* or that *six* equals *one*. But in the elementary substance ‘earth’ (*pr̥thivīdhātu*) [—when entering into the composition of the body—], there is neither the characteristic of male nor of female, and likewise [in the other elementary substances, water, fire, wind, space] up to and including the elementary substance ‘consciousness’ (*viññānadhātu*). If these characteristics do not exist in each [of the six elementary substances] taken separately, then all the more they do not exist in the collocation of these six elementary substances. – Likewise, if six dogs (*kukkura*), taken separately, cannot engender a lion (*siṃha*), then all the more so, when taken together, they could not do so since they do not have the nature for it.

Question. – Why would there not be a male or female? Although the persons (*puruṣa*) do not differ, the parts of the body (*kāyāvayava*) themselves differ and there are distinctions in terms of gender.<sup>56</sup> The body cannot exist independently from the parts of the body and all the more the parts of the body cannot exist independently of the body. <1218> If we see the foot, which is part of the body, we know that there is a whole (*avayavin*) called body. The parts of the body, foot, etc., differ from the body, and it is the body that has the characteristics of the male or female.

Answer. – The person has already been refuted above (F 736) and I [Nāgārjuna] have also refuted the characteristics (*nimitta*) of the body. Now I must repeat myself.

If there were a whole (*avayavin*) called body (*kāya*), all the parts of the body would exist in their entirety in each part (*avayava*) of this body; each of the parts would exist in all of the parts. If the

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<sup>55</sup> Human beings are a collocation of six elementary substances (*dhātu*) – earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness – but, whether they are taken separately or together, they do not constitute any difference in terms of gender.

The analysis of the human being into six elementary substances is of canonical origin: cf. *Majjhima*, III, p. 239: *Chadhāturo ayaṃ, bhikkhu, puriso ti iti kho pan’ etaṃ vuttaṃ. Kiñ c’etaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ? Paṭhavīdhātu āpodhātu tejodhātu vāyodhātu ākāśadhātu viññānadhātu.*

On these six elementary substances, see also *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 176; *Vibhaṅga*, p. 82-85; *Tch’ang a han*, T 1, k. 8, p. 52a6-7; *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 3, p. 435c21-22; k. 7, p. 468a27-28; k. 21, p. 562c17-18; k. 42, p. 690b27-28; k. 47, p. 723b20-21; k. 49, p. 732c28-29; *Tsa a han*, T 99, k. 9, p. 60c28-29 (cf. E. Waldschmidt, *Das Upasenāsūtra*, Nach. Göttingen, 1957, No. 2, p. 38, l. 11-12); *Tsa a han*, T 99, k. 17, p. 119a3; k. 37, p. 269c20-21; k. 43, p. 315b16; *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 29, p. 710b14-15; *Pitāputrasamāgama*, T 320, k. 16, p. 964b21-22, the original Sanskrit of which is cited in *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, p. 244, and *Pañjikā*, p. 508. – See also *Madh. avatāra*, p. 262 (tr. L. de La Vallée Poussin, Muséon, 1911, p. 307-308); *Garbhāvākraṅtisūtra* cited in *Kośa*, I, F 66.

<sup>56</sup> The problem of the whole (*avayavin*) and its parts (*avayava*), which sets the Buddhists against the Vaiśeṣikas, is treated at length in the *Kośa*, III, F 210-214.



body existed fully in its entirety in all of the parts, the foot (*pāda*) would exist in the head (*śīras*). Why? Because there would be an entire body in the head. If each part of the body would exist in all the parts, there would be no difference between the body and its parts, since the whole (*avayavin*) follows the parts (*avayava*).

Question. – If the parts of the body, the foot, etc., would differ from the whole, the fault (*doṣa*) that you mention would exist, but here the parts of the body, the foot, etc., do not differ from the whole, i.e., the body. Therefore there is no fault.

Answer. – If the parts of the body do not differ from the whole, then the head would be the foot. Why? Because both of them, as body, do not differ. [206c]

Moreover, the parts of the body are many, whereas the whole is just one. Now, it is impossible that a multiplicity should make a unit and that a unit should make a multiplicity.

Furthermore, although it is true that the effect (*phala*) does not exist when the cause (*hetu*) does not exist, it is not true that the cause does not exist when the effect does not exist. If, [as you claim], the parts of the body do not differ from the whole, the cause would not exist when the effect does not exist. Why? Because cause and effect would be identical.

The body does not exist (*nopalabhyate*) whether you look for it in the identity (*ekatva*) or difference (*anyatva*) [with its parts], and, as the body does not exist, then on what support (*sthāna*) would the characteristics (*nimitta*) of male or female rest? If the latter exist, they are either bodily or different from the body. Now, the body does not exist. If they occur in some factor (*dharma*) other than the body, since this other factor is non-material (*arūpa*), there would be no difference between male and female. It is only a matter of a collocation of causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*) in the course of two successive existences and <1219> it is due to a mental mistaken view (*viparitacitta*) that we speak of male and female. Thus it is said:

Lower your head or raise it up,  
Bend (*samiñite*) or stretch (*prasārite*),  
Stand (*sthite*), go away (*pratīkrānte*) or approach (*abhīkrānte*),  
Look straight ahead (*ālokite*) or to the side (*vilokite*),  
Speak or discourse:  
In all of that, there is nothing true.  
It is because the wind moves the consciousness (*viññāna*)  
That these activities take place.  
But this consciousness is of a perishable nature (*kṣayadharman*)  
And from moment to moment it exists no longer.

The distinction  
Between male and female  
Comes from my mind.  
It is out of lack of discrimination  
That I see them wrongly to exist.

Skeleton of bones tied one to another,  
Skin bag and bag of flesh,  
Able to move,  
Like a mannequin!

[Although] inwardly without reality,  
Outwardly, one would speak of a man.  
Like a foreign coin thrown into the water  
Or a jungle fire devouring a bamboo forest,  
It is a result of a collocation of causes and conditions  
That sounds issue forth from it.

For other similar characteristics, see what has been said above [about the singular and multiple characteristics; F 1095-1106]: it would be necessary to speak about it at length. This is the gate of signlessness (*ānimittadvāra*).

BBA.1.3.

### CONCENTRATION OF WISHLESSNESS (*APRAṆIHITASAMĀDHI*); F 1219

There is wishlessness (*apraṇihita*) when, having knowledge of the non-existence of the characteristics, there is no longer any reaction.<sup>57</sup> This is the gate of wishlessness (*apraṇihitadvāra*).

<1220>

BBA.2.

### INTRINSIC NATURE OF THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS; F 1220-1222

Question. – But it is by means of discrimination that these three factors contemplate the emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*ānimitta*) and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*) respectively. If these are discriminations (*prajñā*), why call them concentrations (*samādhi*)?

Answer. – If these three kinds of discrimination did not occur in concentration, they would be distracted discriminations (*unmattaprajñā*); many people would fall into pernicious doubts (*mithyāśaṅkhā*) and do nothing further. But when these discriminations occur in concentration, they are able to destroy all the defilements (*kleśa*) and find the true characteristic (*bhūta-dharma*) of factors (*dharma*).

Furthermore, these are the factors of the noble path (*mārga*), different from the entire world and in opposition to the world (*lokaviruddha*). The noble persons (*ārya*) who are in these concentrations see the true nature and teach it; and this is not the language of a distracted mind.

Finally, the other meditations (*dhyāna*) and equipoises (*samāpatti*), in which these three factors do not occur, are not called ‘concentration’ (*samādhi*).<sup>58</sup> Why? Because one can stray away from them, lose them and fall back into *saṃsāra*. This is just as the Buddha said:

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<sup>57</sup> Or any effort (*abhiśaṃskāra*).

The person who observes pure morality (*śīlavīśuddhi*)

Is called a monk (*bhikṣu*).

The person who contemplates emptiness (*śūnyatā*)

Is called a meditator (*dhyāyin*).

The mindful (*smṛtimat*), zealous (*ātāpin*), diligent (*vīryavat*) person

Is called the real yogin.

The foremost of all happinesses (*sukha*)

Is cutting the cravings (*trṣṇā*) and destroying madness.

Rejecting the group of the five aggregates (*skandha*) and the factors of the noble path,

This is eternal happiness, arriving at *nirvāṇa*.<sup>59</sup> <1221>

It follows from these stanzas that the Buddha calls the three gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*) ‘concentration’. [207a]

Question. – Why are they called ‘gates of liberation’?

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<sup>58</sup> Among the innumerable concentrations (*samādhi*), those of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), etc., are the only true ones: this idea has already been developed above, F 324-325.

<sup>59</sup> A new translation of two stanzas already cited above, F 325. These are two stanzas of the *Udānavarga*, XXXII, 81 and 82 of the Sanskrit edition (F. Bernhard, p. 458-459), XXXII, 78 and 79 of the Tibetan edition (H. Beckh, p. 142):

*sa bhikṣur yasya śīlāni*  
*sa dhyāyī yatra śūnyatā /*  
*sa yogī yatra sātatyam*  
*tat sukham yatra nirvṛtiḥ //*

*khriṃs ldan gang yin dge slong de*  
*stong nyid ldan gang bsam gtan de /*  
*rtaḡ tu byed gang rnal ‘byor de*  
*mya ngan ‘das gang bde ba de //*

“The one who possesses morality is a *bhikṣu*; the one in whom [the concentration of] emptiness occurs is a meditator; the one in whom constancy occurs is a yogin; that in which extinction occurs is happiness.”

*aratiratisaḥo hi bhikṣur evam*  
*... /*  
*... rāgānuśayaṃ samuddharaṃ hi //*  
*dge slong dga’ dang mi dga’ mi brjod cing*  
*bas mtha’i gnas mal dag tu sten pa gang /*  
*de ni bag yod gnas zhing srid pa yi*  
*‘dod chags phra rgyas legs par ‘byin par byed //*

“Actually the *bhikṣu* who endures pleasure and displeasure, whose bed and seat are in an isolated place (*prāntāśayanāsana*), who is established in purity, this *bhikṣu* who is well-founded in heedfulness (*apramāda*) will extirpate the latent tendencies of the attachment to existence.

Answer. – When they are practiced, liberation (*vimokṣa*) is attained and one reaches *nirvāṇa* without remainder [of conditioning] (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*); this is why they are called ‘gates of liberation’. *Nirvāṇa* without remainder [of conditioning] is true liberation for in it one finds liberation from physical and mental suffering (*kāyamānasikaduḥkha*). *Nirvāṇa* with remainder [of conditioning] (*sopadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*) is the gate to it and, although these three concentrations are not [actual] *nirvāṇa*, they are the cause (*hetu*) of *nirvāṇa* and that is why they are called *nirvāṇa*. In the world (*loka*), it is common usage to designate the cause by the effect and the effect by the cause.

Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*ānimitta*) and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*) are concentrations (*samādhi*) in their intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). The factors of the mind and mental events associated with these concentrations (*samādhisaṃprayuktacittacaittasikadharma*), the bodily actions (*kāyakarman*) and the vocal actions (*vākkarman*) that arise following them and the formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) <1222> that appear with them form a collocation (*sāmagrī*) called ‘concentration’. Thus, when the king (*rājan*) arrives, the prime minister (*mahāmātya*) and some soldiers (*sainika*) necessarily come along with him.<sup>60</sup> Here concentration (*samādhi*) is like the king, discrimination (*prajñā*) is like the prime minister, and the other factors (*dharma*) are like the soldiers. Even if these other factors are not mentioned, they must necessarily be present. Why? Concentration does not arise by itself; it is unable to have any activity by itself. The other factors arise with it, endure with it, perish with it, and realize with it when collaborating in the good (*hita*).

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<sup>60</sup> Same comparison above, F 135.

BBA.3.

### ASPECTS OF THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS;<sup>61</sup> F 1222-1224

A. The concentration of emptiness (*śūnyatāsamādhi*) has two aspects (*ākāra*): <1223>

- 1) Because it considers (*samanupaśyati*) the five appropriative aggregates (*pañca upādānaskandha*) as having neither identity (*ekatva*) nor difference (*anyatva*), it is 'empty' (*śūnya*).
- 2) Because it considers the 'self' (*ātman*) and the 'mine' (*ātmiya*) as non-existent (*anupalabdha*) it is 'nonself' (*anātmaka*).

B. The concentration of signlessness (*ānimittasamādhi*) has four aspects:

<sup>61</sup> The three concentrations (*samādhi*) are the gates of liberation because they penetrate the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths. These sixteen aspects have already been taken into consideration during the path of preparation (*prayogamārga*) by the practice of the four good roots 'leading to penetration' (*nirvedhabhāgiya*), heat (*uṣmagata*), etc. (cf. *Kośa*, VI, F 163). But the three concentrations are alone in penetrating them completely.

The *Vibhāṣā* (T 1545, k. 104, p. 538c7-10), the *Abhidharmāmṛta* (T 1553, k. 2, p. 975c1-9; reconstruction by *bhikṣu* Sastri, p. 99); *Kośa* (VIII, F 188-190) and the *Abhidharmadīpa* (p. 424) distribute the aspects seized by the three concentrations in the following way:

The concentration of emptiness (*śūnyatāsamādhi*) perceives the aspects 'empty' (*śūnya*) and 'nonself' (*anātmaka*) which constitute the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> aspect of the truth of suffering (*duḥkhasatya*).

The concentration of signlessness (*ānimittasamādhi*) perceives the four aspects of the truth of cessation (*nirodhasatya*).

The concentration of wishlessness (*apraṇihitasamādhi*) perceives the aspects 'impermanent' and 'suffering' which constitute the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of the truth of suffering (*duḥkhasatya*), plus the four aspects of the truth of the origin (*samudayasatya*), plus the four aspects of the truth of the path (*mārgasatya*): in all, ten aspects.

The *Traité* refers quite often to the theory of the sixteen aspects: cf. k. 11, p. 138a7-10 (above, F 641); k. 17, p. 186c28 (above, F 1036); k. 19, p. 200a14 and 202c24; k. 23, p. 233b2; k. 29, p. 274a22; k. 54, p. 444a15; k. 63, p. 505a17-18; k. 83, p. 641a16.

A phrase often repeated in the early scriptures (*Majjhima*, I, p. 435, 500; *Anguttara*, II, p. 128; IV, p. 422-424) may be thought of as a rough draft of the theory of the sixteen aspects: *Dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati*: "He considers the factors (*dharma*) as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumor, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty and as nonself." In the Pāli *Abhidhamma*, e.g., in the *Paṭisambhidā*, I, p. 118, there are analyses growing out of the four noble truths. But the specification of the sixteen aspects (*Mahāvīyut.*, no. 1189-1205) is an innovation of the Sarvāstivādins.

The definitions proposed by their scholars are quite divergent and would deserve a detailed study: the *Kośa* (VII, F 31-34) provides no less than three different explanations; the *Abhidharmāmṛta* (T 1553, k. 1, p. 973a1-9; reconstruction by *bhikṣu* Sastri, p. 83), the *Abhidharmadīpa* (p. 329), the *Kośakārikābhāṣya* by Saṃghabhadra (T 1563, k. 35, p. 950c27-951a12) have their own interpretations as well.

- 1) Because it considers *nirvāṇa* as the cessation of the manifold types of suffering (*nānāvidhaduḥkhanirodha*), it is 'cessation' (*nirodha*).
- 2) Because it considers *nirvāṇa* as the extinctions of the fires of the threefold poison (*triviṣa*) and the other defilements (*kleśa*), it is 'peaceful' (*śanta*).
- 3) Because it considers *nirvāṇa* as the foremost of all factors (*dharma*), it is 'excellent' (*praṇīta*).
- 4) Because it considers *nirvāṇa* as separated from the world (*lokaviśamyukta*), it is 'exit' or 'deliverance' (*niḥsaraṇa*).

C. The concentration of wishlessness (*apraṇihitasamādhi*) has two aspects:

- 1) Because it considers the five appropriative aggregates (*pañcopādānaskandha*) as arising from causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*), it is 'impermanent' (*anitya*).
- 2) Because it considers the five appropriative aggregates as the torments of the body and mind (*kāyikamānasikaviheṭhana*), it is 'suffering' (*duḥkha*).

Then, as it considers the causes (*hetu*) of the five appropriative aggregates (*upādānaskandha*), it has four more aspects:

- 3) Because the collocation of defilements and impure actions (*kleśasāsravakarmasāmagrī*) produces an effect of suffering (*duḥkhaphala*), it is 'origin' (*samudaya*).
- 4) Because the six causes (*hetu*)<sup>62</sup> produce a fruit of suffering (*duḥkhaphala*), it is 'cause' (*hetu*). <1224>
- 5) Because the four conditions (*pratyaya*)<sup>63</sup> produce an effect of suffering (*duḥkhaphala*), it is 'condition' (*pratyaya*).
- 6) Because a certain number of homogeneous causes and conditions [follow one another] to produce an effect, it is 'procession' or 'successive causation' (*prabhava*).

Finally, as it considers the appropriative aggregates (*anupādānaskandha*), it has four more aspects:

- 7) Because the eight members of the noble path (*āryamārgāṅga*) can lead to *nirvāṇa*, it is 'path' (*mārga*).
- 8) Because [this path] is free of mistaken views (*viparyāsa*), it is 'reasonable' or 'practical' or 'correct method' (*nyāya*).
- 9) Because all noble persons (*āryapudgala*) follow this path, it is the 'route' or 'accomplishing' (*pratipad*).

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<sup>62</sup> See above, F 386, 1038.

<sup>63</sup> See also p. F 386 and 1038.

- 10) Because the defilements (*kleśa*) that depend on craving (*tṛṣṇāpatita*) and those that depend on afflicted views (*dṛṣṭipatita*)<sup>64</sup> do not conceal this path, it is 'definitive exit' or 'definitive release' (*nairyāṇika*).

BBA.4.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS IN THE STAGES;**<sup>65</sup>

**F 1224-1225**

The three gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*) occur in nine stages (*bhūmi*):

- 1-4) the four meditations (*dhyāna*),
- 5) the stage of preparatory meditation [*anāgamyā* of the first meditation (*dhyāna*)],
- 6) the intermediate meditation [*dhyānāntara*: subdivision of the first meditation],
- 7-9) the [first] three formless (*ārūpya*) equipoises.

And this, because the three gates of liberation are essentially pure (*anāsravasvabhāva*).

Some say that the three gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*) are absolutely pure (*atyantam anāsrava*), whereas the three concentrations (*samādhi*) are sometimes impure (*sāsrava*) and sometimes pure (*anāsrava*). This is why there would be two distinct names: concentration (*samādhi*) and liberation (*vimokṣa*). For those who say this, the concentrations occur in eleven stages: <1225>

- 1-6) the six stages (*bhūmi*), [namely, the four meditations (*dhyāna*), the preparatory meditation (*anāgamyā*) and the intermediate meditation (*dhyānāntara*)];
- 7-9) the [first] three formless (*ārūpya*) equipoises;
- 10) the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*);
- 11) the perception-sphere of the summit of existence (*bhavāgra* or fourth *ārūpya*).

When the three concentrations are impure (*sāsrava*), they are tied (*baddha*) to these eleven stages. When they are pure (*anāsrava*), they are not tied, but are associated with the faculty (or controlling faculty) of contentedness (*saumanasyendriya*), with the faculty of satisfaction (*sukhendriya*) and with the faculty of equanimity (*upekṣendriya*).<sup>66</sup>

Beginners (*ādikārmika*) in the practice of the three concentrations are in [207b] the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), the perfected ones (*pariṇiṣpanna*) are in the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) or the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). See what has been set forth in length in the Abhidharma on all of those, whether they are perfected or non-perfected, practiced or non-practiced.

<sup>64</sup> Two classes of defilements already indicated above, F 424.

<sup>65</sup> In this section, the *Traité* proposes a distribution identical with that of the *Vibhāṣā* (T 1545, k. 104, p. 539b1-2) and of the *Kośa* (VIII, F 187 and n. 1).

<sup>66</sup> I.e., the three faculties appearing in the list of 22 faculties (*indriya*) which will be discussed below, F 1494.

BBB. **THE THREE CONCENTRATIONS ACCORDING TO THE MAHĀYĀNA; F 1225-1232**

[omitted]

BC. **THIRD SECTION: THE FOUR MEDITATIONS (DHYĀNA); F 1233-1238**

BCA. **THE FOUR MEDITATIONS ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHARMA; F 1233-1236**

BCA.1. **[TWO TYPES OF MEDITATION; F 1233]**

The four meditations (*dhyāna*) are of two types:

1. clean (*śuddhaka*) in the mundane order of purity;
2. pure (*anāsrava*) in the supramundane order of purity.<sup>67</sup>

What is called clean meditation (*dhyāna śuddhaka*)? The five impure but good (*sāsravakuśala*) aggregates.<sup>68</sup>

What is called pure meditation (*dhyāna anāsrava*)? The five pure (*anāsrava*) aggregates.<sup>69</sup>

BCA.2. **[OTHER FACTORS CONTAINED IN THE MEDITATIONS; F 1233]**

The bodily and vocal actions (*kāyavakkarman*) contained in the four meditations are material factors (*rūpa*); the rest is non-material (*arūpa*). All of them are invisible (*anidarśana*), non-resistant (*apratigha*), sometimes impure (*sāsrava*), sometimes pure (*anāsrava*). The five good-impure (*kuśala-sāsrava*) aggregates are impure; the five pure (*anāsrava*) aggregates are pure. The impure aggregates fall within the domain of the desire realm (*kāmadhātuvacara*); the pure aggregates do not fall within any realm.

The meditations contain bodily actions (*kāyakarman*), vocal actions (*vākkarman*) and formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) that are neither mind (*citta*) nor mental events (*caitasika dharma*), nor associated with the mind (*cittasaṃprayukta*).

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<sup>67</sup> See above, F 1027 and n. 3; 1035 and n. 1; 1038; 1042 and n. 4. – Cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 144-146.

<sup>68</sup> Whoever enters into meditation (*dhyāna*), i.e., possesses the equipoise called meditation (*dhyāna*), necessarily possesses besides the mind and mental events, (i.e., the four last aggregates [*skandha*],) the discipline (*saṃvara*) of meditation (*dhyāna*) that is form (*rūpa*; the first aggregate): cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 128 and n. 4.

<sup>69</sup> The five pure aggregates (*anāsravaskandha*), also called *dharma* aggregates (*dharmaskandha*) or supramundane aggregates (*lokottaraskandha*): morality (*śīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*prajñā*), liberation (*vimukti*), cognition-vision of liberation (*vimuktijñānadarśana*): cf. *Dīgha*, III, p. 279; *Majjhima*, I, p. 145, 214, 217; *Saṃyutta*, I, p. 99-100, 139; V, p. 162; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 162; III, p. 134, 271; V, p. 16; *Itivuttaka*, p. 107-108; *Kośa*, VI, F 297 n.; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 607.



The meditations also contain the aggregate of sensation (*vedanāskandha*), the aggregate of conception (*saṃjijñāskandha*) and the aggregate of formations (*saṃskāraskandha*) <1234> that are associated with it. The mental events (*caitasika dharma*) as well are associated with the mind (*cittasaṃprayukta*).

The meditations contain mind (*citta*), mental sense-faculty (*manas*), and consciousness (*viññāna*): this is only mind.

BCA.3.

**[TETRALEMMA BETWEEN ‘CONCOMITANTS OF MIND’ AND ‘ASSOCIATED WITH SENSATION’; F 1234-1234]**

In the meditations, there are:

1. factors that are ‘concomitants of mind’ (*cittānuparivartin*) and ‘non-associated with sensation’ (*na vedanāsaṃprayukta*);
2. factors that are ‘associated with sensation’ (*vedanāsaṃprayukta*) and ‘not concomitants of mind’ (*na cittānuparivartin*);
3. factors that are ‘concomitants of mind’ (*cittānuparivartin*) and ‘associated with sensation’ (*vedanāsaṃprayukta*);
4. factors that are ‘not concomitants of mind’ (*na cittānuparivartin*) and ‘non-associated with sensation’ (*na vedanāsaṃprayukta*).

(1.) There are factors that are ‘concomitants of mind’ and ‘non-associated with sensation’. Indeed, the four meditations contain:

- a. bodily actions (*kāyakarman*) and vocal actions (*vākkarman*),
- b. formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) but concomitants of mind (*cittānuparivartin*),
- c. sensations (*vedanā*).

(2.) There are factors that are ‘associated with sensation’ and ‘not concomitants of mind’. Indeed, the four meditations contain mind (*citta*), mental sense-faculty (*manas*) and consciousness (*viññāna*).

(3.) There are factors that are ‘concomitants of mind’ and ‘associated with sensation’. Indeed, the four meditations contain:

- a. the aggregate of conception (*saṃjijñāsaṃskāra*),
- b. the ‘associated’ aggregate of formations (*saṃprayukta saṃskāraskandha*).

(4.) There are factors that are ‘not concomitants of mind’ and ‘non-associated with sensation’. Indeed, with the exception of the formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) but concomitants of the mind (*cittānuparivartin*)—formations contained in the four meditations—,

these are all the other formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) and associated with the aggregate of conception (*saṃjñāskandhasaṃprayukta*).

BCA.4.

**[TETRALEMMA BETWEEN ‘CONCOMITANTS OF INITIAL INQUIRY’ AND ‘ASSOCIATED WITH INVESTIGATION’; F 1234-1235]**

Of the four meditations, the [last] three are ‘not concomitants of initial inquiry’ (*na vitarkānuparivartin*) and are ‘not associated with investigation’ (*na vicārasaṃprayukta*). <1235>

In the first meditation, there are:

1. factors that are ‘concomitants of initial inquiry’ (*vitarkānuparivartin*), but ‘non-associated with investigation’ (*na vicārasaṃprayukta*),
2. factors that are ‘associated with initial inquiry’ (*vicārasaṃprayukta*), but ‘not concomitants of investigation’ (*na vitarkānuparivartin*),
3. factors that are concomitants of initial inquiry (*vitarkānuparivartin*) and associated with investigation (*vicārasaṃprayukta*),
4. factors that are ‘not concomitants of initial inquiry’ (*na vitarkānuparivartin*) and ‘non-associated with investigation’ (*na vicārasaṃprayukta*).

(1.) There are factors that are ‘concomitants of initial inquiry’ but ‘non-associated with investigation’. Indeed, the first meditation contains:

- a. bodily actions (*kāyakarman*) and vocal actions (*vākkarman*),
- b. formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) and concomitants of initial inquiry (*vitarkānuparivartin*),
- c. investigation (*vicāra*).

(2.) There are factors that are ‘associated with investigation’, but not ‘concomitants of initial inquiry’, namely, initial inquiry (*vitarka*).

(3.) There are factors that are ‘concomitants of investigation’ and ‘associated with investigation’, namely, the mind (*citta*) and mental events (*caitasika dharma*) associated with initial inquiry (*vitarka*) and investigation (*vicāra*).

(4.) There are factors that are ‘not concomitants of initial inquiry’ and ‘non-associated with investigation’. Indeed, with the exception of the formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) that are ‘concomitants of initial inquiry’ (*vitarkānuparivartin*), these are all the other formations dissociated from mind.

BCA.5.

**[TRILEMMA BETWEEN 'BEING ALL THE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS' AND 'CONSTITUTING ALL THE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS'; F 1235-1236]**

The four meditations (*dhyāna*) 'are all the causes and conditions' (*hetupratyaya*) and 'constitute all the causes and conditions'.

In the first of the four meditations, there are:

- 1) factors that 'follow upon an antecedent' (*samanantara*) but do 'not constitute an antecedent condition' (*samanantarapratyaya*),
- 2) factors that 'follow upon an antecedent' and 'constitute an antecedent condition',
- 3) factors that do 'not follow upon an antecedent' and do 'not constitute an antecedent condition'.

(1.) There are factors that 'follow upon an antecedent', but do 'not constitute [208b] an antecedent condition'. This is the mind (*citta*) and mental events (*caitasika dharma*) called 'to arise in a future existence'. <1236>

(2.) There are factors that 'follow upon an antecedent' and 'constitute an antecedent condition'. This is the past (*atita*) and present (*pratyutpanna*) mind.

(3.) There are factors that do 'not follow upon an antecedent' and that do 'not constitute an antecedent condition'. Actually, with the exception of mind and mental events that will arise in a future existence, these are the other minds and mental events of the future, physical and mental actions dissociated from the mind.

It is the same for the second and third meditations.

In the fourth meditation, there are:

- 1) factors that 'follow an antecedent' but that do 'not constitute an antecedent condition'. These are:
  - a. The mind and mental events called 'to arise in a future existence';
  - b. The equipoise of non-discrimination (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti*), arisen or to arise.
- 2) Factors that 'follow upon an antecedent' and that 'constitute an antecedent condition'. This is the past and present mind and mental events.
- 3) Factors that do 'not follow upon an antecedent' and that do 'not constitute an antecedent condition'. These are:
  - a. With the exception of the mind and mental events called 'to arise in a future existence', all the other minds and mental events of the future.
  - b. With the exception of the formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) and following upon an antecedent, all the other formations dissociated from the mind.

c. Bodily and vocal actions.

The four meditations include bodily actions (*kāyakarman*), vocal actions (*vākkarman*) and formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*); some constitute conditions (*pratyaya*) and do not have conditions. Others both have conditions and constitute conditions.<sup>70</sup>

These four meditations are also dominating conditions (*adhipatipratyaya*) and constitute dominating conditions.<sup>71</sup> All this is fully explained in the *Abhidharmavibhāga*. <1237>

BCB.

**THE FOUR MEDITATIONS ACCORDING TO THE MAHĀYĀNA; F 1237-1238**

[omitted]

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<sup>70</sup> This subject is treated in detail above, F 1038-1040.

<sup>71</sup> See above, p. 1040.

C. **CHAPTER XXXIII: THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES AND THE FOUR FORMLESS EQUIPOISES; F 1239-1279**

CA. **FIRST SECTION: THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES; F 1239-1273**

**PRELIMINARY NOTE; F 1239-1241**

The fourth class of supplementary factors recommended to the bodhisattva by the *Prajñāpāramitā* is constituted by the four immeasurables: (i) loving-kindness (*maitrī* or *maitrā*), (ii) compassion (*karuṇā*), (iii) sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and (iv) equanimity (*upekṣā*). These are the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), the four liberations of mind (*cetovimukti*) or the four abodes of Brahmā (*brahmavihāra*). This last term is by far the most frequent in the post-canonical Sanskrit texts and in the *sūtras* and *śāstras* of the Mahāyāna.

A stock phrase endlessly repeated in the *Tripitāka* defines the four immeasurables. The Pāli wording shows practically no variation: *Digha*, I, p. 250-251; II, p. 186-187, 242, 250; III, p. 49-50, 78, 223-224; *Majjhima*, I, p. 38, 127, 283, 297, 335, 351, 369-370; II, p. 76, 195; III, p. 146; *Saṃyutta*, IV, p. 296, 322, 351-356; V, p. 115-116; *Āṅguttara*, I, p. 183, 192, 196; II, p. 128-130, 184; III, p. 225; IV, p. 390; V, p. 299-301, 344-345. – On the other hand, the Sanskrit wording, imperfectly reproduced in the *Prajñāpāramitā* editions, shows many variants: Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, p. 350; *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 213; *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 181; *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 1444; *Daśabhūmika*, o. 34; *Mahāvvyut.*, no. 1504-1509.

Pāli: So mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthiṃ, iti uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantāṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggaṭṭhena appamāṇeṇa **<1240>** avyāpajjhena (var. abyābajjhena) pharitvā viharati.

Karuṇāsahagatena cetasā – pe – pharitvā viharati. Muditāsahagatena cetasā – pe – pharitvā viharati. Upekṣāsahagatena cetasā – poe – pharitvā viharati.

Sanskrit: Sa maitrisahagatena cittena vipulena mahadgaṭṭhādāvayenāpramāṇenāvairēṇā-sapatnenāvvyāvadhyena sarvatrānugatena subhāvitenaikāṃ diśaṃ adhimucya spharitvopasampadya viharati, tathā dvitīyaṃ tathā tṛtīyaṃ tathā caturthiṃ ity ūrdhvaṃ adhas tiryag dharmadhātuparame loka ākāśadhātuparyavasāne sarvaśaḥ sarvāvantam imaṃ lokaṃ spharitvopasampadya viharati.

Evam karuṇāsahagatena cittena... muditāsahagatena cittena... upekṣāsahagatena cittena... spharitvopasampadya viharati.

Transl. of the Pāli. – (i) Having pervaded the first direction with a mind associated with loving-kindness, they dwell. Having pervaded in the same way the second, the third and the fourth direction, the zenith, the nadir, the [four] intermediate directions, having pervaded everywhere and in every way the entire world with a mind associated with loving-kindness, with an extended, enlarged, immeasurable mind free of enmity, free of malice, they abide.

The same happens (ii) with a mind associated with compassion, (iii) with a mind associated with sympathetic joy and (iv) with a mind associated with equanimity.

In the chapters dedicated to the immeasurables, the Abhidharmas comment at greater or lesser length on this canonical formula. For the Pāli Abhidhamma, see *Vibhaṅga*, chap. XIII, p. 272-284; *Atthasālini*, p. 192-197; *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, chap. IX, p. 244-270 (transl. Ñāṇamoli, p. 321-353); *Vimuttimaggā*, transl. Ehara, p. 181-197. For the Sanskrit Abhidharma, consult *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 81-83, p. 420b-431b; *Abhidharmamūṛta*, T 1553, k. 2, p. 975c9-22 (reconstruction by Sastri, p. 99-100); *Kośa*, VIII, F 196-203; *Nyāyānusāra*, T 1562, k. 79, p. 768c-771a; *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 427-429.

Here, contrary to its custom, the *Traité* moves away from its usual method of first explaining the Sarvāstivādin theories in order to then oppose them with the Mahāyāna point of view. This is perhaps because the two Vehicles are in agreement on an essential point: in the meditation of loving-kindness, etc., nobody receives, nobody is satisfied and, nevertheless, merit arises in the mind of those with loving-kindness by the very power of their loving-kindness (*Kośa*, IV, F 245). The four immeasurables are purely platonic wishes: it is not enough to wish (*adhimuc-*) that sentient beings be happy, free of suffering or full of sympathetic joy for this wish to be realized.

There are, however, three differences between the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna conceptions on this subject.

- (1) First, a difference in intention. The hearers (*śrāvaka*) practice the immeasurables in their own interest, in order to purify their own mind. The bodhisattvas have in mind only the interests of others which they realize indirectly. By practicing the immeasurables, they personally gain merit which they then can apply to the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings.
- (2) Then there is a difference in domain or object. The hearers focus the immeasurables on the sentient beings of *kāmadhātu* who alone are able to call forth the feelings of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy or equanimity in them. The bodhisattvas <1241> put no limits on their feelings and 'pervade' all sentient beings of the three worlds (*kāma-*, *rūpa-* and *ārūpyadhātu*) distributed in the numberless universes of the ten directions.
- (3) Not only that, the bodhisattvas never lose sight of the twofold emptiness of persons and factors that forms the very basis of their philosophical perspective. They focus their feelings (i) on persons, (ii) on factors and even, by a supreme paradox, (iii) on nothing whatsoever. If they have persons in mind, they do not forget that these do not exist; if they have factors in mind, they remember that they arise from a collocation of causes and conditions and are empty of intrinsic nature and of characteristics; if they have nothing whatsoever in mind, they guard against hypostatizing this true characteristic of factors which resolves into a pure and simple non-existence.

To my [Lamotte] knowledge, the distinction between loving-kindness having persons as object, factors as object, or not having any object is a Mahāyanist idea. In the following pages, the *Traité* does not fail to exploit it. <1242>

CAA.

### DEFINITION OF THE IMMEASURABLES; F 1242-1245

The four immeasurable feelings (*apramāṇacitta*) are loving-kindness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*).

- (1) Loving-kindness (*maitrī*) is to think with love of sentient beings and always seek security (*yogaḥṣema*) and satisfying things (*sukhavastu*) in order to do good for them.
- (2) Compassion (*karuṇā*) is to think with compassion of sentient beings who undergo all sorts of bodily suffering (*kāyikaduḥkha*) and mental suffering (*caitasikaduḥkha*) in the five destinies (*gati*).
- (3) Sympathetic joy (*muditā*) is to wish that sentient beings, after happiness (*sukha*), obtain joy.
- (4) Equanimity (*upekṣā*) is to reject the three previous immeasurables and think about sentient beings neither with repugnance (*pratigha*) or with affection (*anunaya*).

CAA.1.

### [THE IMMEASURABLES AS ANTIDOTES; F 1242]

Loving-kindness is practiced to suspend<sup>72</sup> malice (*vyāpāda*) toward sentient beings.

Compassion is practiced to suspend violence (*vihiṃsā*) toward sentient beings.

Sympathetic joy is practiced to suspend discontent (*arati*) toward sentient beings.

Equanimity is practiced to suspend attachment to pleasure (*kāmarāga*) and malice (*vyāpāda*) toward sentient beings.<sup>73</sup>

CAA.2.

### [THE IMMEASURABLES, LIBERATIONS, ETC., AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE MEDITATIONS; F 1242-1243]

Question. – The four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), [the four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*), the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), <1243> the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāvāyatana*), the nine successive equipoises (*anupūrvāsamāpatti*) and finally the ten perception-spheres of

<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that, for the *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 83, k. 427b10-24, the *Kośa*, VIII, F 200-201 and the *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 687, the defilements are only suspended (*dūrikrta*) or shaken (*viṣkambhita*) by the immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) [of the fundamental meditations and of the preliminary stage, respectively], but not abandoned (*prahīṇa*).

<sup>73</sup> This is the canonical doctrine: cf. *Dīgha*, III, p. 248-249 (cited in *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 264): *Nissaraṇaṃ h'etaṃ, āvuso, byāpādassa, yad idaṃ mettā cetovimutti...Nissaraṇaṃ h'etaṃ, āvuso, vihesāya, yad idaṃ karuṇā cetovimutti... Nissaraṇaṃ h'etaṃ, āvuso, aratīyā, yad idaṃ muditā cetovimutti... Nissaraṇaṃ h'etaṃ, āvuso, rāgassa, yad idaṃ upekkhā cetovimutti.*

The corresponding Sanskrit stock phrase is cited in *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 428: *Maitrī āsevītā bhāvitā bahulikṛtā vyāpādaprahāṇāya saṃvartate, karuṇā vihiṃsāprahāṇāya, aratiprahāṇāya muditā, kāmarāgavyāpādaprahāṇāyopekṣā.*

See also *Kośa*, VIII, F 196; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 686, l. 6-8; *Lalitavistara*, p. 442, l. 3-5; *Sūtrālaṅkāra*, p. 181, l. 10-11; *Bodh. bhūmi*, p. 98, l. 18-19, p. 204, l. 24.

totality (*krtsnāyatana*) are already contained in the four meditations (*dhyāna*). Why speak of them separately here?

Answer. – Although all these factors are contained in the four meditations, if they are not mentioned separately by name, their particular qualities (*guṇa*) would not be known. It is like precious objects in a sack: if you do not open the sack to take them out, nobody can know about them.

- 1) To those who want to obtain great merit (*mahāpunya*),<sup>74</sup> one should talk about the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*).
- 2) In order to inspire disgust for visible forms (*rūpanirveda*) like a prison-house (*kārāgṛha*), one should talk about the four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*).
- 3) To those who cannot obtain mastery (*abhibhava*) over object-supports (*ālambana*) so as to see the object-supports as they please (*yatheṣṭam*), one should talk about the eight masteries (*abhibhvāyatana*).
- 4) To those who take forbidden paths (*pratiṣiddhamārga*) and do not succeed in clearing obstacles, one should talk about the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*).
- 5) To unsubdued minds (*adāntacitta*) that cannot emerge from one meditation (*dhyāna*) in order to enter successively into the others, one should talk about the nine successive equipoises (*anupūrovasamāpatti*).
- 6) To those who do not possess total knowledge (*krtsnāvabhāsa*) of all object-supports (*ālambana*) in order to liberate them at will, one should talk about the ten perception-spheres of totality (*krtsnāyatana*).

CAA.3.

### [THE IMMEASURABLES AND THE OTHER FACTORS; F 1243-1244]

When one thinks about the sentient beings of the ten directions by wishing that they obtain happiness, a mental event (*caitasika dharma*) occurs called loving-kindness (*maitrī*). The aggregates—sensations (*vedanā*), conceptions (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousnesses (*viññāna*)—associated with this loving-kindness give rise to bodily actions (*kāyakarman*), vocal actions (*vākkarman*) and formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*): the collocation of these factors (*dharmasāmagrī*) is [also] called loving-kindness (*maitrī*). Being loving-kindness, or dominantly (*adhipatī*) arisen from loving-kindness, these factors are given the name of loving-kindness (*maitrī*). In the same way, all [209a] minds (*citta*) and all mental events <1244> (*caitasika dharma*), although they are all causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*) of future

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<sup>74</sup> See above, F 323-324, 1040.



actions, are called intention (*cetana*) because, among their activities (*kriyā*), “intention” (*cetana*) is the strongest.<sup>75</sup>

It is the same for *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekṣā*.

CAA.4.

#### [THE IMMEASURABLES AND THEIR STAGES, PURITY, ETC.; F 1244-1245]

This loving-kindness occurs in the form realm (*rūpadhātu*);<sup>76</sup> it is impure (*sāsrava*) or pure (*anāsrava*), to be destroyed (*prahātavya*) or not to be destroyed (*na prahātavya*). It also occurs in the [four] fundamental meditations (*maulādhyāna*) and again in the intermediate meditation (*dhyānāntara*), [i.e., a variety of the first meditation].<sup>77</sup> Associated with three controlling faculties

<sup>75</sup> All bodily or vocal actions derived from loving-kindness are called ‘loving-kindness’ (*maitrī*) in the same way that bodily or vocal actions, derived from ‘intention’ (*cetana*), are themselves intention. This is why the Buddha said in the *Anguttara*, III, p. 415: *Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi; cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā*: “I declare, O monastics, that action is intention: it is after having intended that one acts with body, speech and mind.”

On this subject, see *Tchong a han*, T 26, k. 27, p. 600a24; *Kathāvatthu*, p. 393; *Atthasālinī*, p. 88; *Kośa*, IV, F 1-2; *Karmasiddhiprakāraṇa*, MCB, IV, p. 152, 207-208; *Madh. vṛtti*, p. 305-306.

<sup>76</sup> This refers to a loving-kindness in the state of non-equipoise, in *kāmadhātu*.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 81, p. 421a1-6: “The four immeasurables occur in *kāmadhātu*. As for the stages (*bhūmi*), loving-kindness, compassion and equanimity occur in seven stages: (1) *kāmadhātu*, (2-5) the four meditations, (6) the preparatory meditation (*anāgāmya*) and (7) the intermediate meditation (*dhyānāntara*). Some say that they occur in ten stages: (1-4) the four meditations, (5-8) the four preliminary concentrations (*sāmantaka*), (9) the intermediate meditation and (10) *kāmadhātu*. The immeasurable of sympathetic joy (*muditā*) occurs in three stages: (1) *kāmadhātu*, (2-3) first and second meditations. Other teachers say that the first and second meditations do not have the immeasurable of compassion. Why? Because the first and second meditations have a powerful sensation of joy.”

Cf. *Kośabhāṣya*, p. 453, l. 12-18: *Prathamadvītyadhyānāyor muditā, saumanasyatvāt. Anyāni triṇy apramanāṇi śaṭsu bhūmiṣu: anāgāmye, dhyānāntare, dhyāneṣu ca, saprayogamaulagrahaṇāt. Keci punaḥ anāgāmyaṃ hitvā pañcasv etānīcchanti. Daśasv ity apare, kāmadhātuṃ sāmantakāni ca prakṣipyā samāhitāsamāhitamaula-prayogagrahaṇāt.* – “Sympathetic joy is of the first and second meditation, for it is contentedness [and contentedness is absent in the other meditations]. The other three immeasurables occur in six stages: (1) preparatory meditation (*anāgāmya*), (2) intermediate meditation (*dhyānāntara*) and (3-6) the [four] meditations, thus including the ‘fundamental meditations’ with their preparatory states. However, some teachers, excluding the preparatory meditation, distribute these immeasurables into five stages. Still others, [distribute these immeasurables] into ten stages by adding [to the six] the [four] preliminary concentrations (*sāmantaka*) [of the higher meditations] and by attributing [the immeasurables] to the state of non-concentration as well as to that of concentration, to the preparatory states as well as to the fundamental meditations.”

(*indriya*), it excludes the faculty of suffering (*duḥkhendriya*) and the faculty of discontentedness (*daurmanasyendriya*).<sup>78</sup> This is all explained in detail in the Abhidharma. <1245>

When loving-kindness still grasps (*udgrhṇāti*) the characteristic of sentient beings [whom loving-kindness concerns], it is impure (*sāsrava*); when, after having grasped the characteristic of sentient beings, it enters into the true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) of factors (*dharma*), it is pure (*anāsrava*). This is why the Wou-tsin-yi p'ou-sa-wen (*Akṣayamatibodhisattvapariṣcchā*)<sup>79</sup> says:

There are three kinds of loving-kindness: 1. that which has sentient beings as object-support (*sattvāmbana*), 2. that which has factors as object-support (*dharmāmbana*), 3. that which has no object-support (*anāmbana*).<sup>80</sup> <1246>

<sup>78</sup> Of the twenty-two controlling faculties (*indriya*) of which the *sūtra* speaks, five are faculties of sensation (*vedanendriya*). Loving-kindness is associated with the faculty of sensation of satisfaction (*sukhendriya*), the faculty of sensation of contentedness (*saumanasyendriya*), and the faculty of sensation of equanimity (*upekṣendriya*). On the other hand, it is without the faculty of sensation of suffering (*duḥkhendriya*) and the faculty of sensation of discontentedness (*daurmanasyendriya*).

For these five faculties, see *Samyutta*, V, p. 209; *Kośa*, II, F 113-15.

<sup>79</sup> The *Akṣayamatibodhisattvapariṣcchā*, which will be cited again below, F 1272, and which is mentioned in the *Mahāvvyut.*, no. 1400, forms the 45<sup>th</sup> section of the Chinese *Ratnakūṭa* and the 44<sup>th</sup> section of the Tibetan *Ratnakūṭa*:

1. Wou-tsin-houei p'ou-sa houei, T 310, k. 115, p. 648a-650b, translated by Bodhiruci (Dharmaruci) between 693 and 727 AD.
2. Blo-gros-mi-zad-pas zhush pa, OKC, no. 760 (44), translated and revised by Śurendrabodhi and Yeshe-sde.

But the passage cited here does not belong to the *Akṣayamatibodhisattvapariṣcchā*: it comes from the *Akṣayamatinirdeśasūtra*, or simply *Akṣayamatisūtra*, of which there are two Chinese translations and one Tibetan translation:

- (i) *A-tch'a-mo p'ou-sa king*, T 403, translated by Dharmarakṣa between 265 and 313.
- (ii) Wou-tsin-yi p'ou-sa p'in, translated by Dharmakṣema between 414 and 421, and later incorporated in the *Mahāsaṃnipāta* where it forms the 12<sup>th</sup> section (T 397, k. 27-30, p. 184-213).
3. Blo-gros-mi-zad-pas bstan-pa, OKC, no. 842, anonymously translated.

This *sūtra*, under the name *Akṣayamatisūtra*, is cited in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, p. 11, 21, 33, 34, 117, 119, 158, 167, 183, 190, 212, 233, 236, 271, 278, 285, 287, 316; in the *Pañjikā*, p. 81, 86, 118, 173, 522, 527; and the *Traité* will refer to it later (k. 53, p. 442a2), calling it *A-tch'a-mo king*. It is also cited under the name *Akṣayamatinirdeśasūtra* in the *Pañjikā*, p. 20, and the *Mahāvvyut.*, no. 1344.

<sup>80</sup> *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*, T 403, k. 4, p. 500a13-17; T 397, k. 29, p. 200a15-18. The original Sanskrit is cited in *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, p. 212: *Sā [maitrī] trividhākṣayamatisūtre 'bhihitā: sattvārambaṇā maitrī prathamacittotpādikanāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ; dharmārambaṇā caryāpratipannānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ; anārambaṇā maitrī anutpattikadharmakṣāntipratilabdhanāṃ bodhisattvānām iti.* – “In the *Akṣayamatisūtra*, this loving-kindness is threefold: (i) that which has sentient beings as object-support belongs to the bodhisattvas who have just produced the mind of *bodhi*; (ii) that which has factors as object-support belongs to bodhisattvas

CAB.

## ASPECTS OF THE IMMEASURABLES; F 1246-1273

CAB.1.

### LOVING-KINDNESS, COMPASSION, SYMPATHETIC JOY AND EQUANIMITY; F 1246-1250

Question. – What are the aspects (*ākāra*) of these four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*)?

Answer. – As the Buddha said everywhere in the *sūtras*:

With a mind associated with loving-kindness (*maitrisahagatena cittena*), free of enmity (*avaireṇa*), free of vengefulness (*anupanāhena*), free of rivalry (*asapatnena*), free of ill will (*avyāvādhyena*), vast (*vipulena*), extensive (*mahadgatena*), measureless (*apramāṇena*) and well cultivated (*subhāvitena*), the *bhikṣus* voluntarily pervade with their mind of loving-kindness (*maitricittenādhimucya spharati*) the sentient beings of universes in the eastern direction (*pūrvā diś*), then they voluntarily pervade with their mind of loving-kindness the sentient beings of the universes of the ten directions: those of the south (*dakṣiṇā*), the west (*paścimā*), the north (*uttarā*), the four intermediate directions (*vidiś*), the zenith (*upariṣṭāt*) and nadir (*adhasṭāt*). And in the same way they pervade them with a mind associated with compassion (*karuṇāsahagatena*), associated with sympathetic joy (*muditāsahagatena*) and associated with equanimity (*upekṣāsahagatena cittena*).<sup>81</sup>

CAB.1.1.

#### “WITH A MIND ASSOCIATED WITH LOVING-KINDNESS”; F 1246

With a mind associated with loving-kindness (*maitrisahagatena cittena*).

Loving-kindness is a mental event (*caitasika dharma*) capable of counteracting the corruptions (*kaṣāya*) contained in the mind, namely, hatred (*dveṣa*), vengefulness (*upanāha*), selfishness (*mātsarya*), attachment (*rāga*), and the other defilements (*kleśa*). Thus, when the purifying pearl (*maṇi*) is placed in dirty water, it becomes clear.

CAB.1.2.

#### “WITH A MIND FREE OF ENMITY AND FREE OF VENGEFULNESS”; F 1246-1247

With a mind (i) free of enmity and (ii) free of vengefulness (*avairānupanāhena cittena*). <1247>

Let us suppose that with or without reason, one hates someone.

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cultivating the practices; (iii) that which has no object-support belongs to the bodhisattvas having the conviction that factors do not arise.”

As we will see later, F 1251, this threefold loving-kindness is mentioned frequently in the *sūtras* and *śāstras* of the Mahāyāna.

<sup>81</sup> Here the *Traité* reproduces, with a few liberties, the canonical stock phrase cited above, F 1239, with references. Like the *Kośa*, VIII, F 199, and the *Visuddhimagga*, p. 255, it is anxious to state that the immeasurables include not the directions but the sentient beings distributed in these directions. It insists on the voluntary characteristic of their action, for it is voluntarily (*adhimucaya*) and contrary to the actual fact that the practitioners see sentient beings as happy, unhappy, joyful: see *Kośa*, IV, F 245; VIII, F 198-199.

- (i) If one wants to insult him, curse him, strike him or rob him, this is ‘enmity’ (*vaira*).
- (ii) If one waits for an opportune moment and, given the chance, one torments him with all one’s strength, this is ‘vengefulness’ (*upanāha*).

Since loving-kindness counteracts both of these two factors, it is said to be free of enmity and vengefulness.<sup>82</sup>

CAB.1.3.

### “WITH A MIND FREE OF RIVALRY AND FREE OF ILL-WILL”; F 1247-1248

With a mind (i) free of rivalry and (ii) free of ill-will (*asapatnenāvyāvadhyena cittena*)

- (i) Vengefulness (*upanāha*) is ‘rivalry’ (*sapatnatā*). The first offensive movement (*āghāta*) is vengefulness (*upanāha*). In time, vengefulness becomes rivalry (*sapatnatā*).
- (ii) When one inflicts torment (*vyābādha*) by means of physical and vocal actions (*kāyavākkarman*), this is ‘ill-will’ (*vyāvadhyā*).

Furthermore, the fetter ‘repugnance’ (*pratighasaṃyojana*) is called enmity (*vaira*).

- (i) When enmity increases, persists and is attached but is not yet fixed (*niyata*) in the mind, it receives the name of ‘vengefulness’ (*upanāha*) and also ‘rivalry’ (*sapatnatā*).
- (ii) When the mind is fixed and no longer has any scruples, this is called ‘ill-will’ (*vyāvadhyā*).<sup>83</sup>

Because the power of the mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*) rejects, abandons and leaves behind these four factors, it is said to be ‘free of enmity, free of vengefulness, free of rivalry and free of ill-will’. The Buddha praised the mind of loving-kindness in regard to this fourfold exemption.<sup>84</sup> <1248>

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<sup>82</sup> According to the *Visuddhimagga*, p. 256, the mind is without enmity (*avera*) as it destroys ill-will and vengefulness (*byāpādapaccatthikappahānena*).

<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, for the *Visuddhimagga*, p. 256, the mind is ‘free from oppression’ (*abyāpajjha*), because it destroys discontentedness (*domanassappahānto*). The expression then would mean absence of suffering (*niddukkha*).

<sup>84</sup> Notably in the *Mettasutta* of the *Suttanipāṭa*, p. 26, v. 149-151, where it is said by the Buddha:

*Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ  
āyusā ekaputtam anurakkhe /  
evam pi sabbabhūtesu  
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ //*  
*Mettaṃ ca sabbalokasmiṃ  
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ /  
uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyaṃ ca  
asabādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ //*  
*Tiṭṭhaṃ caraṃ nisinno vā  
sayāno vā yāvat’ assa vigatamiddho /*

All sentient beings fear suffering and are attached to happiness. Enmity is cause and condition for suffering, and loving-kindness is cause and condition for happiness. Sentient beings who hear it said that this concentration of loving-kindness (*maitrisamādhi*) can chase away suffering and bring happiness show themselves to be mindful (*smṛtimat*), zealous (*ātāpin*) and diligent (*viryaavat*) to practice this concentration, and this is why they are ‘without enmity, without vengeance, without rivalry and without ill-will’.

CAB.1.4.

“WITH A VAST, GREAT, MEASURELESS MIND”; F 1248-1250

With a (i) vast, (ii) extensive, (iii) measureless mind (*vipulena, mahadgatenāpramāṇena cittena*).<sup>85</sup>

This mind is single, but as its magnitude differs, there are three attributive adjectives used.

This mind is (i) vast (*vipula*) when it pervades one single direction, (ii) extensive [209b] (*mahadgata*) when it goes far and high, (iii) measureless (*apramāṇa*) when it pervades the nadir (*adhastād diś*) and the other nine directions.

Furthermore, if it is (i) lower (*avara*), loving-kindness is called ‘vast’ (*vipula*); (ii) middling (*madhya*), it is called ‘extensive’ (*mahadgata*); (iii) higher (*agra*), it is called ‘measureless’ (*apramāṇa*).

Furthermore, (i) if it concerns (*ālambate*) sentient beings of the four main directions (*diś*), loving-kindness is called ‘vast’ (*vipula*); (ii) if it concerns sentient beings of the four intermediate directions (*vidiś*), it is called ‘extensive’ (*mahadgata*); (iii) if it concerns sentient beings of the zenith and the nadir, it is called ‘measureless’ (*apramāṇa*). <1249>

Furthermore, (i) if it destroys<sup>86</sup> the minds of enmity (*vairacitta*), loving-kindness is called ‘vast’ (*vipula*); (ii) if it destroys the minds of rivalry (*sapatnacitta*), it is called ‘extensive’ (*mahadgata*); (iii) if it destroys the minds of ill-will (*vyāvadhyacitta*) it is called ‘measureless’ (*apramāṇa*).

*etaṃ satim adhiṭṭheyya,  
brahman etaṃ vihāraṃ idha-m-āhu //*

Transl. – “As a mother, during her entire life, protects her own child, her only child, so should everyone nourish an immeasurable friendliness for all sentient beings.

Let them nourish thus loving-kindness for the entire world, an immeasurable friendliness above, below and across, be free from any obstacle, enmity or rivalry.

Standing, walking, sitting or lying down, as long as they are awake, let them engage in this immeasurable, for this, they say, is the abode of the Brahmā gods.”

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *Visuddhimagga*, p. 256: *Vipulenā ti ettha ca pharaṇavasena vipulatā daṭṭhabbā. Bhūmivasena pana etaṃ mahaggataṃ. Paṇṇavasena ca appamāṇasattārammaṇavasena ca appamāṇam*: “(i) By *vast* here we should understand its amplitude as regards inclusion. (ii) It is also *extensive* in regard to the stages to which it applies itself [from *kāmadhātu* up to and including *rūpadhātu*]. (iii) It is *measureless* in regard to its expertise and due to the fact that it has innumerable sentient beings as object.”

Furthermore, all the defiled cognitions or minds (*kliṣṭajñāna*) cultivated by vile persons and giving rise to vile factors are called vile (*hina*). The most vile among these minds are enmity (*vaira*), rivalry (*sapatnatā*) and ill-will (*vyāvadhyā*). Since loving-kindness destroys these vile minds among the vile, it is called ‘vast’ (*vipula*), ‘extensive’ (*mahadgata*) and ‘measureless’ (*apramāṇa*). Why? Because great causes and conditions are necessary to destroy [these] vile factors. (i) The ‘vast’ mind (*vipulacitta*) that fears the offense (*āpatti*), that fears falling into hell, suspends the bad factors (*dharma*) of the mind; (ii) the ‘extensive’ mind (*mahadgatacitta*) that believes in the retribution of merits (*puṇyavipāka*) suspends the bad minds; (iii) the ‘measureless’ mind (*apramāṇacitta*) that wants to attain *nirvāṇa* suspends the bad minds.

Furthermore, (i) when the yogins observe the purity of morality (*śīlaviśuddhi*), this is a ‘vast’ mind; (ii) when they are endowed with meditations and equipoises (*dhyānasamāpattisaṃpanna*), this is an ‘extensive’ mind; (iii) when they are endowed with discrimination (*prajñāsaṃpanna*), this is a ‘measureless’ mind.

[Furthermore,] (iii) when the yogins, by means of this mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*), think about the noble persons (*āryapudgala*) who have found the noble path, this is a ‘measureless’ mind because they use measureless means to distinguish these noble persons; (ii) when they think about the noble residences (*āvāsa*) of gods and men, this is an ‘extensive’ mind; (i) when they think about lower sentient beings (*hīnasattva*) and the three bad destinies (*durgati*), this is a ‘vast’ mind.

[Furthermore,] (i) when they think with loving-kindness about a sentient being that is dear to them (*priyasattva*) and they extend this thought [to all dear sentient beings], this is a ‘vast’ mind; (ii) when they think with loving-kindness about people who are indifferent to them (*madhyastha puruṣa*), this is an ‘extensive’ mind; (iii) when they think with loving-kindness about their enemies (*vairin*) and that in this way their merits (*guṇa*) are many, this is a ‘measureless’ mind.<sup>87</sup> <1250>

The mind (i) that concerns a limited object is called ‘vast’; (ii) that which concerns a small object is called ‘extensive’; (iii) that which concerns the measureless is called ‘measureless’.

<sup>86</sup> In fact, it does not destroy the defilements; it suspends and shakes them.

<sup>87</sup> Loving-kindness should be practiced gradually in such a way that it includes all sentient beings—friends, neutrals and enemies—in the same loving-kindness. This is called ‘breaking the boundaries’ (*simasambheda*). Cf. *Visuddhimagga*, p. 246: *Bhikkhunā... simasambhedaṃ katthkāmena... atippiyasahāyake, atippiyasahāyakato majjhatte, majjhattato veripuggale mettā bhāvetabbā. Bhāventena ca ekasmiṃ koṭṭhāse muduṃ kammaniyaṃ cittaṃ katvā tadanantare tadanantare upasaṃharitabbaṃ*: “The monks who wish to carry out the breaking of the boundaries should cultivate loving-kindness toward very dear friends, then toward neutral persons as though they were very dear, then toward enemies as though they were neutral. While they are doing this, in each case they should make their mind soft and supple before going on to the next one.”

For the way in which beginners (*ādikārmika*) should practice loving-kindness, see also *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 82, p. 421c15-22; *Kośa*, VIII, F 201-202.



This is the meaning of these distinctions.

CAB.1.5. “WITH A WELL-CULTIVATED MIND”; F 1251

With a well-cultivated mind (*subhāvitena cittena*).

By a ‘well-cultivated’ mind is meant a strong (*dr̥ḍha*) mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*). When one begins to acquire it, the mind of loving-kindness is not yet ‘cultivated’. In order that it to be ‘well-cultivated’, it is not enough to practice it toward fond people, or toward good people, or toward those who do good to us, or toward sentient beings of a single direction; it is necessary, after practicing it for a long time, (i) to acquire a deep affection for and to love equally and without any difference the three types of sentient beings—friends (*priyapudgala*), enemies (*vairipudgala*) and neutrals (*madhyastha*)—, (ii) to look at sentient beings distributed in the five destinies (*pañcagati*) of the ten directions with the same and unique loving-kindness as one looks at one’s father, mother, older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, one’s son, nephew, one’s friend; (iii) to always look for good things to make them obtain the good (*hita*) and security (*yogakṣema*); and finally, (iv) to pervade the sentient beings of the ten directions with this loving-kindness.

CAB.2. THE THREE KINDS OF LOVING-KINDNESS;<sup>88</sup> F 1250-1254

1. The mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*) of which we have just spoken is that which has sentient beings as object-support (*sattvālamkāna*). It occurs <1251-1252> mainly among ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) practicing the spheres [of meditation] or in ‘those in training’ (*śaikṣa*) who have not yet destroyed the impurities (*akṣiṇāsrava*). <1253>

2, There are those who practice a loving-kindness that has factors as object-support (*dharmālamkāna*): these are the perfected beings (*arhat*) who have destroyed the fluxes [209c] (*kṣiṇāsrava*), the *pratyekabuddhas* and the *Buddhas*. Having destroyed the ‘conception of self’ (*ātmasaṃjñā*) and eliminated conceptions of identity and difference (*ekatvānyatvasaṃjñā*), these noble persons (*āryapudgala*) consider only the objects of desire (*kāmaguṇa*), arising continuously (*prābandhika*) from causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*). When they think with loving-kindness about sentient beings, they think only of what is empty (*śūnya*), arising continuously from the combined causes and conditions. The ‘sentient being’ (*sattva*) is the five [empty] aggregates (*skandha*). When they think with loving-kindness, they think about these five aggregates. But sentient beings themselves, ignoring this emptiness of the factors (*dharmasūnyatā*), always and with their whole heart want to find happiness (*sukha*). The noble persons (*āryapudgala*) of whom we are speaking take pity on them and see to it that they find happiness as they wish, but only

<sup>88</sup> The *Traité* will return later (k. 40, p. 350b25-28; k. 53, p. 442a2-3) to these three types of loving-kindness and compassion. They are often in the *sūtras* and *śāstras* of the Mahāyāna, especially in the *Akṣayamatīśūtra* cited above, F 1245. [The rest of the footnote is omitted.]

from the relative point of view (*saṃvṛtita*). This is what is called ‘loving-kindness having factors as object-support (*dharmālabhāna*)’.

3. As for the loving-kindness that has no object-support (*anālabhāna*), this is a loving-kindness that only the Buddhas possess. Why? The mind of the Buddhas does not rest on the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) or on the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*); it does not lean on the past (*atīta*) or on the future (*anāgata*) or on the present (*pratyutpanna*). The Buddhas know that all object-supports (*ālabhāna*) are unreal, erroneous and deceptive: this is why their mind is without object-support (*anālabhāna*). Sentient beings themselves, [on the other hand,] do not know the true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) of factors; they wander through the five destinies (*pañcagati*), their minds become attached (*abhinivīṣate*) to factors, they make distinctions, accept [certain factors] and reject others. Therefore the Buddhas employ the discrimination (*prajñā*) of the true characteristic of factors and see to it that sentient beings obtain it: this is the loving-kindness ‘without object-support’.

It is as if one gave (i) material goods (*vasu*), (ii) precious objects of gold or silver (*suvarṇarūpya-mayaratnadṛavya*) and [finally] (iii) the precious wish-fulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*), to a poor person (*daridra*): the same applies to (i) the loving-kindness <1254> that has sentient beings as object-support, (ii) the loving-kindness that has factors as object-support and (iii) the loving-kindness without object-support, [respectively].<sup>89</sup>

This briefly (*saṃkṣepeṇa*) defines the meaning of the mind of loving-kindness. The same applies to the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*): the practitioners pervade with compassion (*karuṇā*) the suffering of sentient beings of the ten directions and reflect as follows: “Unhappy are sentient beings; it is not necessary that they undergo these sufferings.” Then “with a mind free of enmity (*avaira*), free of vengefulness (*anupanāha*), free of rivalry (*asapatna*), free of ill-will (*avyāvadhya*),” etc., “they pervade the ten directions.”

CAB.3.

### SUBJECTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF LOVING-KINDNESS; F 1254-1255

Question. – There are three kinds of sentient beings:

1. those who experience happiness (*sukhita*), such as the gods and a small portion of humans (*manuṣyāṇāṃ prabheda*);
2. those who undergo suffering (*duḥkhita*), such as the sentient beings of the three bad destinies (*durgati*) and a small portion of humans;
3. those who experience neither suffering nor happiness (*aduḥkhāsukhita*), such as a small portion of sentient beings in the five destinies.

<sup>89</sup> The three kinds of loving-kindness are comparable to (i) the gift of an ordinary material object, (ii) the gift of a precious object, and (iii) the gift of the wishfulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*), respectively.



[Then] how do those who practice loving-kindness see all sentient beings as experiencing happiness, and how do those who practice compassion see all sentient beings as undergoing suffering?

Answer. – When the yogins want to practice the infinite immeasurable of loving-kindness, first they make the following resolution (*praṇidhāna*): “I wish that sentient beings may experience all kinds of happiness.”<sup>90</sup> Having in this way grasped (*udgr̥hya*) the characteristic of the happy man (*sukhitanimitta*), they concentrate their mind (*cittaṃ pragr̥hṇāti*) and enter into meditation (*dhyāna*). This characteristic increases gradually (*krameṇa vardhate*) and then the yogins see all sentient beings as experiencing happiness.

Thus, when one is making fire by friction (*mathana*), first the flame catches fire on the soft straw (*mṛdutr̥ṇa*) and <1255> dried cow dung (*śuṣkagomaya*) and, as the strength of the fire increases, it is able to consume big pieces of moist wood (*sasnehakāṣṭha*).<sup>91</sup> It is the same for the concentration of loving-kindness (*maitrisamādhī*): at the beginning, when one makes the resolutions of loving-kindness (*maitrīpraṇidhāna*), one applies them solely to one’s parents (*bandhu*) and to one’s friends (*mitra*); but when the mind of loving-kindness grows, enemies (*amitra*) and parents (*bandhu*) become mixed up and one sees them all as experiencing happiness: this is because the meditations (*dhyāna*) or equipoises (*samāpatti*) of loving-kindness have grown (*vardhita*) and become perfected (*saṃpanna*).

It is the same for the minds of compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*).

CAB.4.

#### OBJECT AND MERIT OF EQUANIMITY; F 1255-1256

Question. – In the course of the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*), one takes hold of the characteristic of the unhappy man (*duḥkhanimittam udgr̥hṇāti*); in the course of the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditā*) one takes hold of the characteristic of the joyful man (*muditānimitta*). What characteristic does one take hold of in the course of the mind of equanimity (*upekṣānimitta*)? [210a]

Answer. – One takes hold of the characteristic of the neither unhappy nor happy man (*aduḥkhāsukhita*). When this mind has grown gradually, the yogins see entirely the whole world as being neither unhappy nor happy.

<sup>90</sup> We may recall that the practice of the immeasurables is limited to formulating and extending to infinity purely platonic resolutions: cf. *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 428: *Sukhitā vata santu sattvā iti manasi kurvan maitrīṃ samāpadyate, duḥkhitā vata sattvā iti karuṇāṃ, modantāṃ vata sattvā iti muditāṃ, sattvā ity eva manasi kurvann upekṣāṃ samāpadyate mādhyasthyāt*. See also *Kośa*, VIII, F 198.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 240: *Api nu... puriso allaṃ... kaṭṭhaṃ sasnehaṃ udake nikkhittaṃ uttarāraṇiṃ ādāya abhimanthento aggiṃ abhinibbatteyya tejo pātukareyyati*. – “A man who would rub a humid and soaking wet piece of wood with a fire stick, would he be able to produce fire and create heat?”

Question. – The first three minds – loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy – are certainly meritorious (*puṇya*), but what benefit (*arthakriyā*) can there then be in the mind of equanimity bearing on sentient beings who are neither unhappy nor happy?

Answer. – The yogins reflect in the following way: “When they lose their happiness (*sukha*), beings encounter suffering (*duḥkha*), and, when they suffer, they are unhappy (*duḥkhita*). Finding a state without either suffering or happiness would be security for them (*yogakṣema*).” This is how [the mind of equanimity] presents a benefit (*arthakriyā*).<sup>92</sup>

When the yogins practice the minds of loving-kindness (*maitrī*) and <1256> sympathetic joy, it may happen that a mind of intense affection (*abhiṣvaṅgacitta*) arises in them; when they practice the mind of compassion (*karuṇā*), it may happen that a mind of sadness (*daurmanasyacitta*) arises in them. Their mind is distracted (*vikṣipta*) by this intense affection or this sadness. Then, they enter into the mind of equanimity (*upekṣacitta*) and drive away (*apanayati*) this intense affection and this sadness. Since intense affection and sadness are eliminated, there is a ‘mind of equanimity’.

CAB.5.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOVING-KINDNESS AND SYMPATHETIC JOY;

F 1256-1258

Question. – We can see the differences (*viśeṣa*) that exist between the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*) and the mind of equanimity (*upekṣacitta*). [But the differences are less evident between the other two]. The mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*) wishes that all sentient beings be happy (*sukhita*) and the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditācitta*) wishes that all sentient beings be joyful (*muditā*). What difference is there between happiness (*sukha*) and joy (*muditā*)?

Answer. – Happiness is bodily happiness (*kāyika sukha*); joy is mental happiness (*caitasika sukha*).

We call ‘happiness’ the happiness associated with the first five consciousnesses (*pañcavijñānaśaṃprayutasukha*);<sup>93</sup> we call joy the happiness associated with the mental consciousness (*manovijñānaśaṃprayuktasukha*).

We call happiness the happiness that arises in regard to the first five [external] sense-sources of consciousness (*pañcāyatana*);<sup>94</sup> we call ‘joy’ the happiness that arises in regard to the sense-source made up of mental objects (*dharmāyatana*).

First the yogins formulate the resolutions of happiness (*sukhapraṇidhāna*) so that sentient beings find this happiness and that, after this happiness, they find sympathetic joy (*muditā*). Thus, when someone has pity on a poor person (*daridra*), first he gives him a precious thing

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<sup>92</sup> An advantage for the persons who are practicing it, but not for the persons who are the object of it.

<sup>93</sup> Visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile consciousnesses.

<sup>94</sup> Color or visible form, sound, odor, taste and tangible.

(*ratnadravya*): that is 'happiness'; next, he invites the poor person to trade it for money so that he can enjoy the five objects of desire (*pañcakāmaguṇa*): that is 'joy'.

Furthermore, we call 'happiness' the happiness of the desire realm (*kāmadhātusukha*) which one is wishing for sentient beings; we call 'joy' the happiness of the form realm (*rūpadhātusukha*) which one is wishing for sentient beings. <1257>

Furthermore, we call 'happiness': 1. the satisfaction associated with the five consciousnesses (*pañcavijñānaśamprayuktasukha*) in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*); 2. the satisfaction associated with the three consciousnesses (*trivijñānaśamprayuktasukha*) in the first meditation (*dhyāna*); 3. all the satisfaction in the third meditation.<sup>95</sup> – We call 'joy': 1. the satisfaction associated with the mental consciousness (*manovijñānaśamprayuktasukha*) in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*) and the first meditation; 2. all the satisfaction in the second meditation.

We call 'happiness' coarse (*audārika*) happiness; we call 'joy' subtle (*sūkṣma*) happiness.

'Happiness' refers to the time of the cause (*hetukāla*); 'joy' refers to the time of the effect (*phalakāla*). When one begins to find happiness, that is called 'happiness'; when the joyful mind emerges internally (*adhyātman*) and the signs of happiness appear externally (*bahirdhā*) by way of singing, dancing and leaping about, that is called 'joy'. Thus when one begins to swallow a medicine (*bhaiṣajya*), that is 'happiness', but when the medicine has penetrated the whole body, that is 'joy'.

Question. – If that is so, why does one not combine these two minds into a same and unique immeasurable (*apramāṇa*), but instead distinguish two different factors in them?

Answer. – At the beginning, the yogins' mind is not concentrated (*pragṛhita*) and as they cannot deeply love sentient beings, that gives them only happiness; but when they have concentrated their mind and love sentient beings deeply, that gives them joy. This is why they are first happy and, only after that, joyful.

Question. – If that is so, why does [the *sūtra*]<sup>96</sup> not mention loving-kindness (*maitri*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*) following each other [but inserts compassion between them]?

Answer. – When the mind of loving-kindness is being practiced, one loves sentient beings as one's children and one wishes to bring them happiness. But having emerged from the concentration of loving-kindness, one sees sentient beings undergoing all kinds of suffering. Then, producing a mind of deep <1258> love, one has compassion for [210b] sentient beings and makes them obtain deep happiness.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> On the nature of satisfaction (*sukha*) in the *kāmadhātu* and the first three meditations (*dhyāna*), see *Kośa*, VIII, F 150-151.

<sup>96</sup> The canonical stock phrase for the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) is cited above, F 1239-40.

<sup>97</sup> Psychologically, sympathetic joy (*muditā*) follows after compassion (*karuṇā*): we should note that sentient beings are unhappy before wishing that they are joyful.

Just as parents even though they love their children at all times, redouble their affection for them when they fall sick, so the bodhisattvas, having entered into minds of compassion (*karuṇācitta*) and considering the sufferings of sentient beings, develop a mind of pity (*anukampācitta*) and grant them profound happiness. This is why the mind of compassion takes an intermediate place [between the mind of loving-kindness and the mind of joy].

CAB.6.

### REASONS FOR PRACTICING EQUANIMITY; F 1258-1259

Question. – If one loves sentient beings so deeply, why practice the mind of equanimity (*upekṣācitta*) in addition?

Answer. – The yogins see things in the following way: they never abandon sentient beings and they think only about abandoning the three minds [of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy]. Why? First of all, to put an end to other factors (*dharma*).<sup>98</sup>

Then, by the mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*), they would wish that sentient beings be happy, but they would not succeed in making them happy. By the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*), they would wish that sentient beings would escape from suffering, but they would not succeed in making them free of suffering. When they would practice the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditācitta*), they would also not succeed in causing them to experience great joy. All of that was therefore only mental activity or imaginings (*manaskāra*) without any real reality (*bhūtārtha*). Therefore, to see to it that sentient beings find the real truth, the yogins give rise to the resolution (*cittam utpādayate*) to become Buddha. They practice the six perfections (*pāramitā*) and perfect the attributes of Buddha within themselves so that sentient beings may find true happiness. This is why the yogins abandon the three minds [of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy] so as to enter into the mind of equanimity (*upekṣācitta*).<sup>99</sup>

Finally, the minds of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy are of a love so deep that it is hard to abandon sentient beings. [On <1259> the other hand], if one enters into the mind of equanimity, it is easy to separate from them.

CAB.7.

### LIMIT TO THE SALVIFIC ACTION OF THE IMMEASURABLES; F 1259-12260

Question. – The bodhisattvas who practicing the six perfections, have finally become Buddha, can no longer see to it that sentient beings escape from suffering and find happiness. Then why do you limit yourself to saying that the three minds [of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy] are mental activity or imaginings arising from the mind and without any real truth? [Why not say as much of the mind of equanimity?]

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<sup>98</sup> By practicing equanimity (*upekṣā*), the yogins suspend sensual attachment (*kāmarāga*) and malice (*vyāpāda*) towards sentient beings: see above, F 1242.

<sup>99</sup> This mind of equanimity is indispensable for them to becoming Buddha.

Answer. – It is true that the bodhisattvas, once they have become Buddha, cannot see to it that all sentient beings find happiness, but when they are still bodhisattvas, they give rise to the great resolution (*mahāprañidhānāny utpādayati*); following these great resolutions, they gain great merit (*mahāpuṇya*) and, as the reward (*vipāka*) of this great merit, they are able to do great good for ordinary persons (*prthagjana*).

When the hearers (*śrāvaka*) practice the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), it is for taming themselves (*ātmadamanāya*), for their own good (*svahitāya*), and it is quite in vain that they think about sentient beings.<sup>100</sup> The bodhisattvas, however, practice the mind of loving-kindness so that sentient beings may escape from suffering and find happiness. Because of this mind of loving-kindness, they themselves gain merit and teach others how to gain merit. Gathering the ripened effect (*vipākaphala*) of their merit, these bodhisattvas sometimes become noble wheel-turning kings (*cakravartin*), rich in kind deeds; sometimes also they go forth from home (*pravrajanti*), practice the meditations (*dhyāna*), guide sentient beings and teach them how to practice the meditations to be reborn in pure universes (*śuddhalokadhātu*) and to enjoy there the happiness of the immeasurables. Finally, when they become Buddha, they enter into the ‘nirvāṇa without remainder’ (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*) with immeasurable and incalculable sentient beings (*apramāṇāsamkhyeyasattva*). Compared to the mind of emptiness (*śūnyatācitta*), their resolutions (*prañidhāna*) are much more salutary, and still other things, including their relics (*śarira*), are very beneficial. <1260>

Furthermore, if a sole Buddha completely saved all sentient beings, the other Buddhas would have no one to save. From then on, there would be no more future (*anāgata*) Buddhas, the lineage of the Buddhas (*buddhavaṃśa*) would be interrupted (*samucchinna*) and other faults of this kind would ensue. This [210c] is why a sole Buddha does not save all sentient beings without exception.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, what is called the intrinsic nature of sentient beings (*sattvasvabhāva*) is only a product of delusion (*mohaja*): it is not a real factor (*bhūta*) nor is it determined (*niyata*). If all the Buddhas of

<sup>100</sup> In the sense that sentient beings will derive no benefit, for the resolutions formulated by the hearers (*śrāvaka*) profit only themselves.

<sup>101</sup> According to a canonical argument (*Majjhima*, III, p. 65; *Aṅguttara*, I, p. 28), two Buddhas cannot exist simultaneously in the same universe. The followers of the Small Vehicle use this text in order to deny the simultaneous plurality of the Buddhas. On the contrary, the followers of the Great Vehicle, populate the innumerable universes of the ten directions with an infinite number of Buddhas working simultaneously for the salvation of sentient beings. This is the point of view adopted by the *Traité* which, already above, has refuted the objections raised against the plurality of Buddhas (F 536-542) and produced a series of arguments in favor of the contrary thesis (F 542-545). But for a large number of saviors, there would be only a small number of the elect (F 545-557).

Obviously, this refers here only to holding a provisional position, relevant for the relative or conventional (*saṃvṛti*). And the *Traité* will show in the pages that follow that the conception of salvation is purely relative and that from the point of view of the twofold emptiness of persons and of factors no one is saved.

the three times and the ten directions went to look for a being, they would find none. Then how could they save all completely?

CAB.8.

### THE IDEA OF SALVATION IS PURELY RELATIVE OR CONVENTIONAL;

F 1260-1263

Question. – If [sentient beings] who are empty [of intrinsic nature] cannot be saved (*trāta*) as a whole, then how do [the Buddhas] save a small number of them who will be equally empty?

Answer. – I have just said that if the Buddhas of the three times and the ten directions went to look for sentient beings, they would find not a single one and that, consequently, there is no one to save. – If you object: “Why do they not save them all?”, you fall into a questionable position (*nigrahasthāna*), a questionable position from which you will not succeed in extricating yourself. – And if you object: “The categories of few and many do not apply to sentient beings, how could the Buddhas save a small number of them?”, you fall into an even more questionable position. <1261>

Furthermore, from the absolute point of view (*paramārtha*) which is the true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) of factors, there are no sentient beings (*sattva*) and there is no salvation (*trāṇa*). It is merely in terms of the relative or conventional (*saṃvṛti*) that we affirm the existence of salvation. As for you, you seek the absolute (*paramārtha*) in the relative (*saṃvṛti*), which is inadmissible (*nopapadyate*). It is as if you were looking for a precious pearl (*maṇiratna*) in a brick or a stone: never would you find it there.

Furthermore, all the qualities acquired by the Buddhas in the interval of time between their first arising of the mind of awakening (*prathamacittotpāda*) until the disappearance of the good law (*saddharmavipralopa*), all these qualities, we say, are conditioned forces (*saṃskāra*), limited (*saparyanta*), measurable (*sapramāṇa*), having a beginning (*ādi*) and an end (*paryavasāna*). This is why the number of sentient beings to be converted (*vaiṇeyasattva*) must also be measurable. It is not possible with measurable qualities, the effects of retribution [of a given number] of causes and conditions, to save sentient beings without number in their entirety.

It is like a strong man (*balavān puruṣaḥ*): no matter how powerful his bow (*dhanus*) and no matter how far his arrow (*iṣu*) can fly, it will necessarily finally fall down. Or it is like the great fire (*mahāgni*) at the end of the aeon (*kalpasamvartana*)<sup>102</sup> that burns the trichiliochasm (*trisāhasralokadhātu*): its flame (*arcis*) is immense, but although it burns for a long time, it finally ends by becoming extinguished. It is the same for the bodhisattvas becoming Buddhas. From the first arising of the mind of awakening, they hold the bow of diligence (*vīryadhanus*) in their hand, wield the arrow of discrimination (*prajñeṣu*), penetrate deeply into the law of the Buddhas and accomplish the great deeds of the Buddhas (*buddhakārya*), but they also must end up becoming extinguished. When the bodhisattvas have won the cognition of factors in all their

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Kośa*, III, F 184, 209-210.

aspects (*sarvakārajñāna*), their body emits rays (*raśmi*) that light up innumerable universes (*apramāṇalokadhātu*); each of these rays creates by metamorphosis (*nirmimīte*) innumerable bodies (*apramāṇakāya*) that save innumerable sentient beings (*apramāṇasattva*) in the ten directions. After their *nirvāṇa*, the eighty-four thousand groups of the law that he has taught (*caturśītisahasra dharmaskandha*) and their relics (*śarīra*) convert (*paripācayanti*) sentient beings. But, like the fire at the end of the aeon, after having shone for a long time, they too must become extinguished.

<1262>

Question. – You yourself say that these rays create *innumerable* bodies by metamorphosis that save the *innumerable* sentient beings of the ten directions. Why did you sometimes say that, due to *measurable* causes and conditions, the number of sentient beings to be converted should also be *measurable*?

Answer. – There are two kinds of immeasurable (*apramāṇa*).<sup>103</sup>

1. The true immeasurable (*bhūtāpramāṇa*) which cannot be measured by any noble person (*āryapudgala*). Thus space (*ākāśa*), *nirvāṇa* and the intrinsic nature of sentient beings (*sattvabhāva*) cannot be measured [in any way].
2. Measurable factors (*prameyadharmā*) which only weak people are incapable of measuring; for example, the weight (*gurutva*) of Mount Sumeru, or the more or less great number (*pramāṇa*) of drops of water (*bindu*) contained in the great ocean (*mahāsamudra*). The Buddhas and bodhisattvas know these things, but they are unknown to gods and humans.

It is the same for the number of sentient beings to be converted (*vinitasattva*) by [211a] the Buddhas: the Buddhas know it, but as it is not within your capacity, it is described as immeasurable.

Finally, factors (*dharma*) arising from the collocation of causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*) have no intrinsic nature (*nīḥsvabhāva*). Since their intrinsic nature does not exist, they are eternally empty (*śūnya*) and, in this eternal emptiness, sentient beings do not exist (*sattva nopalabhyate*). Thus the Buddha said:

When I was seated on the seat of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*),<sup>104</sup>

My wisdom was non-existent.

Like the empty fist deceiving little children,<sup>105</sup>

I have saved the entire world.

<sup>103</sup> The same distinction is made above, F 152, 393, 451.

<sup>104</sup> The *bodhimaṇḍa*, in the literal sense, the diamond seat (*vajrāsana*) at Gayā where Śākyamuni reached supreme enlightenment; in the figurative sense, the spiritual presence of the law or of the *dharmakāya* of the Buddhas which is independent of any material localization: cf. *Vimalakīrti*, p. 199-200, note.

<sup>105</sup> *Bālollāpāna riktamuṣṭivat*: cf. above, F 1195 and n. 2.



The true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) of things  
Is the sign of sentient beings (*sattvanimitta*).  
But to seize the sign of sentient beings  
Is to stray far from the true noble path. <1263>

Always thinking about the emptiness,  
People do not follow the noble path.  
For the factors (*dharma*) that are without arising and ceasing,  
They make up imaginary characteristics.

Imaginings, reflections, conceptions  
Are the net of Māra (*mārajāla*).  
Not moving, not standing still  
That is really the seal of the law (*dharmamudrā*).

CAB.9.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 'HAPPINESS' AND 'COMPASSION'; F 1263-1264

Question. – If 'happiness' (*sukha*) is subdivided into two parts, the mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*) and the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditācitta*), why is not the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*) that contemplates suffering (*duḥkha*) considered to be of two parts?

Answer. – Happiness (*sukha*), loved by everyone, is important (*guru*); this is why it is divided into two parts, [loving-kindness and sympathetic joy]. On the other hand, suffering (*duḥkha*), which nobody loves, which nobody commemorates, is not divided into two parts.

Furthermore, when happiness is experienced, the mind is soft (*mṛdu*); but when suffering is undergone, the mind is hard (*dr̥ḍha*).

CAB.9.1.

### THE STORY OF VITAŚOKA; F 1263-1264

When Wei-t'o-chou (Vitaśoka), the younger brother of King Aśoka, was for seven days king of Jambudvīpa, he was allowed to indulge in the five objects of desire (*pañcakāmaguṇa*) on a grand scale. At the end of the seven days, king Aśoka asked him: "As king of Jambudvīpa, did you experience happiness (*sukha*) and joy (*muditā*)?" Vitaśoka answered: "I saw nothing, heard nothing, noticed nothing. Why? Because some outcasts (*caṇḍāla*), each morning, rang a bell and shouted out loud: "Of the seven days [that you have been granted], so many have already gone by, and at the end of the seven days you will die." Hearing this proclamation, while being king of Jambudvīpa and showered with the five objects of desire, my discontentedness (*daurmanasya*) and my suffering (*duḥkha*) were so deep that I heard nothing and saw nothing."<sup>106</sup>

<1264>

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<sup>106</sup> The story of Vitaśoka, also called Vigataśoka, Sudatta or Sugātra, is told fully in *Aśokavadāna*, T 2042, k. 2, p. 106a-107c (transl. Przyluski, *Aśoka*, p. 270-280); *Aśokasūtra*, T 2043, k. 3, p. 141b-144a; *Divyāvadāna*,



From that we know that the power of suffering is strong whereas that of happiness is weak. When a person who experiences happiness in his whole body is stabbed some place, all his happiness will disappear and he feels nothing but the pain from the stab. The power of happiness (*sukhabala*) is so weak that two parts<sup>107</sup> are needed to make it strong; the power of suffering (*duḥkhabala*) is so strong that it needs only one part.

CAC.

### EFFECTS OF THE IMMEASURABLES; F 1264-1273

Question. – What ripened effects (*vipākaphala*)<sup>108</sup> do the persons who are practicing the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) receive? <1265-1266>

p. 419-429 (transl. Burnouf, *Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, p. 370-379); *Tchou yao king*, T 212, k. 6, p. 641a-c (transl. Chavannes, *Contes*, III, p. 297-302); *Fen pie kong tö louen*, T 1507, k. 3, p. 39c. – Vitaśoka, the younger brother of king Aśoka, had faith in heretical doctrines and scoffed at the disciples of the Buddha whose easy life he criticized. In order to convert him to the good law, Aśoka resorted to a trick. While the king was bathing, his ministers, in connivance with him, invited Vitaśoka to try on the royal crown which the chances of succession might someday lead him to wear. Vitaśoka went along with the experiment and, mounting the throne, he donned the crown. Suddenly the king emerged from his bathroom and, seeing his brother seated on the throne, pretended to be indignant. He treated him as an usurper and sent him to the outcasts, ordering him to be put to death. However, in order to permit him to repent, he allowed Vitaśoka to reign effectively for seven days after which he would be executed. Thus Vitaśoka enjoyed all the royal prerogatives, but each morning, the outcasts, counting off the days remaining to him to live, reminded him of his forthcoming death. When the seventh day had passed, Vitaśoka was led into the presence of his brother the king. Aśoka questioned him about his impressions during the days of his reign. Vitaśoka answered: “All the sense pleasures with which I was showered upon were spoiled by the prospective of my imminent death. Tormented by the fever of death, I remained sleepless for the entire time.” Embracing his brother, Aśoka said to him: “I will not put you to death; I wanted to see to it that you have faith in the law of the Buddha and explain to you how his disciples, while abstaining from the painful practices imposed on the Brahmins, turn away from sense objects, which they assess to be complete vanity.” Convinced by this experience, Vitaśoka became a mendicant (*śramaṇa*).

In the Ceylonese tradition, the hero of this story is Tissa-kumāra, brother of Aśoka and his vice-regent (*Mahāvamsā*, V, v. 151-60); for Hiuan-tsang, it was Mahendra (the Mahinda of the Pāli sources), wrongly presented as the king’s brother, whereas he was his son (Si-yu-ki, T 2087, k. 8, p. 912a; transl. Watters, II, p. 93-94).

<sup>107</sup> Namely, happiness (*sukha*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*).

<sup>108</sup> In order to understand the discussion that will follow, one should recall the distribution of gods in the three worlds, a distribution discussed among scholars (cf. *Kośa*, III, F 2-4, note) but which the *Traité* has already presented above, F 517, 519, 954:

- 1) *Kāmadhātu* serves as the abode of six groups of gods: 1. Caturmahārājika, 2. Trāyastriṃśa, 3. Yāma, 4. Tuṣita, 5. Nirmāṇarati, 6. Paramirmitavaśavartin.
- 2) *Rūpadhātu*, also called Brahmāloka, world of the Brahmā gods, with its four meditations (*dhyāna*), serves as the abode of seventeen groups of gods:

First meditation: 1. Brahmakāyika, 2. Brahmapurohita, 3. Mahābrahman.

Second meditation: 1. Parittābha, 2. Apramāṇābha, 3. Ābhāsvara.

Third meditation: 1. Parittāsubha, 2. Apramāṇāsubha, 3. Śubhakṛtsna.

Fourth meditation: 1. Anabhṛaka, 2. Puṇyaprasava, 3. Bṛhatphala, and the five Śuddhāvāsikas, 4. Avṛha, 5. Atapa, 6. Sudṛśa, 7. Sudarśaṇa, 8. Akaniṣṭha.

- 3) Ārūpyadhātu, formless realm, has no abodes: it is inhabited, one might say, by formless sentient beings belonging to four perception-spheres: 1. Akāśanantyāyatana, 2. Vijñānānantyāyatana, 3. Ākīṃcanyāyatana, 4. Naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana.

In principle, practitioners who have practiced the immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) are reborn in the two higher realms, Rūpadhātu and Ārūpyadhātu, but the exact place is disputed by scholars because the canonical sources give the impression of contradicting each other. Here, without any pretense of being complete, is a series of canonical topics that are under discussion:

- 1) *Aṅguttara*, IV, p. 150; V, p. 342 (T 125, k. 47, p. 806a26; *Vinaya*, V, p. 140; *Paṭisambhidā*, II, p. 130; *Milindapañha*, p. 198; *Visuddhimagga*, p. 253, 258-260. – If they do not penetrate any higher, those who practice loving-kindness (*maitrī*) gain Brahmaloṇa (*uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokupago hoti*). ‘If they do not penetrate any higher’ means: if they are incapable of attaining the state of the perfected being (*arahattaṃ adhigantuṃ asakkonto*).
- 2) *Dīgha*, I, p. 251; *Majjhima*, II, p. 195 (T 26, k. 6, p. 458b1); *Majjhima*, II, p. 207-208. – The practice of loving-kindness, of compassion, of sympathetic joy or of equanimity is the path leading to be reborn in the company of the Brahmā gods (*Brahmānaṃ saṃvāyātāya maggo*).
- 3) *Aṅguttara*, II, p. 130. – The good persons who practice loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, at the dissolution of their body after death, are reborn in the company of the Śuddhāvāsa gods (*kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā Suddhāvāsānaṃ devānaṃ saṃvāyātāṃ uppajjati*). These gods constitute the five classes of Brahmā gods occupying the summit of the fourth meditation in Rūpadhātu.
- 4) *Tseng yi a han* (T 125, k. 21, p. 656b1-9); *Vibhāṣā* (T 1545, k. 82, p. 425c13-23); *Nyāyānusāra* (T 1562, k. 44, p. 594c3-6); *Kośa*, IV, F 250; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 438 (Sanskrit original). – Those who practice the immeasurables are one of the four persons ‘who gain brahmic merit’ (*brāhmaṇaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavanti*). Now, according to *Aṅguttara*, V, p. 76, the holder of brahmic merit ‘rejoices in the heavens for an aeon’ (*kappaṃ saggaṃhi modati*), and according to *Kośa* (III, F 174; IV, F 251), the gods whose lifespan is one aeon are the Brahmāpurohitas forming the second group of gods localized in the first meditation.

Therefore ‘those practicing loving-kindness’ who gain brahmic merit are reborn among the Brahmāpurohitas.

- 5) *Aṅguttara*, II, p. 129. – Those who practice loving-kindness are reborn in the company of the Brahmakāyikas whose lifespan is one aeon. Those who practice compassion are reborn among the Ābhāsvaras whose lifespan is two aeons. – Those who practice sympathetic joy are reborn among the Śubhakṛtsnas whose lifespan is four aeons. – Those who practice equanimity are reborn among the Bṛhatphalas whose lifespan is five hundred aeons.

[But the sources do not agree on the lifespan of the various classes of gods: cf. W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, Leipzig, 1920, p. 194; add *Vibhāṅga*, p. 424-425; *Kośa*, III, F 173-174].

Answer. – The Buddha said:

Those who enter into the concentration of loving-kindness (*maitrīsamādhi*) receive, at present, five advantages (*anuśaṃsa*):

1. they are not burned if they enter fire (*agni*);
2. they do not die if they swallow poison (*viṣa*);
3. the soldier's sword (*śastra*) does not wound them;
4. they will not die a violent death (*asaṃmūḍhaḥ kālāṃ karoti*);
5. the good gods protect them (*devatā rakṣanti*).

Having done good to innumerable sentient beings (*apramāṇasattva*), they receive immeasurable merit (*apramāṇapuṇya*). By virtue of this immeasurable mind of impure order (*sāsravāpramāṇacitta*) having sentient beings as object-support (*sattvālambana*), they are reborn in a pure place (*śuddhasthāna*), namely, the form realm (*rūpadhātu*).<sup>109</sup> <1267> [211b]

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- 6) *Samyutta*, V, p. 119-121; *Tsa a han*, T 99, k. 27, p. 197c11-13; *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 83, p. 430c22-24; *Nyāyānusāra*, T 1562, k. 79, p. 770b24-26; *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 269. – Those who practice loving-kindness end up at best with in the Śubha (according to the Chinese versions, with the Śubhakṛtsnas). – Those who practice compassion end up at best in the Ākāśanāntyāyatana. – Those who practice sympathetic joy end up at best in the Vijñānāntyāyatana. – Those who practice equanimity end up at best in the Ākīṃcanyāyatana.

The Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas have spent a wealth of ingenuity in order to harmonize all these discrepancies. The *Traité* has not ignored them, but, refusing to enter into these subtleties, it concludes that those who practice the immeasurables—concerned entirely and without exception with all the sentient beings of the ten directions—receive their reward in Ārūpyadhātu as well as in the Rūpadhātu of the Brahmā gods.

<sup>109</sup> Five advantages in the *sūtra* cited by the *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 83, p. 427a6-7; eight advantages according to *Āṅguttara*, IV, p. 150; eleven advantages according to *Āṅguttara*, V, p. 342; *Vinaya*, V, p. 140; *Paṭisambhidā*, II, p. 130; *Milinda*, p. 198; *Visuddhimagga*, p. 253. We reproduce here the text of the *Āṅguttara* V, p. 342 (*Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 47, p. 806a17-806b3; *Che yi siang sseu nien jou lai*, T 138, p. 861a23-b7):

*Mettāya cetovimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya... ekādasāṇisaṃsā pātikaṅkhā... Sukhaṃ supati, sukhaṃ paṭibujjhati, na pāpakam supinaṃ passati, manussāsaṃ piyo hoti, amanussānaṃ piyo hoti, devatā rakkhanti, nāssa aggi vā visaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati, tuvaṭaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati, mukavaṇṇo vipassīdati, asammūlho kālāṃ karoti, uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto brahmalokūpago hoti.*

Transl. – If the liberation of the mind consisting of loving-kindness is observed and cultivated, eleven advantages are in store: 1) those who practice loving-kindness sleep happy; 2) they awake happy; 3) they have no bad dreams; 4) they are dear to humans; 5) they are dear to non-humans; 6) the gods protect them; 7) fire, poison and the knife do not harm them; 8) their mind becomes concentrated quickly; 9) their complexion is serene; 10) they die without bewilderment; 11) if they do not penetrate higher, [after death] they reach the world of the Brahmā gods.

The reservation *uttariṃ appaṭivijjhanto* ‘if they do not penetrate higher’, i.e., ‘if they are incapable of attaining the state of the perfected being’ (*arahattaṃ adhigantaṃ asakkonto*), is necessary as it permits one to understand

Question. – Why did the Buddha say that the retribution (*vipāka*) for loving-kindness is to be reborn in the Brahmā heavens?<sup>110</sup>

Answer. – Because the Brahmadevas are venerated by sentient beings, because everyone has heard speak of them and everyone knows them.

The Buddha lived in the kingdoms of India. Now in the kingdoms of India there were always many brahmins and—in the religion of the brahmins—virtuous people were all reborn among the Brahmadevas.<sup>111</sup> Learning that the devotees of loving-kindness (*maitrācārin*) are reborn among the Brahmadevas, sentient beings have much faith (*śraddhā*) and prepare themselves to practice loving-kindness. This is why the Buddha said that devotees of loving-kindness are reborn among the Brahmadevas.

Furthermore, the gods who have cut through sexual desire (*rāga*) are all called Brahmā, and it is said that these Brahmās dwell in the form realm (*rūpadhātu*). And so the fact of having cut through sexual desire is called *brahmacarya*, ‘celibacy’, and those who have cut through it are called *brāhmaṇas*.

When [the Buddha] speaks here of the ‘Brahmā heavens’, he means not only the four meditations (*dhyāna*) [of *rūpadhātu*, inhabited by the Brahmadevas] but also the four formless equipoises [*ārūpyasamāpatti* of *ārūpyadhātu*, inhabited by the formless deities]. Initial inquiry (*vitarka*) and investigation (*vicāra*) [which are eliminated in the meditations of *rūpyadhātu*] are so difficult to destroy that the Buddha does not speak here about the stages higher than these meditations, [namely, the four formless equipoises]. In the same way, when he spoke about the discipline of speech (*vāksaṃvara*) which is part of the fivefold morality <1268> (*pañcaśīla*) of the ‘approacher of virtue’ (*upāsaka*), the Buddha mentioned only one [abstention], the abstention from lying (*mṛṣāvādavairamaṇa*), but he implied the other three abstentions [regarding divisive talk (*paīśunyavāda*), harmful talk (*pāruṣyavāda*) and frivolous chatter (*saṃbhinnapralāpa*)].<sup>112</sup>

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that loving-kindness can, by way of exception, accede to the supreme fruit of the religious life. But judging from the Chinese versions, this reservation does not appear in the Sanskrit *āgamas*.

The *sūtra* on the eleven advantages of loving-kindness is fully commented on, with supporting stories, in *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 258-260. See also *Manorathapūraṇi*, V, p. 82-84.

<sup>110</sup> *Anguttara*, III, p. 225: *So ime cattāro brahmayānā bhāvetvā kāyassa bheda parammaraṇā sugatīm brahmalokaṃ upapajjati*. – See also *Dīgha*, I, p. 251; *Majjhima*, II, p. 195, 207-208, where the practice of the immeasurables is given as the path leading to be reborn in the company of the Brahmā gods: *ayaṃ pi kho Brāhmaṇaṃ sahaṃvātāya maggo*.

<sup>111</sup> This comment which is obviously aimed at Chinese readers is not ascribable to the author of the *Traité*, Nāgārjuna, or others; it is probably a gloss of the translator Kumārajīva. See on this subject R. Hikata, *Suvikrāntavikrāmin*, Introduction, p. LII-LXXV.

<sup>112</sup> In regard to the fivefold morality (*pañcaśīla*) of the layperson, it is enough to mention ‘lying’ and by that to include the other three offenses of speech: see above, F 820.

Question. – Loving-kindness (*maitrī*) introduces thus the five advantages (*anuśaṃsa*) in question; but why did the Buddha say nothing about the advantages introduced by compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*)?

Answer. – Refer to the above comparison (*upamāna*): by speaking of one single thing, the Buddha implies the other three. This applies here also. What the Buddha said about loving-kindness is equally true for compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

Furthermore, loving-kindness is the immeasurable par excellence. Loving-kindness is like the king (*rājan*); the other three immeasurables that accompany it are like the people (*jana*). Why? First, the yogins, by the mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*), want sentient beings to find happiness (*sukha*). Seeing that there are those who do not find happiness, they produce the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*). Wanting sentient beings who are free from painful thoughts to find the joy of the law, they produce the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditācitta*). No longer experiencing either repugnance (*pratigha*) or affection (*anunaya*) or discontentedness (*daurmanasya*) towards these three things, they produce the mind of equanimity (*upekṣācitta*).

Finally, it is loving-kindness that gives happiness (*sukha*) to sentient beings.

Besides, in the *Tseng yi a han* (*Ekottarāgama*), the Buddha spoke about the mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*) ‘endowed with the five advantages (*anuśaṃsa*)’.<sup>113</sup>

In many places in the Mahāyānasūtras, he spoke about the advantages that (compassion) introduces. Thus, in the *Wang-ming p’ou-sa king* (*Jāliniprabhābodhisattvasūtra* or *Viśeṣacintibrahmaparipṛcchā*),<sup>114</sup> he said: <1269>

<sup>113</sup> Unidentified passage.

<sup>114</sup> A sūtra where the *brahmarājan* Viśeṣacintin, the bodhisattva Jāliniprabha and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī intervene. The *Traité* cites it indiscriminately under the name of *Jāliniprabhābodhisattvasūtra* (k. 20, p. 211b19; k. 22, p. 227b4; k. 28, p. 267a16) or under the name of *Tch’e sin king* = *Viśeṣacintisūtra* (k. 27, p. 257b2; k. 29, p. 275a18; k. 32, p. 297c9; k. 66, p. 524a24; k. 77, p. 604a23; k. 81, p. 631a18). The *Mahāvvyutpatti* mentions the bodhisattva Jāliniprabha (no. 705) and a *Brahmaviśeṣacintiparipṛcchā* (no. 1367).

The *Viśeṣabrahmaparipṛcchā* is known to us by three Chinese versions and one Tibetan version:

1. *Tch’e-sin fan-t’ien so wen king* (T585) by Dharmarakṣa; translated on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> T’ai-k’ang year (April 20, 286): cf. *K’ai yuan mou lou*, T 2154, k. 2, p. 494a26.
2. *Sseu-yi fan-t’ien so wen king* (T 586) by Kumārajīva; translated at Tch’ang-ngan, in the garden of Siao-yao, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 4<sup>th</sup> Hong-che year (January 9, 403): cf. *Li ti san pao ki*, T 2034, k. 8, p. 77c12. Seng-jouei wrote the preface.
3. *Cheng-sseu-wei fan-t’ien so wen king* (T 587) by Bodhiruci; translated at Lo-yang in the 1<sup>st</sup> Chen-koueï year (518): cf. *Li tai san pao ki*, T 2034, k. 9, p. 85c20. – A *Cheng-sseu-wei king louen* (T 1532), commentary by Vasubandhu (?) on this *paripṛcchā* was translated by this same Bodhiruci in the 1<sup>st</sup> P’ou-t’ai year (531): cf. *Li tai san pao ki*, T 2034, k. 9, p. 86a15.
4. *Tshangs-pa khyad-par-sems-kyis zhus-pa* (OKC 827), translated by Śākyaprabha, etc.

The bodhisattvas practice, among sentient beings, the thirty-two kinds of compassion (*karuṇā*). These increasing gradually change into great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*). Great compassion is the root of the qualities (*guṇamūla*) of all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas; it is the mother (*mātr*) of Prajñāpāramitā and the grandmother (*mahāmātr*) of the Buddhas. By means of great compassion, the bodhisattvas attain Prajñāpāramitā and, having acquired Prajñāpāramitā, they become Buddha.<sup>115</sup>

He praises great compassion in all these ways.

Also in other places, he speaks very highly of the mind of sympathetic joy (*muditācitta*) and the mind of equanimity (*upekṣācitta*), but as loving-kindness (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) are very important, the Buddha praises their advantages <1270> (*anuśaṃsa*) by preference: loving-kindness, because of its qualities (*guṇa*), is difficult to get, and compassion realizes great deeds.

Question. – However, in explaining the advantages (*anuśaṃsa*) of the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) the Buddha said:

The mind of loving-kindness—well observed, well developed—ends up at best [in a rebirth] among the Śubhakarṣṇa gods (*maitricittam āsevitaṃ subhāvitaṃ Śubhakarṣṇebhya devebhyaḥ saṃvartate*). – The mind of compassion (*karuṇācitta*)—well observed, well developed—ends up at best in the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ (*ākāśānantyāyatana*). – The mind of joy (*muditācitta*)—well observed, well developed—ends up at best in the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ (*viññānānantyāyatana*). – The mind of equanimity (*upekṣācitta*)—well observed, well developed—ends up at best in the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ (*ākīṃcanyāyatana*).<sup>116</sup> <1271>

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<sup>115</sup> *Viśeṣacintin*, T 585, k. 1, p. 9b24-10a16; T 586, k. 2, p. 41c6-42a25; T 587, k. 2, p. 72b26-73b9. – The same passage also appears in two Chinese versions of the *Ratnameghasūtra*: T 660, k. 5, p. 302a9-302c19; T 489, k. 8, p. 723a8-723c11; and its Indian original is in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, no. 154-186.

It is not a matter of the thirty-two kinds of great compassion but of the thirty-two reasons impelling the Tathāgata to practice. Here is the first: *Nairātmyāḥ sarve dharmāḥ sattvāś ca nairātmyaṃ nādhimucyante. atas tathāgatasya sattveṣu mahākaruṇotpadyate*: “All factors (*dharma*) are without self and yet sentient beings do not believe in nonself; this is why great compassion for sentient beings arises in the Tathāgata”; and so on.

The great compassion of the Tathāgata will be the subject of chapter XLII.

<sup>116</sup> An extract from the *Haliddavasanasutta* of *Saṃyutta*, V, p. 119-121 (*Tsa a han*, T 99, no. 743, k. 27, p. 197c11-13). – Some *bhikkhus* were paying a morning visit to the Parivrājaka heretics established at Haliddavasana, a village of the Koliyas. The latter stated that they taught the same ‘liberations of mind’ (*cetovimutti*), i.e., the same immeasurables, as the Buddha, and asked the *bhikkhus* how the Buddha’s teaching differed from their own. The *bhikkhus*, unable to answer, came to consult the Buddha, and this is what he told them:

*Subhapparamāhaṃ, bhikkhave, mettaṃ cetovimuttiṃ vadāmi... Ākāśānañcāyatanaparamāhaṃ, bhikkhave, karuṇaṃ cetovimuttiṃ vadāmi... Viññāṇāmañcāyatanaparamāhaṃ, bhikkhave, muditaṃ cetovimuttiṃ vadāmi... Ākiñcaññāyatanaparamāhaṃ, bhikkhave, upekkhaṃ cetovimuttiṃ vadāmi.* – “I say, O monks, that the liberation

[Now, the last three perception-spheres in question belong to the *ārūpyadhātu* and not to *rūpadhātu* which forms the Brahmāloka.] Why then did the Buddha say above (F 1267) that the ripened effect [211c] of loving-kindness [and of the other immeasurables] “is to be reborn in the Brahmā heavens”?

Answer. – 1. The teaching of the Buddhas is inconceivable (*acintya*).<sup>117</sup> If he speaks in this way this is in order to conform to the needs of those to be converted (*vaiṇeyasattvānuvartanāt*).

2. Furthermore, when one emerges from the concentration of loving-kindness (*maitrisamādhi*), it is easy to make one’s way to the third meditation [the summit of which the Śubhakarṣna gods occupy]. – On emerging from the concentration of compassion (*karuṇāsamādhi*), it is easy to enter into the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’. – On emerging from the concentration of sympathetic joy (*muditāsamādhi*), it is easy to enter the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’. – On emerging from the concentration of equanimity (*upekṣāsamādhi*), it is easy to enter into the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’.

3. Furthermore, by means of the mind of loving-kindness (*maitricitta*), the yogins wish that all sentient beings may find happiness (*sukha*), and, as a reward for this thought, they themselves find happiness. Now, in the threefold world (*traiḍhātuka*), the Śubhakarṣna gods are the happiest.<sup>118</sup> This is why the Buddha says that “[the mind of loving-kindness] ends up at best in a rebirth among the Śubhakarṣna gods”.

By means of the mind of compassion (*karuṇacitta*), the yogins see sentient beings who are old, sick, weak, tormented and suffering. A feeling of pity (*anukampācitta*) arises in them and they wonder how they can liberate these sentient beings from suffering (*duḥkha*): actually, if one

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of mind which is loving-kindness has the Śubha [in the Chinese versions, the heaven of the Śubhakarṣnas] as supreme outcome. That which is compassion has the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ as supreme outcome. That which is sympathetic joy has the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ as supreme outcome. That which is equanimity has the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ as supreme outcome.”

Now, among the four ultimate outcomes, only the first, namely, the heaven of the Śubhakarṣnas, belongs to the form realm (*rūpadhātu*), also called the world of the Brahmās (*brahmāloka*). The other three concern the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*).

The *Haliddavasanasutta* is the only *sūtra* where rebirths in the formless realm are promised to those who practice the immeasurables. Everywhere else the Buddha affirmed that followers of the immeasurables “are reborn in the Brahmāloka”, i.e., in the form realm.

These contradictory teachings naturally struck the old exegetists, and both Sanskrit and Pāli scholars have looked into the *Haliddavasanasutta*. See especially *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 269; Comm. of *Samyutta*, III, p. 172; *Vimuttimagga*, tr. Ehara, p. 195; *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 83, p. 430c22-24; *Nyāyānusāra*, T 1562, k. 79, p. 770c3-8.

<sup>117</sup> *Aṅguttara*, II, p. 80: *Buddhānaṃ, bhikkhave, budhavisayo acinteyyo na cintabbo yaṃ cinto ummādassa vighātassa bhāgi assa*.

<sup>118</sup> See above, F 499, 504.



eliminates the internal sufferings (*ādhyātmikaduḥkha*), the external sufferings (*bāhyaduḥkha*) follow one after another; and if one eliminates the external sufferings, the internal sufferings follow one after another. The yogins then say: Those who have a body (*dehin*) necessarily encounter suffering; only those who have no body succeed in not having suffering. Now, space (*ākāśa*) excludes all form (*rūpa*) and, [by that very fact, escapes from suffering]. This is why the Buddha said that '[the mind of compassion] ends up at best in the 'perception-sphere of infinite space'.

By means of the mind of sympathetic joy, the yogins want to give sentient beings the mental happiness <1272> (*vijñānasukha*) called 'joy'. In this mental happiness, the mind (*citta*), freed from the body (*kāya*), is like a bird (*paṅśin*) that has escaped from its cage (*pañjara*).<sup>119</sup> In the 'perception-sphere of infinite space', the mind, although free of the body, was still attached to space (*ākāśa*). The 'perception-sphere of infinite consciousness' is immeasurable (*apramāṇa*): in all its phenomena, it is consciousness, and this consciousness enjoys unlimited sovereignty (*aiśvarya*). This is why the Buddha said that joy ends up at best in the 'perception-sphere of infinite consciousness'.

By means of the mind of equanimity, the yogins remain indifferent (*upekṣante*) to the suffering (*duḥkha*) and the happiness (*sukha*) of sentient beings and, as they pay no attention to suffering or happiness, they attain true equanimity (*bhūtopekṣādharmā*), namely, the 'perception-sphere of nothingness'. This is why the Buddha said that 'the mind of equanimity ends up at best in the 'perception-sphere of nothingness'.

These four immeasurables in question are acquired only by the noble persons (*āryapudgala*) and not by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*).

4. Finally, the Buddha knew that, in future times (*anāgate 'dhvani*), his disciples, being of weak faculties (*mṛdvindriya*), would become attached to factors (*dharma*) by way of conceptual constructions (*vikalpa*), would speak wrongly about the four immeasurables by saying: "The four limitless, having sentient beings as their object-support (*ālambana*) are exclusively impure (*sāsrava*), and concern the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*) exclusively, they do not exist in the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*)."<sup>120</sup>

In order to destroy the false views (*mithyādrṣṭi*) of these people, the Buddha said that the four immeasurables also concern the *ārūpyadhātu*. And since the Buddha considers these four immeasurables as concerning sentient beings of the ten directions as a whole, it is necessary that these immeasurables have the *ārūpyadhātu* as object-support.

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<sup>119</sup> Similar considerations have been developed above, F 1032.

<sup>120</sup> Here the *Traité* counters the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣika theses according to which the immeasurables have sentient beings as object-support (*apramāṇāḥ sattvālambanāḥ*) and, more precisely, that their domain is the sentient beings of the desire realm (*kāmasattvās tu gocarāḥ*): cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 199; *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 429. The *Mahāyānasūtras* and particularly the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, cited here for the second time, state that they also can have factors as object-support and even no object-support.



Thus it is said in the *Wou-tsin-yi p'ou-sa wen* (*Akṣayamatipariṣcchā*): “Loving-kindness is of three kinds: 1. that which has sentient beings as object-support (*sattvāmbana*); 2. that which has factors as object-support <1273> (*dharmāmbana*); 3. that which has no object-support (*anāmbana*).” And the *śāstra* explains: “That which has sentient beings as object-support is impure (*sāsrava*); that which has no object-support is pure (*anāsrava*); and that which has factors as object-support is sometimes impure and sometimes pure.”<sup>121</sup>

All this is a summary of the four immeasurables. <1274>

CB. **SECOND SECTION: THE FOUR FORMLESS EQUIPOISES; F 1274-1279**

CBA. **THE FORMLESS EQUIPOISES ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHARMA; F 1274-1278**

The four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*) are:

1. the perception-sphere of infinite space (*ākāśānantyāyatana*),
2. the perception-sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññānānantyāyatana*),
3. the perception-sphere of nothingness (*ākīñcanyāyatana*),
4. the perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception (*naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñā-āyatana*).

CBA.1. **DEFILED EQUIPOISES, ACQUIRED THROUGH BIRTH, ACQUIRED THROUGH PRACTICE; F 1274-1275**

These four formless equipoises are each of three kinds: (i) stained (*samāla*), (ii) acquired through birth (*upapattiprātilambhika*) or (iii) acquired through practice (*prāyogika*).<sup>122</sup> [212a]

1. Stained (*samāla*): – The thirty-one bad latent tendencies or contaminants (*anuśaya*) contained in the four *ārūpyas*<sup>123</sup> and the formations associated with the mind (*cittasaṃprayuktasaṃskāra*) arising within these latent tendencies are stained (*samāla*).

<sup>121</sup> Quotation from the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and not from the *Akṣayamatipariṣcchā*: see above, F 1245, n. 1.

<sup>122</sup> Like the meditations (*dhyāna*), the equipoises (*samāpatti*) may be equipoises (*samāpatti*) of enjoyment (*āsvādana*) associated with craving (*saṭṭṣṇa*), or clean (*śuddhaka*) equipoises, but of the mundane order (*laukika*) and still involving fluxes (*āsrava*): see above, F 1027, and better *Kośa*, VIII, F 145-146, with notes by L. de La Vallée Poussin. Moreover, the equipoises may be acquired through birth (*upapattiprātilambhika*) as is the case among sentient beings who, in the form of a ‘mental stream without body’, come to be reborn in the four perception-spheres of the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). Finally, the equipoises may be acquired through practice (*prāyogika*) as is the case for practitioners who momentarily concentrate on these perception-spheres: cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 134.

<sup>123</sup> There are six latent tendencies or contaminants (*anuśaya*): 1) attachment (*rāga*), 2) repugnance (*pratigha*), 3) pride (*māna*), 4) ignorance (*avidyā*), 5) afflicted view (*dṛṣṭi*), 6) afflicted doubt (*vimati*). These six make ten by dividing afflicted view into five. These ten latent tendencies constitute the thirty-six latent tendencies of

2. Acquired through birth (*upapattiprātilambhika*). – Those who have <1275> practiced the four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*) are reborn in accordance with the retribution of these actions (*karmavipāka*) in the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*) and obtain four very clear (*vispaṣṭa*) and morally indeterminate (*avyākṛta*) aggregates (*skandha*).<sup>124</sup>

3. Acquired through practice (*prāyogika*). – Examining the coarseness (*audārya*) and nuisance of form (*rūpa*), the cause of aging (*jarā*), disease (*vyādhi*), death (*marāṇa*) and all kinds of suffering, the yogins consider it ‘as a disease, as a tumor, as an arrow’ (*rogato gaṇḍataḥ śalyataḥ samanupaśyati*).<sup>125</sup> They tell themselves that all of it is deception (*vañcana*) and lying (*mṛṣāvāda*) that must be suspended. Having thought in this way, they go beyond any conception of form, they destroy any conception of resistance, they pay no attention to any conception of multiplicity and penetrate into the equipoise of the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ (*sa sarvaśo rūpasamijñānām samatikramāt pratighasamijñānām astaṅgamān nānātvasamijñānām amanasikārād ākāśānatyāyatanaśamāpattiṃ praviśati*).<sup>126</sup>

CBA.2.

## PROCESS OF ACCESS TO THE EQUIPOISES; F 1275-1276

Question. – How can these three kinds of conceptions [of form, resistance, multiplicity] be destroyed?

Answer. – These three kinds of conceptions (*samijñā*), all arising from a collocation of causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*), are without intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) and, since their intrinsic nature does not exist, they are all deceptions, non-realities, easily destroyed.

Furthermore, [the yogins say to themselves], the conceptual constructions or distinctions (*vikalpa*) regarding <1276> form are eliminated bit by bit (*bhāgaśaḥ*) and finally no longer exist. This is why, if they will not exist later, they do not exist now either. Under the influence of mistaken

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*kāmadhātu*, thirty-one of *rūpadhātu*, the thirty-one of *ārūpyadhātu*, in all ninety-eight latent tendencies: cf. *Jñānaprasthāna*, T 1544, k. 5, p. 943a, discussed by Kośa, V, F 9.

<sup>124</sup> Whereas the meditations (*dhyāna*) are accompanied by the five aggregates (*skandha*), the equipoises (*samāpatti*) have only four of them, because all form (*rūpa*; discipline arising from meditation [*dhyānasamvara*], pure discipline [*anāsravasamvara*]) is absent there (*anuparivartakarūpābhāvāt*). This is why the four equipoises as well as the preliminary concentrations (*sāmantaka*) of the three higher equipoises are called ‘having overcome the conception of form’ (*vibhūtarūpasamijñā*). The preliminary concentration of the first equipoise, i.e., of the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’, is not given this name because the conception of form has not been completely gone beyond there. It is in this preliminary concentration, indeed, that the practitioners go beyond the conception of form (*rūpasamijñām atikramati*) and connected conceptions. See Kośa, VIII, F 134-135; *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 412.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. *Majjhima*, I, 436, 500; *Aṅguttara*, IV, 422-423: *So yad eva tattha hoti... te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati*.

<sup>126</sup> The going beyond these conceptions takes place in the preliminary concentration (*sāmantaka*) of the first formless equipoise (*ārūpyasamāpatti*).

views (*viparyāsa*), sentient beings seize the characteristics of identity (*ekatva*) and difference (*anyatva*) in composite form or matter and they mentally become attached to the characteristic of form. As for myself, I must not imitate these fools; I must seek the true reality (*bhūtavastu*). Now, in the true reality there is neither identity nor difference.

Furthermore, the yogins reflect thus:<sup>127</sup>

1. When I rejected and suspended the factors (*dharma*), I obtained considerable benefits. First I abandoned my wealth, my wife and children; I left home and found the pure morality (*viśuddhaśīla*); my mind is secure (*yogaśema*); I have no longer any fear nor fright.
2. Suspending desires (*kāma*), evil and bad factors (*pāpā akuśala dharmāḥ*), I obtained the first meditation (*dhyāna*)—arisen from detachment (*vivekaja*)—which is joy and satisfaction (*pritisukha*).
3. By the quietening of initial inquiry and investigation (*vitarkavicārāṇaṃ vyutpaśamā*), by personal serenity (*adhyātmaṃ samprasādāt*), I obtained the second meditation where there is great joy and satisfaction (*mahāpritisukha*).
4. By detachment from joy (*prīter virāgāt*), I found myself in the third meditation which is by far the happiest.
5. Abandoning this satisfaction (*sukhasya prahāṇāt*), I obtained the fourth meditation, purified through equanimity and mindfulness (*upekṣāsmṛtipariśuddha*).
6. Now I abandon these four meditations, for it is still necessary to obtain the wonderful equipoises (*samāpatti*).

This is why the yogins “go beyond the conception of form (*rūpasamjñāṃ atikrāmati*), destroy the conception of resistance (*pratighasamjñāṃ nirodhayati*) and no longer pay attention to the conception of multiplicity (*nānātvasamjñāṃ na manasikaroti*)”.

CBA.3.

### GOING BEYOND CONCEPTIONS; F 1276-1277

The Buddha spoke of three kinds of form (*rūpa*):

1. There is visible and resistant form (*asti rūpaṃ sanidarśanaṃ sapratighaṃ*); <1277> 2. there is invisible and resistant form (*asti rūpaṃ anidarśanaṃ sapratighaṃ*); 3. there is invisible and non-resistant form (*asti rūpaṃ anidarśanaṃ apratighaṃ*).<sup>128</sup>

(1.) When the yogins “go beyond the conception of form (*rūpasamjñā*)”, this refers to visible and resistant form (*sanidarśana-sapratigha*); (2.) when they “destroy the conception of resistance

<sup>127</sup> Here the *Traité* repeats the old canonical phrases already quoted above, F 1024-1025, note.

<sup>128</sup> *Rūpasamgrahasūtra* cited in *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 352; Pāli correspondent in *Digha*, III, p. 217; *Vibhaṅga*, p. 13, 72, 89; *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, p. 125, 146-147, 244-245.

(*pratisaṃjñā*)”, this refers to invisible resistant form (*anidarśana-sapratigha*); (3.) when they “no longer pay attention to the conception of multiplicity (*nānātvasaṃjñā*)”, this refers to invisible and non-resistant form (*anidarśanāpratigha*).

Furthermore, by the destruction of visible form (*rūpa*) seen by the eye (*cakṣus*), the yogins “go beyond form”; by the destruction of the ear (*śrotra*) and sound (*śabda*), the nose (*ghrāṇa*) and odor (*gandha*), the tongue (*jihvā*) and taste (*rasa*), the body (*kāya*) and the tangible (*spraṣṭavya*), they “go beyond the conception of resistance”. In regard to other forms and to many varieties not described as form, we speak of “the conception of multiplicity”.<sup>129</sup>

Seeing this, the yogins eliminate the defilements (*saṃkleśa*) of the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and obtain the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ (*ākāśānantyāyatana*). In regard to the causes and methods for obtaining the other three formless equipoises, refer to what was said in the chapter on the Dhyānapāramitā (F 1032-1034). <1278>

CBA.4.

### MORAL QUALITIES OF THE EQUIPOISES; F 1278

Among these four formless (*ārūpya*) [equipoises], one, [namely, the [212b] ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana*)], is always impure (*sāsrava*).<sup>130</sup> For the other three, one has to distinguish:

The ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ (*ākāśānantyāyatana*) is sometimes impure (*sāsrava*) and sometimes pure (*anāsrava*). If it is impure, this ‘perception-sphere of space’ (*ākāśāyatana*) contains four impure aggregates (*sāsravaskandha*); if it is pure, it contains four pure aggregates. It is the same for the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ (*vijñānānantyāyatana*) and the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ (*ākimcanyāyatana*).

All these equipoises are conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and good (*kuśala*). If it is impure, the ‘perception-sphere of space’ involves retribution (*savipāka*) and is morally indeterminate (*avyākṛta*); if it is

<sup>129</sup> An obscure and possibly corrupt passage. For the *Kośavyākhyā*, the *rūpa sanidarśana-sapratigha* is the form to be cognized by the visual consciousness; the *rūpa anidarśana-sapratigha* is the eye, etc., and also the nine material bases of consciousness; the *rūpa anidarśana-apratigha* is the unmanifest (*avijñapti*).

For the *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 273-274, the conceptions of form (*rūpasamjñā*) are the meditations of subtle form mentioned here under the name of ‘conceptions’, and things that are their object (*rūpasamjñānan ti saññāsisena vuttarūpāvacarajjhānānañ c’eva tadārammaṇānañ ca*). The conceptions of resistance (*pratighasamjñā*) are the conceptions of resistance arising from the contact between the physical bases of consciousness, eye, etc., and their respective objects, color, etc. (*cakkhādīnaṃ vatthūnāṇi rūpādīnaṃ ārammaṇānaṃ ca paṭighātena samuppannā paṭighasaññā*). The conceptions of multiplicity (*nānātvasamjñā*) are the conceptions that function with variety as their domain (*nānatte vā gocare pavattā saññā*) or that are varied themselves (*nānattā vā saññā*). The *Visuddhimagga* is here inspired by the *Vibhaṅga*, p. 261-262.

<sup>130</sup> In this perception-sphere, also called *bhavāgra*, ‘summit of cyclic existence’, awareness is so weak in it that one cannot meditate on the noble path: cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 145.

pure, it does not involve retribution (*avipāka*). It is the same for the ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’ (*viññānāyatana*) and the ‘perception sphere of nothingness’.

If it is good, the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naiva-saṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana*) involves retribution and is morally indeterminate, but [in itself] it does not involve retribution.<sup>131</sup>

CBB.

### **THE FORMLESS EQUIPOISES ACCORDING TO THE MAHĀYĀNA; F 1278-1279**

[omitted]

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<sup>131</sup> Here the *Traité* pursues with a series of technical considerations which I [Lamotte] refrain from translating. The reader may find a similar set of analyses in the *Vibhaṅga*, p. 269-271.

D. **CHAPTER XXXIV: LIBERATIONS, SPHERES OF MASTERY, SPHERES OF TOTALITY, SUCCESSIVE EQUIPOISES; F 1281-1309**

DA. **FIRST SECTION: LIBERATIONS, SPHERES OF MASTERY AND SPHERES OF TOTALITY; F 1281-1307**

**PRELIMINARY NOTE; F 1281-1290**

The fifth, sixth and seventh classes of supplementary factors (*dharma*) recommended to bodhisattvas by the Prajñāpāramitā include respectively:

1. Eight liberations: Sanskrit *aṣṭau vimokṣāḥ*; Pāli *aṭṭha vimokkhā* (& *vimokkhā*); Tibetan *rnam par thar ba brgyad*; Chinese *pa pei chō* or *pa kiai t'ouo*.
2. Eight perception-spheres of mastery: Sanskrit *aṣṭāv abhivhāyatanāni*; Pāli *aṭṭha abhivhāyatanāni*; Tibetan *gzil gyis gnon pa'i skye mched brgyad*; Chinese *pa tch'ou tch'ou* (or *jou*) or *pa cheng tch'ou*.
3. Ten perception-spheres of totality: Sanskrit *daśa kṛtsnāyatanāni*; Pāli *dasa kasināyatanāni*; Tibetan *zad par gyi skye mched bcu*; Chinese *che yi tsie tch'ou* (or *jou*) or *che pien tch'ou* (or *jou*).

Since these three lists cross each other and mingle partially, it is suitable to study them jointly.

**CANONICAL DEFINITIONS OF THE THREE LISTS; F 1281-1287**

**1. THE EIGHT LIBERATIONS (VIMOKṢA).**

Pāli formula in *Dīgha*, II, p. 70-71; 111-112; III, p. 261-262; *Majjhima*, II, p. 12-13; *Aṅguttara*, IV, p. 306; *Vibhaṅga*, p. 342. – Sanskrit formula in *Daśottarasūtra*, p. 92-94; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 688; *Daśasāhasrikā*, p. 98; *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 1445; *Mahāvīyut.*, no. 1510-1518: <1281>

Pāli: *Aṭṭha vimokkhā*:

1. *rūpi rūpāni passati: ayaṃ paṭhamo vimokho.*
2. *ajjhataṃ arūpasaññi bahiddhā rūpāni passati: ayaṃ dutiyo vimokho.*
3. *subhan' t'eva adhimutto hoti: ayaṃ tatiyo vimokho.*
4. *sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā, paṭighasaññānaṃ atthaṃgamā, nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā: ananto ākāso ti ākāsañācāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati: ayaṃ catuttho vimokho.*
5. *sabbaso ākāsañācāyatanaṃ samatikkamma: anantaṃ viññāṇaṃ ti viññāṇācāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati: ayaṃ pañcama vimokho.*
6. *sabbaso viññāṇācāyatanaṃ samatikkamma: n'atthi kiñciti ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati: ayaṃ chaṭṭho vimokho.*

7. *sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikamma nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati: ayaṃ sattamo vimokho.*
8. *sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikamma saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati: ayaṃ aṭṭhamo vimokho.*

Sanskrit: Aṣṭau vimokṣāḥ:

The eight liberations:

1. *rūpi rūpāṇi paśyaty ayaṃ prathamam vimokṣaḥ.*  
1. Being [in the realm] of form, they see visible forms; this is the first liberation.
2. *adhyātman arūpasamjñā bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty ayaṃ dvitīyam vimokṣaḥ.*  
2. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible form; this is the second liberation.
3. *śubhaṃ vimokṣaṃ kāyena sāksātkṛtvopasaṃpadya viharaty ayaṃ tṛtīyam vimokṣaḥ.*  
3. Actualizing with their body the agreeable liberation, they abide in this equipoise; this is the third liberation.
4. *sarvaśo rūpasamjñānāṃ samatikramāt, pratighasamjñānāṃ astamgamān, nānātvasaṃjñānāṃ amanasikārād anantam ākāśam [anantam ākāśam] ity ākāśānantyāyatanaṃ upasaṃpadya viharati tadyathā devā ākāśānantyāyatanopagāḥ. ayaṃ caturtham vimokṣaḥ.*  
4. By completely going beyond the conceptions of form, the destruction of the conceptions of resistance, not paying attention to the conceptions of multiplicity, they think: “Space is infinite”, <1283> they penetrate into the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ and abide there like the gods who are attached to this perception-sphere; this is the fourth liberation.
5. *punar aparaṃ sarvaśo ākāśānantyāyatanaṃ samatikramyānantam vijñānam [anantam vijñānam] iti vijñānānantyāyatanaṃ upasaṃpadya viharati tadyathā devā vijñānānantyāyatanopagāḥ. ayaṃ pañcamam vimokṣaḥ.*  
5. Further, having completely gone beyond the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’, they think: ‘Consciousness is infinite’, they penetrate into the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ and abide there like the gods who are attached to this perception-sphere; this is the fifth liberation.
6. *punar aparaṃ sarvaśo vijñānānantyāyatanaṃ samatikramya nāsti kiṃ cid ity ākiñcanyāyatanaṃ upasaṃpadya viharati tadyathā devā ākiñcanyāyatanopagāḥ. ayaṃ ṣaṣṭham vimokṣaḥ.*  
6. Further, having completely gone beyond the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’, they think: “Nothing exists”, they penetrate into the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ and abide there like the gods who are attached to it; this is the sixth liberation.
7. *punar aparaṃ sarvaśo ākiñcanyāyatanaṃ samatikramya naivasamjñānāsaṃjñāyatanaṃ upasaṃpadya viharati tadyathā devā naivasamjñānāsaṃjñāyatanopagāḥ. ayaṃ saptamam vimokṣaḥ.*

7. Further, having completely gone beyond the 'perception-sphere of nothingness', they penetrate into the 'perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception' and abide there like the gods who are attached to it; this is the seventh liberation.
8. *punar aparāṇi sarvaśo naivasaṃjñānāsasaṃjñāyatanāṇi samatikramya saṃjñāveditanirodhaṃ kāyena sāksātkṛtvoopasaṃpadya viharaty ayam aśṭamo vimokṣa iti.*
8. Further, having completely gone beyond the 'perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception', having actualized with their body the cessation of conception and of sensation, they penetrate into it and abide there; this is the eighth liberation.

## 2. THE EIGHT PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY (ABHIBHĀYATANA).

Pāli formula in *Dīgha* II, p. 110-111; III p. 260-261; *Majjhima*, II, p. 13-14; *Aṅguttara*, IV, p. 305-306; V, p. 61-62. – Sanskrit formula in *Daśottarasūtra*, p. 95-97; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 690-691; *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 431-432; *Daśasāhasrikā*, p. 101-102; *Mahāvīyut.*, nos. 1230-1527:

Pāli:

*Aṭṭha abhibhāyatanāni:*

1. *ajjhattaṃ rūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati parittāni suvaṇṇadubbaṇṇāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ paṭthamaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi.*
2. *ajjhattaṃ rūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati appamāṇāni suvaṇṇadubbaṇṇāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ dutiyaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi.*
3. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati parittāni suvaṇṇadubbaṇṇāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ tatiyaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi.*
4. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati appamāṇāni suvaṇṇadubbaṇṇāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ catutthaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi. <1284>*
5. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati nilāni nilavaṇṇāni nilanidassanāni nilanibhāsāni. seyyathāpi nāma ummāpupphaṃ nilaṃ nilavaṇṇaṃ nilanidassanaṃ nilanibhāsaṃ, seyyathāpi vā pana taṃ vatthaṃ bārāṇaseyyakaṃ ubhatobhāgavimaṭṭhaṃ nilaṃ nilavaṇṇaṃ nilanidassanaṃ nilanibhāsaṃ, evaṃ eva ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati nilāni nilavaṇṇāni nilanidassanāni nilanibhāsāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ pañcamaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi.*
6. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati pitāni pitavaṇṇāni pitānidassanāni pitānibhāsāni. seyyathāpi nāma kaṇikārapupphaṃ pitaṃ pitavaṇṇaṃ pitānidassanaṃ pitānibhāsaṃ, seyyathāpi vā pana taṃ vatthaṃ bārāṇaseyyakaṃ ubhatobhāgavimaṭṭhaṃ pitaṃ pitavaṇṇaṃ pitānidassanaṃ pitānibhāsaṃ evaṃ eva ajjhattaṃ arūpasāññi eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati pitāni pitavaṇṇāni pitānidassanāni pitānibhāsāni, tāni abhibhūyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṃsaññi hoti. idaṃ chaṭṭhaṃ abhibhāyatanāṇi.*



7. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati lohitaṇi lohitaṇaṇi lohitaṇidassanāni lohitaṇibhāsāni. seyyathā pi nāma bandhujīvakaṇupphaṇi lohitaṇi lohitaṇaṇi lohitaṇidassanāni lohitaṇibhāsāni, seyyathā vā pana taṇi vatthaṇi bārāṇaseyyakaṇi ubhatobhāgavimaṭṭhaṇi lohitaṇi lohitaṇaṇi lohitaṇidassanāni lohitaṇibhāsāni, evaṇi eva ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati lohitaṇi lohitaṇaṇi lohitaṇidassanāni lohitaṇibhāsāni, tāni abhibhuyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṇisaññī hoti, idaṇi sattamaṇi abhibhāyatanāni.*
8. *ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati odātāni odātavaṇṇāni odātānidassanāni odātānibhāsāni. seyyathā <1285> pi nāma osadhitārakā odātā odātavaṇṇā odātānidassanāni odātānibhāsāni, seyyathā vā pana taṇi vatthaṇi bārāṇaseyyakaṇi ubhatobhāgavimaṭṭhaṇi odātāni odātavaṇṇāni odātānidassanāni odātānibhāsāni, evaṇi eva ajjhattaṃ arūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati odātāni odātavaṇṇāni odātānidassanāni odātānibhāsāni, tāni abhibhuyya: jānāmi passāmiti evaṇisaññī hoti. idaṇi atṭhamaṇi abhibhāyatanāni.*

Sanskrit:

Aṣṭāv abhibhvāyatanāni:

1. *adhyātmaṇi rūpaṇiññī bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati parittāni suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇi abhibhūya jānāty abhibhūya paśyati, evaṇisaññī ca bhavati. idaṇi prathamam abhibhvāyatanam.*
1. Having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, limited or few in number (*parittāni*), beautiful (*suvarṇa*) or ugly (*durvarṇa*), and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the first 'perception-sphere of mastery' (*abhibhvāyatana*).
2. *adhyātmaṇi rūpaṇiññī (the variant arūpaṇiññī is faulty) bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati adhimātrāni (variant: mahadgatāni) suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇi abhibhūya jānāty abhibhūya paśyati, evaṇisaññī ca bhavati. idaṇi dvitīyam abhibhvāyatanam.*
2. Having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, numerous (variation: extensive), beautiful and ugly, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the second 'perception-sphere of mastery'.
3. *adhyātmaṇi arūpaṇiññī bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati parittāni suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇi abhibhūya jānāty abhibhūya paśyati, evaṇisaññī ca bhavati. idaṇi tṛtīyam abhibhvāyatanam.*
3. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, limited or few in number, beautiful and ugly, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the third 'perception-sphere of mastery'.

4. *adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty adhimātrāni* (variant: *mahadgatāni*) *suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati, evamsamjñi ca bhavati. idaṃ caturtham abhibhvāyatanam.*
4. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, numerous (variation: extensive), beautiful and ugly, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the fourth 'perception-sphere of mastery'.
5. *adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati nilāni nilavarṇāni nilanidarśanāni nilanirbhāsāni. tadyathā umakāpuṣpaṃ saṃpannaṃ vā vārāṇaseyaṃ* (variant *vārāṇasīyakam*) *vastraṃ nilaṃ nilavarṇaṃ nilanidarśanaṃ nilanirbhāsam, evam evādhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati nilāni nilavarṇāni nilanidarśāni nilanirbhāsāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati, evamsamjñi ca bhavati. idaṃ pañcamam abhibhvāyatanam.*
5. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, blue, blue in color, blue in aspect, blue in luster. Just like the flax flower or like fine Benares muslin, blue, blue in color, blue in aspect, blue in luster, in the same way, without having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, blue, blue in color, blue in aspect, blue in luster, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the fifth 'perception-sphere of mastery'.
6. *adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati pitāni pitavarṇāni pitanidarśanāni pitanirbhāsāni. tadyathā karṇikārapuṣpaṃ saṃpannaṃ vā vārāṇaseyaṃ vastraṃ pitaṃ pitavarṇaṃ pitanidarśanaṃ pitanirbhāsam, evam evādhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati pitāni pitavarṇāni pitanidarśanāni pitanirbhāsāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati, evamsamjñi ca bhavati. idaṃ ṣaṣṭham abhibhvāyatanam.*
6. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, yellow, yellow in color, yellow in aspect, yellow in luster. Just like the *karṇikāra* flower (*Pterospermum acerifolium*) or like fine Benares muslin, yellow, yellow in color, yellow in aspect, yellow in luster, in the same way, without having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, yellow, yellow in color, yellow in aspect, yellow in luster, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the sixth 'perception-sphere of mastery'.
7. *adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati lohitaṇi lohitavarṇāni lohitanidarśanāni lohitanirbhāsāni. tadyathā bandhujivakapuṣpaṃ* (variant: *bandhūkapuṣpaṃ*) *saṃpannaṃ vā vārāṇaseyaṃ vastraṃ lohitaṃ lohitavarṇaṃ lohitanidarśanaṃ lohitanirbhāsam, evam evādhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati lohitaṇi lohitavarṇāni lohitanidarśanāni lohitanirbhāsāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati, evamsamjñi ca bhavati. idaṃ saptamam abhibhvāyatanam.*

7. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, red, red in color, red in aspect, red in luster. Just like the *bandhujivaka* flower (Pentapetes phoenicea) or like fine Benares muslin, red, red in color, red in aspect, red in luster, in the same way, without having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, red, red in color, red in aspect, red in luster, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the seventh 'perception-sphere of mastery'.
8. *adhyātmaṃ arūpasamjñiṃ bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty avadātāny avadātavarṇāny avadātānidarśanāny avadātānirbhāsāni. tadyathā uśanastārakā sampannaṃ vā vārāṇaseyaṃ vastraṃ avadātaṃ avadātavarṇaṃ avadātānidarśanaṃ avadātānirbhāsaṃ, evaṃ evādhyātmaṃ arūpasamjñiṃ bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty avadātāny avadātavarṇāny avadātānidarśanāny avadātānirbhāsāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati, evamsamjñi ca bhavati. idaṃ aṣṭamaṃ abhibhvāyatanam.*
8. Not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, white, white in color, white in aspect, white in luster. Just like the planet Venus or like fine Benares muslin, white, white in color, white in aspect, white in luster, in the same way, without having the conception of internal visible forms, <1286> they see external visible forms, white, white in color, white in aspect, white in luster, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them and they conceive them; this is the eighth 'perception-sphere of mastery'.

### 3. THE TEN PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF TOTALITY (Kṛtsnāyatana).

Pāli formula in *Digha*, III, p. 268; *Majjhima*, II, p. 14-15; *Aṅguttara*, V, p. 46, 60, – Sanskrit formula in *Mahāvvyut.*, no. 1528-1540:

*Dasa kasiṇāyatanāni:*

1. *paṭhavikasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
2. *āpokasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
3. *tejokasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
4. *vāyokasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
5. *nilakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
6. *pitakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
7. *lohitakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
8. *odātakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
9. *ākāsakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*
10. *viññānakasiṇaṃ eko sañjānati uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ.*

*Daśa kṛtsnāyatanāni:*

The ten perception-spheres of totality:

1. *prthivikṛtsnāyatanam*,  
1. perception-sphere of totality of earth,
2. *apḥkṛtsnāyatanam*,  
2. perception-sphere of totality of water,
3. *tejaskṛtsnāyatanam*,  
3. perception-sphere of totality of fire,
4. *vāyukṛtsnāyatanam*,  
4. perception-sphere of totality of wind,
5. *nilakṛtsnāyatanam*,  
5. perception-sphere of totality of blue,
6. *pitakṛtsnāyatanam*,  
6. perception-sphere of totality of yellow,
7. *lohitakṛtsnāyatanam*,  
7. perception-sphere of totality of red,
8. *avadātakṛtsnāyatanam*,  
8. perception-sphere of totality of white,
9. *ākāśakṛtsnāyatanam*,  
9. perception-sphere of totality of space
10. *vijñānakṛtsāyatanam*,  
10. perception-sphere of totality of consciousness.

*prthivikṛtsnām ity eke sañjānate ity ūrdhvaṃ adhas tiryag advayam apramāṇam.*

*aptejovāyuniḥapitalohitāvadātakṛtsnām ity eke sañjānate ity ūrdhvaṃ adhas tiryag advayam  
aparamāṇam.*

This totality of earth, of water, of fire, of wind, of blue, of yellow, of red and of white, they recognize it above, below, across, without duality and without limit.

The last two *kaṣiṇas* are sometimes omitted in the lists of the *Paṭisambhidā* (I, p. 49, 143-144, 149-150) or replaced by the *āloka-kaṣiṇa* (light-) and the *paricchinn' ākāsa-kaṣiṇa* (limited-space-) in the *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 89.

The totalities are not objective observations but 'voluntary observations': <1287> attention through resolution (*adhimuktimanasikāra*; *Kośa*, II, F 325), conception through resolution (*adhimuktisañjñāna*; *ibid.*, VIII, F 199). This is well-explained in the *Daśasāhasrikā*, p. 102:

When one forms a resolution about all the elements into the element earth, everything becomes a single element, namely, the ‘earth’ element.

(*sarvadhātūn prthividhātāv adhimucya sarvām api prthividhātur evaikhādātur bhavati*)

In the same way, when one forms a resolution about all the elements in water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white, space or consciousness. And the *Daśasāhasrikā* concludes:

We call perception-sphere of totality the fact [that after a conception through resolution] everything becomes a single element: earth, water, etc.

(*prthivyaptejovāyavākāśanilapitalohitāvadātavijñānaṃ sarvām apy ekam eva bhavati etāny ucyante kṛtsnāyatanāni*)

### KASIṆA IN PĀLI SCHOLASTICISM; F 1287-1289

Of these three classes of supplementary factors (*dharma*), [i.e., the fifth, sixth and seventh,] the ten *kasiṇas*<sup>132</sup> have captured the attention of Pāli scholasticism: cf. *Paṭisambhidā*, I p. 6, 95; *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, p. 42; *Nettipakaraṇa*, p. 89, 112; and especially *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 96-144 (transl. Ñāṇamoli, p. 122-184) which describes in length the process of the earth *kasiṇa*. As the following seven, it refers to a process of autosuggestion to reach the meditations (*dhyāna*). Here is a brief summary of the stages of the mental operation:

#### 1. Making of the sign (*nimitta*).

If they are specially endowed, the monastics choose as visible sign a ploughed area (*kasitaṭṭhāna*) or a threshing floor (*khalaṃmaṇḍala*). Most frequently, on the instruction of a teacher, they make an earthen disc (*mattikamaṇḍala*) of dark color (*aruṇavaṇṇa*), as neutral as possible, without the intrusion of the colors blue, yellow, red or white that could cause confusion with the other *kasiṇas* and thus pollute the earth *kasiṇa*. Whether or not this disc is portable, it should be set up on a pedestal in an isolated place, and the practitioners sit down at the required distance to see it well.

#### 2. Appearance of the learning-sign (*uggahanimitta*).

After having wished to escape from the sense desires that give but little enjoyment (*appassādā kāmā*), the monastics calmly observe the earth disc, without worrying about its color (*vaṇṇa*) or its characteristic (*lakkaṇa*), but by fixing their mind on the nominal concept (*paññattidhamma*) of ‘earth’ of which they recite mentally the different names: ‘earth’ (*paṭhavi*), ‘the great one’ (*mahi*), ‘the friendly one’ (*medini*), ‘ground’ (*bhūmi*), etc. Sometimes with their eyes open and sometimes with their eyes closed (*kālena ummiletvā kālena nimiletvā*), the monastics contemplate this semi-concrete and semi-abstract image until they see it just as much with

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<sup>132</sup> **Bhikṣu Bodhi:** The *kasiṇa* is a meditation object derived from a physical device that provides a support for acquiring the inwardly visualized sign. Thus, for example, a disk made of clay can be used as the preliminary object for practicing the earth-*kasiṇa*, a bowl of water for practicing the water-*kasiṇa*.

their eyes shut as with their eyes open. It is at this precise moment that the learning-sign (*uggahanimitta*) occurs. The monastics then leave their seat and return to the monastery while guarding carefully in their mind this learning-sign and regenerating it each time that they lose it.

### 3. Appearance of the counterpart-sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*).

There comes the time (i) when the five hindrances (*nivarana*) to the meditation (*jhāna*) (see above, F 1012-1020) disappear and (ii) when the members (*aṅga*) of the meditation (see above, F 1237) appear. In the first case, the practitioners enter into the access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*); in the second case, they enter into the equipoise concentration (*appanāsamādhi*). But the entry into concentration coincides with the appearance of the counterpart-sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*): <1288>

The difference between the learning-sign (*uggahanimitta*) and the counterpart-sign is the following: In the learning-sign, any fault (*dosa*) of the *kaṣiṇa* (intrusion of foreign colors?) is apparent. But the counterpart-sign, having broken the learning sign, extricates itself from it as it were and appears a hundred times, a thousand times more pure than the learning-sign, like a mirror drawn from its case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well washed, like the disc of the moon coming out from behind a cloud. This counterpart-sign has neither color (*vaṇṇa*) nor shape (*saṇṭhāna*), for if it had any, it would be cognizable by the eye, coarse, susceptible of being grasped and marked by the three characteristics [impermanence, suffering and nonself?]. But it is not like that. It is only a mode of appearance [to the mind], a state of awareness belonging solely to the holder of the concentration. As soon as it occurs, the hindrances [to the meditation (*jhāna*)] are shaken, but the defilements (*kilesa*) remain and the mind is concentrated in the access-concentration (*upacārasamādhi*).

In the equipoise-concentration (*appanāsamādhi*) which follows it, the members of the concentration appear and grow stronger.

### 4) Guarding the counterpart-sign (*paṭighātanimittarakkhaṇa*) and attainment of the meditations (*jhāna*).

The practitioners should guard the counterpart-sign like their most precious treasure and, to this end, carefully watch over their abode (*āvāsa*), their domain (*gocāra*), their speech (*bhassa*), the persons (*puggala*) they do things with, their food (*bhojana*), the climate (*utu*) and the postures (*iriyāpatha*) they adopt. Thus, thanks to the earth *kaṣiṇa*, they attain the first meditation (*jhāna*) and abide there.

### 5) Extension of the counterpart-sign (*paṭighātanimittavaḍḍhana*).

During the access-concentration and equipoise-concentration, the practitioners should gradually extend the counterpart-sign by delimiting its successive boundaries: one span, two spans in order to finally attain the extreme limit of the cosmic sphere.

#### 6) Acquisition of the perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhāyatanapaṭilabdha*).

This complete mastery over the sign assures the practitioners a complete mastery over objects and provides them with supernatural powers. This is how the earth *kaśiṇa* allows them to multiply themselves when they are one, etc. (cf. above, F 382, n. 2).

The other nine *kaśiṇas* take place according to similar processes as the earth *kaśiṇa*. Here it is sufficient to determine their respective 'signs' and to specify the type of 'mastery' they will exert over objects.

In the water *kaśiṇa*, the learning-sign is moving (*calamāna*) and the counterpart-sign is unchanging (*nipparipphanda*), like a crystal fan set in space or like a crystal mirror. It brings about the following powers: diving in and out of the earth, causing rain-storms, creating rivers and seas, making the earth, mountains, palaces, etc., quake.

In the fire *kaśiṇa*, the learning-sign is like a flying spark that separates and falls; the counterpart-sign is motionless (*niccala*) like a piece of red wool set in space. Thanks to this practice, the practitioners can emit smoke and flames, cause showers of sparks, extinguish one fire by means of another, burn only what they wish to burn, create lights that allow them to see visible objects with the help of the divine eye and, at the moment of their *parinirvāṇa*, burn up their body by means of the fire element.

In the wind *kaśiṇa*, the learning-sign appears mobile (*cala*) like the swirl of hot steam escaping from a pot of rice-gruel withdrawn from a stove; the <1289> counterpart-sign is calm (*sannisinna*) and immobile (*acala*). From this *kaśiṇa* ensue the powers of moving with the speed of wind and of causing wind storms.

The four color *kaśiṇas* use as learning-signs a flower or cloth of blue, yellow, red or white color. Their counterpart-sign occurs like a crystal fan. They enable the practitioners to create colored objects and particularly to reach the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> *abhibhāyatana* (perception-spheres of mastery of colors) as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> liberation (*vimokha*), namely, the agreeable liberation (*subhavamokha*).

The *kaśiṇa* of light (*āloka*) and that of limited space (*paricchinṇākāśa*) have as their respective counterpart-signs a mass of light (*ālokapuñja*) and the circle of space (*ākāśamaṇḍala*). Thanks to the first, the practitioners are able to create luminous forms, to banish languor and torpor and to dispel darkness; by means of the second they are able to reveal whatever is hidden, create empty spaces in the earth and rocks in order to occupy them, pass unobstructed through walls as they like, etc.

### LIBERATIONS, PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY AND PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF TOTALITY ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHARMA; F 1289-1290

These technical procedures aimed at becoming completely detached from the objects of the threefold world have been studied at length by the Abhidharmas of the Sarvāstivādins and related texts: *Jñānaprasthāna*, T 1544, k. 18, p. 1013 seq.; *Samgītiparyāya*, T 1536, k. 18-20, p. 443a26-446a18, 447a25-452c11; *Samyuktābhidharmasāra*, T 1552, k. 7, p. 926b-929a; *Abhidharmamūṛta*, T 1553, k. 2, p. 976a17-b16 (reconstruction by Sastri, p. 103-107); *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 84-85, p. 434b15- 442b14;

Kośa, VIII, F 203-218; Nyāyānusāra, T 1562, k. 80, p. 771b-775a; Abhidharmadīpa, p. 429-432; Satyasiddhiśāstra, T 1646, k. 12-13, p. 339a16-340b16, 346b14-c22; Abhidharmasamuccaya (of the Vijñānavādins), T 1605, k. 7, p. 690c23-691a22 (reconstructed by Pradhan, p. 95-96).

Here is a brief summary of the Abhidharma scholasticism:

In general, the liberations (*vimokṣa*) are the gateway into the perception-spheres of mastery (*abhibhu*), and these latter are the gateway into the perception-spheres of totality (*krtsna*). The liberations are 'merely emancipation' (*vimokṣamātra*) from the object. The perception-spheres of mastery exert a twofold mastery (*abhibhavana*) over the object entailing (i) the view of the object as one wishes it (*yatheṣṭam adhimokṣaḥ*) and (ii) the absence of the defilement provoked by the object (*kleśānutpatti*). The perception-spheres of totality embrace the object without interval and in its totality (*nirantarakṛtsnaspharaṇa*). All come under the meditations (*dhyāna*) and the equipoises (*samāpatti*).

**A. The liberations 1-3, the eight perception-spheres of mastery and the perception-spheres of totality 1-8.**

1. They are the five aggregates (*skandha*) by nature and they have the visible forms of *kāmadhātu* as object.
2. The liberations 1-2 and the perception-spheres of mastery 1-4 are contemplations on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*), i.e., of the decomposing corpse, and are practiced in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> meditations (*dhyāna*). (i) When practiced in the first (meditation), they counteract attachment to color (*varṇarāga*) of *kāmadhātu*; (ii) when practiced in the second, they counteract attachment to color of the first meditation. <1290>
3. In the liberation 1 and the perception-spheres of mastery 1-2, the practitioners still have the conception of internal visible forms, those of their own body; in the liberation 2 and the perception-spheres of mastery 3-4, they no longer have them. But in all cases, they contemplate disagreeable (*amañojñā*) external visible forms, (i) limited or few in number (*paritta*) in the perception-spheres of mastery 1 and 3, (ii) numerous (*mahadgata* or *paramāna*) in the perception-spheres of mastery 2 and 4.
4. The liberation 3, the perception-spheres of mastery 5-8 and the perception-spheres of totality 1-8 are contemplations on the beautiful (*śubhabhāvanā*) and are practiced exclusively in the 4<sup>th</sup> meditation (*dhyāna*). No longer having the conception of internal visible forms, the practitioners contemplate the agreeable external visible forms (*mañojñā*) of *kāmadhātu*: in the liberation 3, [they contemplate] the beautiful (*śubha*) in general, which they actualize with their body (*kāyena sākṣātkaroti*); in the perception-spheres of mastery 5-8 and the perception-spheres of totality 5-8, [they contemplate] the four pure colors (blue, yellow, red and white); in the perception-spheres of totality 1-4, [they contemplate] the four fundamental material elements (earth, water, fire and wind).

**B. The liberations 4-7 and perception-spheres of totality 8-10.**



1. Being formless, they are the four aggregates (*skandha*) in their intrinsic nature, with the exception of aggregate of form (*rūpaskandha*), and are practiced in the formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*): the liberation 4 and the perception-sphere of totality 9 [are practiced] in the 'perception-sphere of limitless space' (*ākāśānantyāyatana*); the liberation 5 and the perception-sphere of totality 10 [are practiced] in the 'perception-sphere of limitless consciousness' (*viññānānantyāyatana*); the liberation 6 [is practiced] in the 'perception-sphere of nothingness' (*ākīñcanāyatana*); the liberation 7 [is practiced] in the 'perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception' (*naivasañjñānāsañjñāyatana*).

2. They have for their object the suffering of their stage and a higher stage (*svabhūmyūrdhvaśūmikaṃ duḥkham*), the cause and cessation of this suffering (*taddhetunirodhau*), the noble path connected with all of the subsequent cognition (*sarvānvayajñānapakṣomārgaḥ*), the cessation not due to discrimination (*apratisaṃkyānirodha*) and space (*ākāśa*).

### C. Eighth liberation.

This is the equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation (*sañjñāveditanirodhasamāpatti*), a factor (*dharma*) which stops the mind and mental events.

The qualities that form class A here are acquired only by humans; those of classes B and C are acquired by sentient beings of the threefold world. All these qualities may have the mental series of ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) or noble persons (*ārya*) as basis (*āśraya*), except the last one, the liberation of cessation (*nirodhavimokṣa*), which can occur only among noble persons. <1291>

DAA.

## THE EIGHT LIBERATIONS (VIMOKṢA); F 1291-1299

DAA.1.

### GENERAL DEFINITION; F 1291

The eight liberations (*aṣṭau vimokṣāḥ*): [k. 21, p. 215a]

- 1) Having [the conception] of internal visible forms, they also see external visible forms, this is the first liberation (*adhyātmaṃ rūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty ayaṃ prathamam vimokṣaḥ*).<sup>133</sup>
- 2) Not having [the conception] of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms, this is the second liberation (*adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyaty ayaṃ dvitīyam vimokṣaḥ*).
- 3) They actualize with their body the agreeable liberation, this is the third liberation (*śubhaṃ vimokṣaṃ kāyena sāksātkaṛoty ayaṃ tṛtīyam vimokṣaḥ*).

<sup>133</sup> In place of the canonical phrase *rūpi rūpāṇi paśyati*, the *Traité* substitutes this new wording borrowed from the definition of the first perception-sphere of mastery. Harivarman does the same in his *Satyasiddhiśāstra*, T 1646, k. 12, p. 339a17.

4-8) The four formless equipoises (*cataśra ārūpyasamāpattayaḥ*) and the equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation (*saṃijñāveditanirodhasamāpatti*) are the [last] five liberations.

In all, eight liberations. They 'turn their back' (*pei*) on or purify the five objects of desire (*kāmaguṇa*) and [they 'reject' (*chö*)] or eliminate the mind of attachment (*saṅgacitta*) towards them; this is why they are called 'turning their mind and rejecting' (*pei-chö*, in Sanskrit *vi-mokṣa*).<sup>134</sup>

DAA.2.

### THE FIRST TWO LIBERATIONS; F 1291-1293

The yogins have not destroyed internal and external visible forms: as for the internal and external [of themselves], they have not suppressed the conception of visible forms (*rūpasamijñā*) [of themselves] and it is with a mind of repulsiveness (*aśubhacitta*)<sup>135</sup> that they see these visible forms: this is the first liberation. <1292>

The yogins have destroyed the internal visible forms and suppressed the conception of the internal visible forms (*adhyātmaṃ rūpasamijñā*), but they have not destroyed the external visible forms nor suppressed the conception of the external visible forms (*bahirdhā rūpasamijñā*) and it is with a mind of repulsiveness that they see the external visible forms: this is the second liberation.

Both of these two liberations contemplate the repulsive (*aśubha*): the first contemplates the internal visible forms and contemplates the external visible forms; the second does not see the internal visible forms and sees only the external visible forms. Why is that?

Sentient beings (*sattva*) have two kinds of conduct (*pratipad*):<sup>136</sup> (i) passionate conduct (*tṛṣṇācarita*) and (ii) intellectual conduct (*drṣṭīcarita*). The passionate persons (*tṛṣṇābahula*) are attached to happiness (*sukharakta*) and are bound (*baddha*) by external fetters (*bāhyasaṃyojana*). The intellectual persons (*drṣṭībahula*) are strongly attached to the afflicted view of self (*satkāyadrṣṭi*), etc., and are bound by internal fetters (*adhyātmasaṃyojana*). This is why the passionate persons [wisely] contemplate the repulsiveness of external visible forms (*bāhyarūpāśubha*), whereas the intellectual persons [wisely] contemplate the repulsiveness (*aśubha*) and corruption (*vikāra*) of their own body.

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<sup>134</sup> This paragraph is undoubtedly a note by Kumārajīva aimed at justifying the translation of *vimokṣa* by the Chinese characters *pei-chö*.

For the Indian exegesis, see *Atthasālini*, p. 191-192: *Āraṃmane adhimuccanaṭṭhena paccanikadhammeḥi vimuccanaṭṭhena vimokkho ti vuttam*; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 689: *sarvasaṃskṛtavaimukhyād vimokṣaḥ, samāpattyaṅvarāṇavimokṣaṇād vimokṣa iti*.

<sup>135</sup> Actually, during the first two liberations, the practitioners cultivate the nine conceptions regarding the decomposing corpse, conceptions that will be the subject of the next chapter.

<sup>136</sup> For these two kinds of conduct, see *Nettipakaraṇa*, p. 7, 109; *Kośa*, IV, F 174, 208; V, F 82; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 427.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the practice, the mind of the yogins lacks subtlety (*asūkṣma*) and it is difficult for them, [at first,] to fix their mind on a single point: [that of external visible forms]. That is why they discipline their mind and make it supple through a gradual practice (*kramābhyāsa*) consisting of the [simultaneous] consideration of internal and external visible forms. Then they can destroy the conception of internal visible forms and can see only external visible forms.

Question. – If the yogins no longer have the conception of internal visible forms, why can they see external visible forms?

Answer. – Here it is a matter of a subjective method (*adhimuktimārga*)<sup>137</sup> and not of an objective method (*bhūtamārga*). The yogins think about their future corpse burned by the fire (*vidagdḥaka*), devoured by insects (*vikhāditaka*), buried in the ground and completely decomposed. Or, if they consider it at present, they analyze their body down to its subtle atoms (*paramāṇu*), all non-existent. It is in this way that [the second liberation is defined as] “not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms:.” <1293>

Question. – In the [first] two perception-spheres of mastery, the yogins see internal and external visible forms; in the [last] six perception-spheres of mastery they see only external visible forms. In the first liberation, they see internal and external visible forms; in the second liberation, they see only external visible forms. Why do they destroy only the conception of internal visible forms and do not destroy the external visible forms?

Answer. – When the yogins see their body endowed with the signs of death (*maraṇanimitta*) with their eyes, they grasp the future characteristics of death; as for the actual body, they see in it, only to a lesser degree, the disappearance (*nirodhalakṣaṇa*) of the external four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*). Therefore, since [215b] it is difficult for them to see that they do not exist, the [sūtra] does not speak of the destruction of the visible forms. Besides, at the time when the yogins will have gone beyond the form realm (*rūpadhātu*),<sup>138</sup> they will no longer see external visible forms.

DAA.3.

### THE THIRD LIBERATION; F 1293-1298

“They actualize with their body the agreeable liberation” (*śubhaṃ, vimokṣaṇi kāyena sāksātkaroti*). – This is an agreeable meditation in regard to disagreeable things (*aśubheṣu śubhabhāvanā*), as is said about the eight perception-spheres of mastery.

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<sup>137</sup> An attention through resolution (*adhimuktimanasikāra*) or conception through resolution (*adhimuktisaṃjñāna*) or ‘voluntary observation’ of the object; cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 198-199 and notes.

<sup>138</sup> I.e., in the five liberations and the two perception-spheres of totality called *ārūpya*.

The first eight perception-spheres of totality contemplate in the pure state (*śuddha*):<sup>139</sup> 1) earth (*prthivi*), 2) water (*ap*), 3) fire (*tejas*), 4) wind (*vāyu*), and also 5) blue (*nila*), 6) yellow (*pīta*), 7) red (*lohita*), 8) white (*avadāta*).

The [fifth] sees blue visible forms (*rūpāṇi nīlāni*) similar to the blue lotus flower (*nilotpalaṇḍā*), similar to the *kin-tsing-chan*,<sup>140</sup> similar to the flax flower (*umakāpuṣpa*) or similar to a fine Benares muslin (*saṃpannaṃ vā vārāṇaseyaṃ vastram*). It is the same for the visions of yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*) and white (*avadāta*), each according to its respective color. All of them are called the ‘agreeable liberation’. <1294>

Question. – If all of that is the agreeable liberation, it should no longer be necessary to speak of the perception-spheres of totality [because of the risk of repeating oneself].

Answer. – The liberations form the initial practice (*prathamācaryā*); the perception-spheres of mastery are the intermediate practice (*madhyamācaryā*); and the perception-spheres of totality are the long-standing practice.<sup>141</sup>

The meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*) is of two types: 1. disagreeable (*aśubha*); 2. agreeable (*śubha*). In the disagreeable type fall the [first] two liberations and the [first] four perception-spheres of mastery. In the agreeable type fall one liberation, [i.e., the third,] the [last] four perception-spheres of mastery and the [first] eight perception-spheres of totality.

Question. – When the yogins take as agreeable (*śubha*) that which is disagreeable (*aśubha*), they commit a mistaken view (*viparyāsa*).<sup>142</sup> That being the case, why is the meditation that they practice during the agreeable liberation not mistaken?

Answer. – The mistaken view is to wrongly see as agreeable a woman’s beauty which is disagreeable, but the meditation practiced during the agreeable liberation is not a mistaken view because of the extension (*viśālatva*) of all true blue color, [etc].

Moreover, in order to tame the mind (*cittadamanārtham*), the agreeable meditation presupposes a long-standing practice of the meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*) and on mental disgust

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<sup>139</sup> This detail is essential because, during the first eight perception-spheres of totality, the yogins contemplate the four fundamental material elements and the four colors in their most pure form, without the intrusion of the elements or of foreign colors. This is what the *Visuddhimagga* calls the ‘counterpart-sign’ (*paṭihāganimitta*) of the object: see above, F 1287.

<sup>140</sup> This must refer to a flower or a metal of blue color. However, there is a mountain in Kiang-Si with this name.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 215.

<sup>142</sup> The third of the four mistaken views consisting of taking what is impure to be pure (*aśucau śucir iti viparyāsaḥ*).

(*cittanirveda*): this is why practicing the agreeable meditation is not a mistaken view and, what is more, there is no desire (*lobha*) in it.<sup>143</sup>

Moreover, the yogins begin by contemplating the repulsiveness (*aśubha*) of the body and fix their mind on all the internal and external forms of the repulsiveness in bodily things. Then they feel disgust (*nirveda*): [their defilements], attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveśa*) and delusion (*moha*), diminish; they are frightened and understand: “Personally we do not possess these characteristics: it is the body that is like that. Then why are we attached to it?”

They concentrate their mind and actually meditate so as to no longer commit mistakes. That being the case, their mind becomes disciplined and supple, they avoid <1295> thinking about the repulsiveness of the body, such as skin (*tvac*), flesh (*māṃsa*), blood (*lohita*) and marrow (*asthimajjan*): for them there are only white bones (*śvetāsthika*) and they fix their mind on the skeleton (*kaṅkāla*). If their mind gets lost in the external, they concentrate it and bring it back. Concentrating their mind deeply, they see the diffused brightness of the white bones (*śvetāsthika*) similar to a conch (*śaṅkha*),<sup>144</sup> similar to shells (*kapardaka*), lighting up internal and external things. This is the gateway of the agreeable liberation.

Then, noting the disappearance of the skeleton, the yogins see only the brightness of the bones (*asthiprabhā*) and grasp the characteristics (*nimitta*) of the pure external visible forms. For example:

- 1) diamond (*vajra*), pearl (*maṇi*), precious golden and silver objects (*hemarajataratnavastu*);<sup>145</sup>
- 2) very pure (*suparīśuddha*) earth (*prthivī*):<sup>146</sup> [first perception-sphere of totality];
- 3) pure water (*ap*): [second perception-sphere of totality];
- 4) pure fire (*tejas*), without smoke (*dhūma*) or kindling (*indhana*): [third perception-sphere of totality];
- 5) pure wind (*vāyu*), without dust (*rajas*): [fourth perception-sphere of totality];
- 6) blue visible forms (*rūpāṇi nilāṇi*), similar to the *kin-tsing-chan*: [fifth perception-sphere of mastery and fifth perception-sphere of totality];

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<sup>143</sup> The third liberation is the good root, non-greed (*alobha*): cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 206; *Abhidharmadīpa*, p. 430.

<sup>144</sup> Compare the *aṭṭikāni setāni saṅkhavaṇṇūpanibhāni* about which the canonical sources speak: *Dīgha*, II, p. 297; *Majjhima*, I, p. 58, 89; III, p. 93; *Aṅguttara*, III, p. 324.

<sup>145</sup> The contemplation of these precious objects is not mentioned in the traditional list of the perception-spheres of totality.

<sup>146</sup> Compare the first eight counterpart-signs (*paṭibhāganimitta*) defined by the *Visuddhimagga* in the chapters concerned with the *kaṣiṇas* (above, F 1288).

- 7) yellow visible forms (*rūpāṇi pitāṇi*), similar to the flower of the *campaka* tree (*campakapuṣpa*): [sixth perception-sphere of mastery and sixth perception-sphere of totality];
- 8) red visible forms (*rūpāṇi lohitaṇi*), similar to the flower of the red lotus (*padmapuṣpa*): [seventh perception-sphere of mastery and seventh perception-sphere of totality];
- 9) white visible forms (*rūpāṇy avadātāṇi*), similar to the white snow (*hima*): [eighth perception-sphere of mastery and eighth perception-sphere of totality].

Grasping these characteristics (*nimittāny udgrhṇan*), the yogins fix their mind on the agreeable meditation (*śubhabhāvanā*) concerning the pure brightness (*parisuddhaprabhā*) belonging to each of these visible forms. Then the yogins experience a joy (*priti*) and satisfaction (*sukha*) filling their entire body (*kāya*): this is what is called the agreeable liberation (*śubha vimokṣa*). Since it has agreeable things as object-support (*ālambana*), it is called ‘agreeable’ liberation. Since the practitioners experience this [215c] satisfaction <1296> in their whole body, it is said that the yogins ‘actualize with their body’ (*kāyena sāksātkaṛoti*). Having obtained this mental satisfaction (*cittasukha*), the yogins ‘turn their back on and reject’ (*vi-muc*) the five objects of desire (*kāmaguṇa*) and are henceforth without joy (*priti*) or satisfaction (*sukha*).<sup>147</sup> this is therefore indeed a liberation.

As the yogins have not yet destroyed the impurities (*akṣiṇāsrava*), it happens that, at intervals, fettering thoughts (*saṃyojanacitta*) arise in them and they become attached (*anusajate*) to agreeable visible forms (*śubharūpa*). Then, they zealously (*ātāpin*) and diligently (*vīryavat*) cut this attachment (*taṃ āsaṅgaṃ samucchinatti*). Actually, this agreeable meditation (*śubhabhāvanā*) stems from their mind. And just as a master magician (*māyākāra*), in the face of objects that he has created magically, knows that they come from him, so the yogins no longer experience attachment (*āsaṅga*) and no longer pursue the object-supports (*ālambana*). At that moment the *vimokṣa* (liberation) changes its name and is called the *abhibhāvāyatana* (perception-sphere of mastery over the object-support).

Although the yogins thus master (*abhibhavati*) the agreeable meditation (*śubhabhāvanā*), they are still incapable of extending it (*vistārayitum*). That being the case, they return to grasp the agreeable characteristics (*śubhanimitta*):

<sup>147</sup> This is explained by the fact that the third liberation and therefore the eight perception-spheres of mastery and the first eight perception-spheres of totality are practiced in the fourth meditation (*dhyāna*) where there is no longer any satisfaction or suffering, or joy or discontentedness: see above, F 1031-1032.

The expression ‘actualize with their body’ (*kāyena sāksātkaṛtvā*) is absent in the Pāli canonical sources and is used by the Sanskrit sources only in regard to the fourth and eighth liberation. This is due to their excellence (*prādhānya*) and because they occur in the final stages of *rūpadhātu* and that of *ārūpyadhātu* respectively: cf. *Kośa*, VIII, F 210-211; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 690.

- a. Using the power of the liberations and the power of the perception-spheres of mastery, they grasp the characteristic of agreeable earth (*śubhapṛthivī*) and gradually extend it (*krameṇa vistārayati*) to all the empty space (*ākāśa*) of the ten directions. And they do the same with water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*) and wind (*vāyu*).<sup>148</sup>
- b. They grasp the characteristic of blue (*nilanimitta*) and gradually extend it to all the space of the ten directions. And they do the same with yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*) and white (*avādāta*).<sup>149</sup>

At that precise moment, the *abhibhvāyatana*s (perception-spheres of mastery) change and become the *kṛtsnāyatana*s (perception-spheres of totality of the object-support). <1297>

These three, [namely, the liberations, the perception-spheres of mastery and the perception-spheres of totality], are one and the same thing (*ekārtha*), but which changes its name three times.

Question. – The [first] three liberations, the eight perception-spheres of mastery and the ten perception-spheres of totality are either objective considerations (*bhūtapratyavekṣā*) or subjective considerations (*adhimuktipratyavekṣā*).

If they are objective considerations, even though the body (*kāya*) still contains skin (*tvac*) and flesh (*māṃsa*), how can one see only white bones (*śvetasthika*) in it?<sup>150</sup> Besides, it is a collocation of thirty-six elements (*ṣaṭtriṃśaddhātusāmagri*) which constitutes the body;<sup>151</sup> why distinguish them

<sup>148</sup> This concerns the perception-spheres of totality 1 to 4.

<sup>149</sup> This concerns the perception-spheres of totality 5 to 8.

<sup>150</sup> An allusion to the third liberation.

<sup>151</sup> In the Sanskrit sources of both the Small and the Great Vehicles, physical elements are 26 in number (cf. *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 25, p. 687b9; k. 27, p. 701b7; k. 49, p. 815c5; *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*, T 201, k. 5, p. 285b1; *Po yü king*, T 209, k. 4, p. 555b15; *Tch'ou yao king*, k. 212, k. 1, p. 612b17; k. 5, p. 632c22; k. 17, p. 699c7; k. 26, p. 749c16). They are listed, with many faulty readings, in the Sanskrit editions of the *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 205, l. 16-19 (T 223, k. 5, p. 253c26-29) and the *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 1431, l. 9-13 (T 220, k. 53, p. 298b26-28).

The Pāli *suttas* list 31 (*Dīgha*, II, p. 293; III, p. 104; *Majjhima*, I, p. 57; III, p. 90; *Saṃyutta*, IV, p. 111; V, p. 278; *Aṅguttara*, III, p. 323; V, p. 109). The *Visuddhimagga*, edition H. C. Warren, p. 205-219, gives their number as 32 and devotes long explanations to them. Here is the latter list with corresponding terms in Pāli and Sanskrit:

- 1) head-hairs (*kesa*, *keśa*);
- 2) body-hairs (*loma*, *roman*);
- 3) nails (*nakha*);
- 4) teeth (*dānta*);
- 5) skin (*taca*, *tvac*);
- 6) flesh (*maṃsa*, *māṃsa*);
- 7) sinews (*nhāru*, *snāyu*);



and consider them separately? The four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) [entering into the constitution of the body] each have their specific characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*);<sup>152</sup> why then exclude three of them, [i.e., water, fire and wind,] and <1298> consider only the single earth element (*prthivīmābhūta*)?<sup>153</sup> The four colors do not exist exclusively from blue (*nila*); why then practice only the meditation on blue (*nilabhāvanā*)?<sup>154</sup>

Answer. – [In these considerations] there is (i) an objective consideration (*bhūtapratyavekṣā*) as well as (ii) a subjective consideration (*adhimuktipratyavekṣā*).

(i) Bodily characteristics (*kāyanimitta*), objectively, are disagreeable (*aśubha*): that is an objective consideration. Among external factors (*bāhyadharmā*), there are all kinds of colors of agreeable characteristic (*śubhalakṣaṇa*): this is also an objective consideration. The agreeable (*śubha*) and the disagreeable (*aśubha*) are a matter for objective considerations.

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- 8) bones (*aṭṭhi, asthi*);
  - 9) bone-marrow (*aṭṭhimiñja, asthimajjan*);
  - 10) kidneys (*vakka, vṛkka*);
  - 11) heart (*hadaya, hṛdaya*);
  - 12) liver (*yakana, yakṛt*);
  - 13) pleura (*kilomaka, kloman*);
  - 14) spleen (*pihaka, plihan*);
  - 15) lungs (*papphāsa, pupphusa*);
  - 16) intestines (*anta, antra*);
  - 17) mesentery (*antaguṇa, antraguṇa*);
  - 18) contents of the stomach (*udariya, udara*);
  - 19) excrement (*karisa, kariṣa*);
  - 20) brain (*matthaluṅga, mastuluṅga*);
  - 21) bile (*pitta*);
  - 22) phlegm (*semha, śleṣman*);
  - 23) pus (*pubba, pūya*);
  - 24) blood (*lohita*);
  - 25) sweat (*seda, sveda*);
  - 26) fat (*meda or medas*);
  - 27) tears (*assu, aśru*);
  - 28) grease (*vasā*);
  - 29) saliva (*khela, kheṭa*);
  - 30) snot (*siṅghāṇikā, saṅghāṇaka*);
  - 31) fluid of the joints (*lasikā*);
  - 32) urine (*mutta, mūtra*).

<sup>152</sup> The specific characteristic of the four fundamental material elements is, respectively, solidity (*khakkhataṭṭva*), liquidity (*dravatya*), heat (*uṣṇatva*) and motion (*iraṇatva*).

<sup>153</sup> This is the characteristic of the first perception-sphere of totality.

<sup>154</sup> This is the characteristic of the fifth perception-sphere of mastery and the fifth perception-sphere of totality.



(ii) On the other hand, when one takes the minority of agreeable factors and extends it in order to consider everything as agreeable,<sup>155</sup> when one chooses the single element water and extends it in order to see everything as water,<sup>156</sup> when one chooses the small amount of blue that exists and extends it to see everything as blue<sup>157</sup> and so on, those are subjective considerations that have nothing objective.

DAA.4. **LIBERATIONS FOUR TO SEVEN; F 1298-1299**

The four formless liberations (*ārūpyavimokṣa*) are similar to meditations practiced in the four formless equipoises (*ārūpyasamāpatti*).<sup>158</sup> Those who want to acquire these liberations first enter into the formless equipoises: the formless equipoises are the gateway into these liberations, for the 'perception-sphere of infinite space' (*ākāśānantyāyatana*) 'turns its back on and rejects' the material object-supports (*rūpyālabhāna*).

Question. – If it is the same for the formless equipoises, how do [the formless liberations] differ?

Answer. – The ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) who acquire the formless equipoises, are *arūpin* [i.e., 'without form' or without the conception of form]. But when the noble persons (*āryapudgala*), with high resolve (*adhyāśaya*), <1299> acquire these formless equipoises, [they are *arūpin*, 'without form',] absolutely and without retrogression: that is why it is called liberation.

It is the same for the other liberations stemming from the perception-spheres 'of infinite consciousness' (*viññānānantyāyatana*), 'of nothingness' (*ākīñcanyāyatana*) and 'of neither conception nor of non-conception' (*naivasañjñānāsañjñāyatana*).

DAA.5. **THE EIGHTH LIBERATION; F 1299**

Turning one's back on and suppressing sensations (*vedita*) and conceptions (*sañjñā*), as well as all mind (*citta*) and all mental events (*caitasikadharma*), is what is called 'liberation consisting of the cessation of sensation and conception' (*sañjñāveditanirodhavimokṣa*).

Question. – Why is the equipoise of non-conception (*asañjñāsamāpatti*) not a liberation?<sup>159</sup>

Answer. – Because the sentient beings with false views (*mithyādarśin*) who do not discern the faults (*doṣa*) of the factors (*dharma*)—at the very moment when they enter into the equipoise [of non-conception]—identify [this equipoise] with *nirvāṇa* and, when they emerge from this

<sup>155</sup> During the third liberation.

<sup>156</sup> During the second perception-sphere of totality.

<sup>157</sup> During the fifth perception-sphere of mastery and the fifth perception-sphere of totality.

<sup>158</sup> See above, F 1274 seq.

<sup>159</sup> The equipoise of non-conception is practiced by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) who identify non-conception with true liberation. The noble persons (*ārya*) do not practice it; they reserve their efforts for the equipoise of cessation which they consider as a peaceful equipoise: cf. *Kośa*, II, F 201-214.

equipoise, they feel remorse (*vipratīṣāra*) and retrogress into their false views (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*). This is why the equipoise [of non-conception] is not a liberation.

On the other hand, through the cessation of sensation and conception that suppresses all distraction (*vikṣiptacitta*), the yogins penetrate into a cessation (*nirodha*) that is similar to nirvāṇa.<sup>160</sup> Since they acquire it by attaching [only] their body to it, the *sūtra* says that they ‘actualize it with their body’ (*kāyena sākṣātkaroti*).

DAB. **THE EIGHT PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY (ABHIBHVĀYATANA);**  
**F 1299-1304**

DAB.1. **GENERAL DEFINITION; F 1299-1300**

The eight perception-spheres of mastery (*aṣṭāv abhībhvāyatanāni*):

1. Having the conception of internal visible forms, the yogins see external visible forms, <1300> limited or few in number, beautiful or ugly, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them; this is the first perception-sphere of mastery (*adhyātmam rūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati parittāni suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhībhūya jñāty abhībhūya paśyatidaṃ prathamam abhībhvāyatanam*).
2. Having the conception of internal visible forms, the yogins see external visible forms, numerous, beautiful or ugly, and they know these visible forms by mastering them, they see them by mastering them; this is the second perception-sphere of mastery (*adhyātmam rūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāni paśyaty adhimātrāni suvarṇadurvarṇāni, tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhībhūya jñāty abhībhūya paśyatidaṃ dvitīyam abhībhvāyatanam*).
- 3-4. It is the same for the third and fourth perception-sphere of mastery, with the sole difference that, *not* having the conception of internal visible forms, the yogins see external visible forms (*adyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati*).
- 5-8. [In these perception-spheres of mastery], not having the conception of internal visible forms, the yogins see blue, yellow, red or white perception-sphere of mastery (*adhyātmam arūpasamjñi bahirdhā rūpāni paśyati nilapitalohitāvadātāni*).

These are the eight perception-spheres of mastery.

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<sup>160</sup> The yogins who have entered into the equipoise of cessation are those who possess nirvāṇa in this life (*dr̥ṣṭadharmanirvāṇaprāpta*): in the present life (*dr̥ṣṭe janmani*) it occurs in the nirvāṇa with remainder of conditioning (*sopadhiśeṣanirvāṇastha*).

DAB.2.

## THE FIRST PERCEPTION-SPHERE OF MASTERY; F 1300-1302

a) “Having the conception of internal visible forms, the yogins see external visible forms” (*adhyātmaṃ rūpasamjñī bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati*): personally unharmed, they see external object-supports (*bāhyāḷambana*).

b) “They see them limited or few in number” (*parittāni*): being rare, these objects-supports are said to be ‘limited or few in number’. The path of their seeing not being developed, the yogins see object-supports that are limited or few in number for, if they were to see a large number of them, it would be difficult to grasp them. In the same way, when deer eddy about, one cannot identify them from a distance.

c) “They see the beautiful or ugly” (*suvarṇadurvarṇāni*). At the beginning of the practice, the yogins fix their mind on an object-support (*āḷambana*): the space between the eyebrows, the top of the forehead or the end of the nose. With the conception of disagreeable internal visible forms (*adhyātmaṃ aśubhasamjñī*) and the conception of disagreeable things in their own body, the yogins see external visible forms (*bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati*) which sometimes will be beautiful (*suvarṇāni*) due to the retribution of good actions (*kuśalakarmavipākāt*), <1301> sometimes ugly (*durvarṇāni*) due to the retribution of bad actions (*akuśalakarmavipākāt*).

Furthermore, when the yogins, following [the instructions of] their teacher, grasp and see all kinds of disagreeable things (*nānāvidhāny aśubhāni*) in external object-supports (*bāhyāḷambana*), this is then a matter of ‘ugly visible forms’ (*durvarṇāni rūpāṇi*). But sometimes when, through loss of mindfulness (*smṛtiḥāni*), the yogins conceive an agreeable conception (*śubhasamjñā*) and see agreeable visible forms (*śubhāni rūpāṇi*), this is then a matter of ‘beautiful visible forms’ (*suvarṇāni rūpāṇi*).

Furthermore, when the yogins by themselves fix their mind on a given place, they see two kinds of visible forms (*dvividhāni rūpāṇi*) inherent in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*): 1. the visible forms that engender attachment (*rāga*), 2. the visible forms that engender hatred (*dveṣa*). Those that engender attachment are agreeable visible forms (*śubhāni rūpāṇi*) described here as ‘beautiful’ (*suvarṇāni*); those that engender hatred are disagreeable visible forms (*aśubhāni rūpāṇi*) described here as ‘ugly’ (*durvarṇāni*).

d) The yogins are master (*vaśavartin*) over these object-supports (*āḷambana*):<sup>161</sup> “They know them by mastering them, they see them by mastering them” (*abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati*).

<sup>161</sup> While the liberations liberate from the object-support, the perception-spheres of mastery exert a real mastery (*aśvarya*) over it. According to the *Kośa*, VIII, F 213, this mastery (*abhibhavana*) over the object-support is twofold: 1. *yatheṣṭam adhimokṣaḥ*: the voluntary seeing of the object-support as one desires it; 2. *kleśānutpatti*: the absence of defilement provoked by the object. Here the *Traité* particularly insists on this second point: the practitioners in possession of the perception-spheres of mastery no longer experience any attachment (*rāga*) for agreeable object-supports and do not feel hatred (*dveṣa*) toward disagreeable object-supports.

Faced with beautiful visible forms (*abhirūpa*) capable of generating attachment (*rāga*), the yogins experience no attachment; faced with ugly visible forms capable of generating hatred (*dveṣa*), they experience no hatred. They see only that visible forms arising from the four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) and from a collocation of causes and <1302> conditions (*hetupratyayasāmagrī*) are flimsy (*asāra*) like a water bubble (*budbuda*).<sup>162</sup> That is how it is for 'beautiful or ugly visible forms.

In this perception-sphere of mastery, the yogins hold on to the threshold of the [meditation] on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*). When the fetters of attachment, hatred, etc. (*rāga-dveṣādisaṃyojana*) occur, they do not follow them: that is the perception-sphere of mastery [of the object-support] for they master the mistaken view that consists of taking as pure that which is impure (*aśuca śucir iti viparyāsa*) and the other defilements (*kleśa*).

Question. – While having the conception of internal visible forms (*adhyātmaṃ rūpasamjñi*), how do the yogins see external visible forms (*bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati*)?

Answer. – The eight perception-spheres of mastery can be attained (*prāpta*) by practitioners who have entered deeply into concentration and whose mind is disciplined and made supple. Sometimes the yogins see the repulsive (*aśubha*) of their own body and [216b] also see the repulsive of external visible forms.

The contemplation of the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvanā*) is of two types: 1. that which contemplates all kinds of impurities (*nānāvidhāśuci*), such as the thirty-six bodily real entities (*dravya*), etc.; 2. that which, disregarding in their own body as in others' bodies, the skin (*tvac*), flesh (*māṃsa*) and the five internal organs,<sup>163</sup> contemplates only the white bones (*śvetāsthika*), similar to the conch

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But the perception-spheres of mastery still allow one to see the object-support as one desires it. Indeed, "when the mind is in equipoise, very pure, very clean, stainless, free of impurities, having become supple, ready to act, the practitioners can direct their mind (*cittaṃ abhiniharati*) to the super-knowledges (*abhiññā*) and notably toward supernatural power (*ṛddhi*)" (*Dīgha*, I, p. 77). Then they can, at will, transform the fundamental material elements and the colors so as to see them as they desire them. See on this subject *Visuddhimagga*, ed. H. C. Warren, p. 142-143. Thus, the contemplation on yellow can have as effect the creation of yellow forms (*pitakariūpanimmāṇaṃ*), the resolution that something be golden (*suvaṇṇaṃ ti adhimuccanā*), etc. This creative power of 'volitional seeing' (*adhimokṣa*) is already mentioned in the canonical sources, e.g., *Samyutta*, I, p. 116: *Ākaṅkhamāno Bhagavā Himavantaṃ pabbatarājaṃ suvaṇṇaṃ tv eva adhimucceyya, suvaṇṇaṃ ca pabbat' assā ti*.

<sup>162</sup> See above, F 359, n.

<sup>163</sup> A typically Chinese expression appearing in the canonical versions, whereas the Indian originals show no trace of it: cf. *Fo pan ni yuan king*, T 5, k. 1, p. 163c15; k. 2, p. 171a16; *Fo k'ai kiai*, T 20, p. 262a3; *Heng choui*, T 33, p. 817b3; *Ni-li*, T 86, p. 908b15; *Tseng yi a han*, T 125, k. 25, p. 687b12; k. 51, p. 828c18. The five internal organs (*wou tsang*) are the kidneys, the heart, the liver, the lungs and the spleen. The *Commentary to the Vibhaṅga*, p. 249, also speaks of the *vakkapaṇṇika* "the five [constituents of the body] starting with the kidneys."

(śaṅkha), similar to snow (hima). The sight of the thirty-six bodily real entities is called ‘ugly’ (durvarṇa); the sight similar to the conch or snow is called ‘beautiful’ (suvarṇa).

DAB.3.

### THE SECOND PERCEPTION-SPHERE OF MASTERY; F 1303

At the time when they are contemplating internal and external [visible forms], the yogins are distracted (vikṣiptacitta) and only with difficulty can they enter into meditation (dhyāna). Then they exclude the conception regarding their own body (ādhyātmikasaṃjñā) <1303> and consider only external visible forms (bāhyarūpa). As is said in the Abhidharma, the yogins who possess liberation contemplate and see the dead body: after death, the latter is picked up and taken to the charnel-ground (śmaśāna) where, burned by fire (vidagdhaka) and devoured by insects (vikhādītaka), it disintegrates. That being the case, the yogins see only the insects and the fire, but no longer see the body: this is why the sūtra says [in regard to the third perception-sphere of mastery] that “not having the conception of internal visible forms, they see external visible forms” (ādhyātmam ārūpasamjñā bahirdhā rūpāṇi paśyati).

In accordance with instructions, the yogins perceive and see the body as a skeleton (kaṅkāla). When their mind gets lost in the external, they bring it back and concentrate it on the skeleton as object-support. Why is that? At the beginning of the practice, these persons were unable to see subtle object-supports (sūkṣmālamāna), and that is why the sūtra said [in regard to the first perception-sphere of mastery that the yogins see only] “visible forms limited or few in number” (rūpāṇi parittāṇi). But now, [in regard to the second perception-sphere of mastery], these yogins, whose path of seeing is developed, deepened and broadened, use this single skeleton in order to see skeletons everywhere in Jambudvīpa, and this is why the sūtra says here that they see “numerous visible forms” (rūpāṇy adhimatrāṇi).

Then they concentrate their mind again and see only a single skeleton; this is why the sūtra says that “they know visible forms by mastering them and see visible forms by mastering them” (tāni khalu rūpāṇy abhibhūya jñāty abhibhūya paśyati).

And since, according to their desire (yatheṣṭam), the yogins are able to master the conception of male and female (puruṣastrisaṃjñā) and the conception of beauty (śucisaṃjñā) in regard to the five objects of desire (kāmaguṇa), that is indeed a matter of a ‘perception-sphere of mastery over the object-support’ (abhibhāvāyatana).

Thus, a strong man (balaavat) mounted on his horse in order to capture his enemies and who is able to destroy them is said to ‘master’ them and, if he is also able to direct his horse, he ‘masters’ it. It is the same for the yogins: in the meditation on the repulsive (aśubhabhāvanā), they are able to do a lot with just a little, and do a little with a lot: that is a perception-sphere of mastery. They can also destroy these enemies, the five objects of desire (kāmaguṇa); that also is a perception-sphere of mastery.

When without destroying internally [the conception] of their own body, the yogins see externally visible forms, either numerous or few in number, beautiful or ugly, that is a matter of the first and second perception-sphere of mastery. <1304>

DAB.4. **THE THIRD AND FOURTH PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY; F 1304**

When the yogins, no longer having the conception of visible forms in regard to their bodies, see the visible forms externally, either numerous or few in number, beautiful or ugly, this is a matter of the third and fourth perception-sphere of mastery.

DAB.5. **THE LAST FOUR PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY; F 1304**

When the yogins—having concentrated their mind, deeply penetrated into the equipoises (*samāpatti*) and suppressed [the conception] of their internal body (*adhyāyama*)—see perfectly pure external object-supports (*bāhyapariśuddhālambana*), blue (*nila*) and blue in color (*nilavarṇa*), yellow (*pīta*) and yellow in color (*pītaṇa*), red (*lohita*) and red in color (*lohitavarṇa*), white (*avadāta*) and white in color (*avadātavarṇa*), this is a matter of the last four perception-spheres of mastery.

Question. – What is the difference between these last four perception-spheres of mastery and the four perception-spheres of totality of colors, blue, etc., belonging to the ten perception-spheres of totality?

Answer. – The perception-sphere of totality of blue grasps absolutely everything as blue; the corresponding perception-sphere of mastery sees at will (*yatheṣṭam*) only a large or small number of object-supports as blue, without, for all that, eliminating foreign thoughts. Seeing and mastering these object-supports, it is called perception-sphere of mastery.

Thus, for example, whereas the noble wheel-turning-king (*cakravartin*) totally masters the four continents (*cāturdvīpaka*), the king of Jambudvīpa masters only a single continent. In the same way, whereas the perception-spheres of totality totally master all object-supports, the perception-spheres of mastery see only a small number of visible forms and master them, but they are unable to pervade all objects.

This is in brief (*saṃkṣepeṇa*) the explanation in regard to the eight perception-spheres of mastery. [216c]

DAC. **THE TEN PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF TOTALITY (KṚTSNĀYATANA); F 1304-1306**

As for the ten *kṛtsnāyatana*s (perception-spheres of totality of the object-support), we have already spoken of them in regard to the liberations and the perception-spheres of mastery. They are

called ‘perception-spheres of totality’ because they embrace their object-support in its totality (*ālambanakṛtsnaspharaṇāt*).<sup>164</sup> <1305>

Question. – [Among the four formless perception-spheres (*ārūpyāyatana*)], only the first two, the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ (*ākāśānantyāyatana*) and the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’ (*viññānānantyāyatana*), are perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*). Why are [the other two formless perception-spheres], namely, the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ (*ākimcanāyatana*) and the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naivasamijñānāsamijñāyatana*), not also perception-spheres of totality?

Answer. – The perception-spheres of totality are subjective views (*adhimokṣamanasikāra*) and, [among the formless perception-spheres, only two, i.e., the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’ and the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’, lend themselves to subjective extensions].

“Security (*yogakṣema*), happiness (*sukha*), vast (*viśāla*), measureless (*apramāṇa*) and infinite (*ananta*) sphere of space”, said the Buddha. – Throughout all the perception-spheres of totality, there is a consciousness (*viññāna*) capable of quickly bearing upon all factors and, facing these factors (*dharma*), one notices the presence of the consciousness. This is why the two perception-spheres (*āyatana*) [of space and consciousness] constitute the perception-spheres of totality.

On the other hand, in the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ (*ākimcanyāyatana*), there is no element (*dhātu*) capable of extension; there is no happiness (*sukha*) there, and the Buddha said nothing about infinity and measurelessness in regard to nothingness.

In the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ (*naivasamijñānāsamijñāyatana*), the mind is dull (*mṛdu*) and it is hard for it to grasp a characteristic (*nimittodgrahaṇa*) and extend [it to infinity, as is the case for the perception-spheres of totality].

Furthermore, the ‘perception-sphere of space’ (*ākāśāyatana*) is close to the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and can still concern visible forms (*rūpa*). The ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’ (*viññānāyatana*) can also concern visible objects. Besides, when emerging from the ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’ (*viññānāyatana*), one can leap into the fourth meditation (*dhyāna*) and, when emerging from the fourth meditation, one can leap into the ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’.<sup>165</sup> <1306> On the contrary, the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’ and the

<sup>164</sup> Cf. *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 692: *Nirantarakṛtsnaspharaṇād iti nirantaram kṛtnānam prthivyādīnam spharaṇād vyāpanāt kṛtsnāyatanānity ucyante*. – *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 85, p. 440b18-23: They are called perception-spheres of totality for two reasons: 1. because they are without intervals (*nirantara*) and 2. because they are extensive (*viśāla*). Because deliberate reflection (*adhimokṣamanasikāra*) concerns exclusively blue, etc., without being mingled with another object-support, they are ‘without interval’; because deliberate reflection concerning all of blue, etc., has an infinite domain (*gocara*), they are ‘extensive’. The Bhadanta says: Because their object-support (*ālambana*) is vast and extensive, because there are no intervals-gaps, they are called perception-spheres of totality.

<sup>165</sup> A possibility that may be verified during the ‘equipoise which leaps over’ (*vyutkrāntakasamāpatti*): see above, F 1048, and, for detailed description, see *Hobogirin*, IV, p. 353-360, article *Chōjō* by J. May.



‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’ [as the higher perception-spheres of the *ārūpyadhātu*] are very distant in terms of formlessness: this is why they are not perception-spheres of totality.

DAD.

### **OBJECTS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIBERATIONS, PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF MASTERY AND PERCEPTION-SPHERES OF TOTALITY; F 1306-1307**

Each utilization of these three types of factors (*dharma*) realizes a mastery over the object-support (*ālambanābhibhavana*).

1. The perception-spheres of totality are impure (*sāsrava*).

The first three liberations, the seventh and the eighth liberation are impure. The others are sometimes impure (*sāsrava*), sometimes pure (*anāsrava*).<sup>166</sup>

2. The first two liberations and the first four perception-spheres of mastery are contained (*saṃgrhita*) in the first and second meditations (*dhyāna*).

The agreeable liberation, (i.e., liberation 3,) the last four perception-spheres of mastery and the first eight perception-spheres of totality are contained in the fourth meditation.<sup>167</sup> <1307>

3. The first two perception-spheres of totality are called ‘perception-sphere of space’ (*ākāśāyatana*). The ‘perception-sphere of space’ contains the ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’ (*viññānāyatana*).<sup>168</sup> The ‘perception-sphere of consciousness’ contains the first three liberations, the eight perception-spheres of mastery and the [first] eight perception-spheres of totality, all of which have the visible forms of the desire realm (*kāmadhāturūpa*) as object-support (*ālambana*).

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<sup>166</sup> We may recall that the equipoise of mundane order practiced by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*) is clean (*śuddhaka*), i.e., good-impure (*kuśala sāsrava*): ‘good but mingled with impurities’. The equipoise of supramundane order practiced as noble path by the noble persons (*ārya*) who have seen the Buddhist truths, is ‘free from fluxes’ (*anāsrava*). See above, F 1027, 1035-36, and *Kośa*, VIII, F 145, n.

<sup>167</sup> Thus, the eight liberations are distributed in this way over eleven stages: cf. *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 689: *Te ca, sapta sāmāntakāni hitvā, ‘nyāsv ekādaśasu bhūmiṣu kāmadhātāv anāgamyadhyānāntareṣu dhyānārūpyeṣu cāṣṭāsv iti*: “These liberations occur in the other eleven stages, except for the seven preliminary concentrations, viz., 1. the desire realm; 2-3. the preparatory meditation and the intermediate meditation; 4-11. the eight stages made up of the [four] meditations and the [four] equipoises.” – See also *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 84, p. 434c-435a: The first two liberations occur in the first two meditations, the preparatory meditation and the intermediate meditation... The third liberation occurs in the fourth meditation... The fourth meditation occurs in the ‘perception-sphere of infinite space’... The fifth liberation occurs in the ‘perception-sphere of infinite consciousness’... The sixth liberation occurs in the ‘perception-sphere of nothingness’... The seventh liberation occurs in the ‘perception-sphere of neither conception nor non-conception’... The liberation of the cessation of sensation and conception (*saṃjñāveditanirodha*) likewise.

Why are there no liberations in the third meditation (*dhyāna*)? On this point see *Kośa*, VIII, F 209.

<sup>168</sup> This passage is obscure; one suspects a lacuna.



The four following liberations (nos. 4-7) have as object-support (i) the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*), (ii) the marvelous qualities of pure factors (*anāsravadharma*) and (iii) the good (*kuśala*: read *chan* instead of *jo*) occurring in [the four] fundamental [equipoises] (*maulasamāpatti*), because the fundamental formless equipoises (*ārūpyamaulasamāpatti*) do not concern the stages lower than them.

The equipoise of the cessation of sensation and conception (*saṃjñāveditanirodhasamāpatti* constituting the eighth liberation), being neither mind (*citta*) nor mental event (*caitasikadharma*), has no object-support (*anālamhana*).

The seventh liberation, namely, the equipoise of neither conception nor non-conception (*naivasaṃjñānānāsaṃjñāyatana*) alone has the four formless aggregates (*ārūpyaskandha*) and the pure factors (*anāsravadharma*) as its object-support.<sup>169</sup> <1307>

DB.

## SECOND SECTION: THE NINE SUCCESSIVE EQUIPOISES (ANUPŪRVASAMĀPATTI); F 1308-1309

### PRELIMINARY NOTE; F 1308

Designated by the name *anupūrvavīhāra* (*Dīgha*, III, p. 265; *Āṅguttara*, IV, p. 410), *anupūrvasamāpatti* (*Dīvyā*, p. 95), *anupūrvavīhāra-samāpatti* (*Samyutta*, II, p. 216; *Āṅguttara*, IV, p. 410; *Pañcaviṃśati*, p. 19; *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 58, 1445; *Vibhaṅga*, p. 343; *Mahāvīyut.*, no. 1498), *anupūrvasamādhī-samāpatti* (*Dharmasaṃgraha*, § 82), the nine successive equipoises are the four meditations (*dhyāna*) of the Rūpadhātu, the four equipoises (*samāpatti*) of the Ārūpya, plus the equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation (*saṃjñāveditanirodhasamāpatti*).

To define them, the Pāli and Sanskrit texts (cf. *Dīgha*, III, p. 265-266; *Āṅguttara*, IV, p. 410-414; *Śatasāhasrikā*, p. 1445-1446) repeat the words of the old *Dhyānasūtra*, the text of which has been given above, F 1024.

*Dīgha*, III, p. 266, and *Āṅguttara*, IV, p. 410-414, explain that these nine equipoises are acquired by nine successive cessations (*nirodha*) eliminating in turn:

1. bad desires (*kāma*),
2. initial inquiry and investigation (*vitarkaavicāra*),
3. joy (*prīti*),
4. inhalation and exhalation (*āśvāsaprasāvāsa*) or equanimity and satisfaction (*upekṣāsukha*),
5. the conception of form (*rūpasamjñā*),
6. the conception of infinite space (*ākāśānantyāyatana*),
7. the conception of infinite consciousness (*viññānānantyāyatana*),
8. the conception of nothingness (*ākīñcanyāyatana*),

<sup>169</sup> The object-support of the liberations, etc., is treated in the same manner in *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 84, p. 435a16-28; *Kośa*, VIII, F 208-209.

9. the conception of neither conception nor non-conception (*naivasaṃjñānasaṃjñāyatana*) and, in short, all conception (*saṃjñā*) and sensation (*vedanā*). <1309>

The nine successive equipoises (*anupūrvasamāpatti*):

Emerging from the first meditation (*dhyāna*), the yogins then penetrate [and enter directly] into the second meditation in such a way that no other mind comes in between, whether good (*kuśala*) or defiled (*saṃkliṣṭa*). [From the meditation into the equipoise], the yogins continue in this way until the equipoise of cessation of conception and sensation (*saṃjñāveditaniroddhasamāpatti*).

Question. – But other things can still follow one another [directly]. Why would this be only the nine successive equipoises?

Answer. – Between the other qualities (*guṇa*), there are always foreign minds that come in between; this is why they are not successive. But here, high resolve (*adhyāśaya*) and discrimination (*prajñā*) are sharp (*tikṣṇa*); the yogins put their own minds to the test and, emerging from the first meditation, directly enter into the second meditation in such a way that no other mind comes in between. In these very qualities, the mind is supple (*mṛduka*) and easily cuts through craving (*tṛṣṇā*): this is why the minds succeed one another.

Among these successive equipoises, two are impure (*sāsrava*) and the other [217a] seven are sometimes impure and sometimes pure (*anāsrava*). On the other hand, the intermediate meditation (*dhyānantara*), a ‘variation of the first meditation’, and the preliminary meditation (*anāgamya*), the ‘preliminary concentration of the first meditation’, are without solidity (*asāra*).<sup>170</sup>

Moreover, [the successive equipoises] are acquired by the noble persons [only], and their great benefits do not occur in the preliminary concentrations (*sāmantaka*): this is why the latter are not ‘successive’ (*anupūrva*).

The eight liberations, the eight perception-spheres of mastery, the ten perception-spheres of totality and the nine successive equipoises have been explained here in a summary manner (*samāsataḥ*) according to the system of the hearers (*śrāvaka*). <1310>

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<sup>170</sup> See *Kośa*, VIII, F 178-181.

E.

## CHAPTER XLVIII: THE EIGHTEEN EMPTINESSES

### PRELIMINARY NOTE; F 1994

The eighteen emptinesses, the subject of the present chapter, are the culmination of a long doctrinal evolution of which it is advisable to mark the milestones. The subject is of importance because, to a great extent, it is on account of it that the two first vehicles, (i) that of the hearers (*śrāvaka*) and (ii) that of the bodhisattvas, show their differences. In general, one can say with the *Traité*, F 239: “The vehicle of the hearer (*śrāvakayāna*) teaches *mainly* the emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*), whereas the Buddhayāna (or great vehicle), teaches both the emptiness of sentient beings and the emptiness of factors (*dharmaśūnyatā*).” The assertion will be developed later, F 2060.

Here in a summary manner we will treat:

1. The twofold emptiness in the canonical sūtras; F 1995-2008
2. The emptiness of sentient beings in the Abhidharmas and the Śāstras of the Hinayānist schools, F 2009-2013
3. The emptinesses according to the Madhyamaka; F 2013-2027 [omitted]
4. The emptinesses in the Great Prajñāpāramitāsūtras; F 2027-2040 [omitted]

### 1. THE TWOFOLD EMPTINESS IN THE CANONICAL SŪTRAS; F 1995-2008

- A. Emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*) or emptiness of persons (*pudgalanairātmya*); F 1995-2005
- B. Emptiness of factors (*dharmaśūnyatā*); F 2005-2008

#### A. EMPTINESS OF SENTIENT BEINGS (SATTVAŚŪNYATĀ) OR EMPTINESS OF PERSONS (PUDGALANAIRĀTMYA); F 1995-2005

Emptiness of sentient beings is the non-existence of the sentient being (*sattva*), of the soul or the self (*ātman*), of the living being (*jīva*), of the individual (*puruṣa*), of the person (*pudgala*): all these words are only designations (*prajñāpti*) of the group of fragmentary realities.

On the testimony of the *Brahmajālasutta* (D. I, p. 31-34), the first Buddhists were fully informed about the animistic and spiritualistic concepts current in their time among the mendicants (*śramaṇa*) and brāhmaṇas:

- (a) persistence after death (i) of a self with conception (*saṃjñī ātmā*), in sixteen forms; or (ii) of a self without conception (*asaṃjñī ātmā*), in eight forms; or of a self neither with conception nor without conception (*naivasaṃjñīnāsaṃjñī ātmā*), in eight forms;
- (b) annihilation [after death] of the existent sentient being (*sato sattvasya uccheda*) in seven forms;
- (c) deliverance in the present lifetime (*drṣṭadharmanirvāṇa*) of the existent sentient being in five forms.

All these theories were condemned by the Buddha.

More precisely, the notion of self (*ātman*) against which the Buddhists fought is that of a permanent (*nitya*), stable or everlasting (*dhruva*), eternal (*śāśvata*), unchanging (*avipariṇāmadharman*) entity which the ignorant attribute to the great Brahman (D. I, p. 18-19), to some deities (D. I, p. 19-20), to themselves or to others (M. I, p. 8, 135, 137; S. III, p. 98-99, 183): this notion is very similar to that of the Brahman-Ātman of the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta.

The Buddha resolutely moved away from it and declared: *Natthi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo* (S. III, p. 144).

In order to designate this substantial soul, the Indian language uses an extensive vocabulary <1996> and a broad range of synonyms: *ātman*, but also *sattva*, *jīva*, *poṣa*, *puruṣa*, *pudgala*, *manuṣa*, *mānava*, *kartr*, *kāraka*, *jānaka*, *saṃjanaka*, *paśyaka*, *vedaka*, *pratisaṃvedaka*, *utthāpaka*, *samutthāpaka*, etc. But all these terms do not express what it is, unless it is metaphorical.

Nothing is an exception to the emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*). In order to be convinced of that, it is necessary to recall some elementary notions.

Dharmas or factors fall into two main categories:

- (i) unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) factors,
  - (ii) conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) factors.
- (i) Unconditioned factors, not formed by causes, are without arising (*utpāda*), without passing away (*vyaya*), and without 'change in continuance' (*sthityanyathātva*): cf. A. I, p. 152. The schools debate their number: from one to nine (L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, p. 180-187).
- (ii) Conditioned factors, also called conditioned forces or formations (*saṃskāra*), are 'produced through dependence' (*pratityasamutpanna*) upon causes and conditions (*hetupratyaya*) and are endowed with three (or four) conditioned characteristics: arising (*utpāda*), passing away (*vyaya*) and 'change in continuance' (*sthityanyathātva*) according to which they arise, endure and disappear: cf. A. I, p. 152; S. III, p. 37; *Nidānaṣaṃyukta*, p. 139; and above, F 36-37, 921, 1163.

The canonical texts arrange the conditioned factors into three classes, all three encompassing the same set:

- I. The five *skandhas* or aggregates: 1) form or corporeality (*rūpa*). 2) sensation (*vedanā*), 3) conception (*saṃjñā*), 4) formations (*saṃskāra*), 5) consciousness (*viññāna*). – See, e.g., S. III, p. 47-48, 100; V, p. 60-61.
- II. The twelve *āyatana*s or sense-sources of consciousness, namely, the six internal sense-sources (*ādhyātmika āyatana*): 1) eye (*cakṣus*), 2) ear (*śrotra*). 3) nose (*ghrāṇa*), 4) tongue (*jihvā*), 5) body (*kāya*), 6) mental sense-faculty (*manas*); and the six external sense-sources (*bāhya āyatana*): 7) visual form (*rūpa*), 8) sound (*śabda*), 9) odor (*gandha*), 10) taste (*rasa*),

11) tangible (*sparṣṭavya*), 12) factors (*dharma*). – See, e.g., D. II, p. 302; III, p. 102, 243; M. I, p. 61.

III. The eighteen *dhātus* or sense-elements, namely the six sense-faculties and the six objects in the previous list, plus: 13) visual consciousness (*cakṣurvijñāna*), 14) auditory consciousness (*śrotravijñāna*), 15) olfactory consciousness (*ghrāṇavijñāna*), 16) gustatory consciousness (*jihvāvijñāna*), 17) tactile consciousness (*kāyavijñāna*), 18) mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*). See, e.g., S. II p. 140.

The set of conditioned factors defined by each of the three classes is called (i) *sarvaṃ*, ‘everything’ or ‘all’ (S. IV, p. 15; *Mahāniddeśa*, I, p. 133; *Kośabhāṣya*, p. 301, 7-8), (ii) *Loka*, ‘the world’ (S. IV, p. 52, 54) or also (iii) *duḥkha*, ‘suffering’ (S. IV, p. 28).

In order to pass valid judgment on all these factors, it is always necessary to refer to the four seals of the Dharma (*dharmaṃudrā*) mentioned above (F 1369): (i) *sarvasaṃskārā anityāḥ*, (ii) *sarvasaṃskārā duḥkhāḥ*, (iii) *sarvasaṃskārā anātmanāḥ*, (iv) *śāntaṃ nirvāṇaṃ* “All conditioned forces (*saṃskāras* = *saṃskṛtadharmas*) are impermanent; all conditioned forces are suffering; all factors (whether *saṃskṛta* or *asaṃskṛta*) are nonself; *nirvāṇa* is peaceful.”

The unconditioned factors and especially *nirvāṇa* are all as impersonal as the conditioned factors (*Vin.* V, p. 86: *Nibbānaṃ c’eva paññatti anattā iti nicchayā*). *Nirvāṇa* is the cessation of attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*): cf. S. IV, p. 251, 261. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the non-existence of the self <1997> in order to attain *nirvāṇa* in this life, which abolishes the pride of “I am” (A. IV, p. 353: *Anattasaññi asmimānasamugghātaṃ pāpuṇāti diṭṭh’ eva dhamme nibbānaṃ*).

The conditioned factors, likewise, are not a self (*anātman*) and do not belong to a self (*anātmiya*). This truth should be stated and repeated because it is due to the five appropriative aggregates (*upādānaskandha*) that the idea of “I am” (*asmiti*) arises: cf. S. III, p. 126-132.

Therefore, the Buddha so often lectured his monks about the list of the five aggregates (*Vin.* I, p. 14; M. I, p. 138-139; III, p. 19-20; S. II, p. 124-125; III, p. 88-89. 94, 111, 138, 148-149; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 164-168), the twelve sense-sources (S. II, p. 244-246) and the eighteen sense-elements (M. III, p. 271-273). Stopping after each aggregate, sense-source and sense-element, he engages his monks in the following dialogue:

What do you think then, O monks, is form (*rūpa*) permanent (*nitya*) or impermanent (*anitya*)?

Impermanent, Lord.

But that which is impermanent, is it suffering (*duḥkha*) or satisfaction (*sukha*)?

Suffering, Lord.

Now, that which is impermanent, painful and subject to change, when one thinks about it, can one say: That is mine, I am that, that is my self (*etan mama, eṣo ’ham asmi, eṣa ma ātmā*)?

One cannot, Lord.”

And the Buddha concludes:

Consequently, O monks, all past, future or present form (*rūpa*), internal or external, coarse or subtle, lower or higher, distant or close, all this form is not mine, I am not it, it is not my self: this is what must be truly seen according to valid cognition.

The same dialogue and the same conclusions are repeated in regard to the other four aggregates, the twelve sense-sources and the eighteen sense-elements.

If the conditioned factors are not a self and do not belong to a self, it is because they are impermanent and painful: “Short and brief is the life of humans; it abounds in suffering and torments. It is like a mountain river that goes afar, runs rapidly, carries everything in its path. There is no second, no minute, no hour where it stops: it forges ahead, whirls about and speeds up. For the one who is born here below there is no immortality.” (A IV, p. 136-137).

Where is there to find a self in these conditioned forces (*saṃskāra*), “so transitory (*anitya*), so fragile (*adhruva*), so untrustworthy (*anāśvāsyā*)”? (S. II, p. 191, 193). – Would one say, in the mind? – “But it would be better to take as self this body (*kāya*) that can last one year, two years or even a hundred or more, rather than the mind. For what is called mind (*citta*), mental sense-faculty (*manas*) or consciousness (*viññāna*) arises as one thing and passes away as another in perpetual change by day and by night. The mind is like a monkey roaming through a forest that grabs hold of one branch, lets it go and grabs another.” (S. II, p. 94-95; *Traité*, F 1165).

There are three types of suffering:

- (iii) suffering which is suffering (*duḥkhaduḥkhata*),
- (iv) suffering which is the fact of being conditioned (*saṃskāraduḥkhata*),
- (v) the suffering which is transformation or change (*vipariṇāmaduḥkhata*): cf. D. III, p. 216; S. IV, p. 259; V, p. 56.

All the psychophysical phenomena of existence are formed through causes and destined to disappear. From this it results that everything is suffering (*Sarvaṃ duḥkham*: S. IV, p. 28); all that is experienced is experienced as suffering (*yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ taṃ duḥkhasmiṃ*: S. IV, p. 216; *Traité*, F 1159, 1446) and nothing arises but suffering, nothing is destroyed but suffering (*nāññatra dukkhā sambhoti, nāññāṃ dukkhā nirujjhati*: S. I, p. 135; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 354).

The whole process of becoming takes place outside of a self and there is no self to control it: “Form (*rūpa*) is not a self. If it were a self, this form would not be subject to torments (*ābādha*) and one would be able to say with regard to the form: Thus is my body, thus is not my body. But that is not the case. And it is the same for the other aggregates, sensations, conceptions, formations and consciousnesses” (*Vin.* I, p. 13-14; S. III, p. 66-67; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 162-164; *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 335-336).

As conditioned dharmas (*saṃskṛta*), the aggregates (*skandha*), arising, enduring a very short time and ceasing, evolve from time immemorial in the wheel of existence (*bhavacakra*) according to the

unchanging mechanism of the twelve-membered dependent origination (*dvādaśāṅgapratitya-samutpāda*, detailed above, F 349 seq.). Dependent origination was discovered by the Buddhas but was not created by them nor by any agent (*kāraka*) whatsoever: “This dependent origination has not been made by me nor by anyone else; but whether the Tathāgatas appear in this world or not, this nature of the factors (*dharma*) is stable.” (*Nidānasaṃyukta*, p. 164, cited in the *Traité* above, F 157 and later, k. 32, p. 298a: *Na bhikṣo mayā pratityasamutpādaḥ kṛto nāpy anyaiḥ, api tūtpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā*). Dependent origination is inherent in conditioned factors. As *Kośa* III, p. 60, says: “The stream of aggregates that develops in three lifetimes [taken at random in the infinite stream of lifetimes] is the dependent origination which has 12 members”. Each of its members is a complex of five aggregates, although it takes its name from the factor (*dharma*) that is the most important (*Kośa*, III, p. 66). Each of its members, including ignorance (*avidyā*), which opens the list, prevails over its neighbor; all are equally impermanent (*anitya*), conditioned (*saṃskṛta*), produced through dependence (*pratityasamutpanna*), destined to destruction, to disappearance, to detachment, to suppression (*S. II*, p. 26).

One would search in vain for a substantial soul or self or an autonomous agent in the dependent origination. The *Paramārthaśūnyatāsūtra* of the *Samyuktāgama* which the *Traité* will cite at length below (F 2136) is definite in this regard: “There is action (*karman*), there is retribution (*vipāka*) but there is no agent (*kāraka*) that, [at death], puts aside these aggregates and takes up other aggregates, unless that is a matter of a conventional metaphor (*saṃketa*) to designate the law of dependent origination” (*T 99*, k. 13, p. 92c12-26; *Bimbisārasūtra* in E. Waldschmidt, *Bruchstücke buddh. Sūtras*, p. 131; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 358; *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 448, 4-6; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 707, 13-16).

The non-existence of the self entails or assumes the non-existence of the ‘mine’ and vice versa: “If the ‘self’ existed, there would be a ‘mine’; if the ‘mine’ existed, there would be a ‘self’. But since the ‘self’ and the ‘mine’ do certainly not truly exist (*attani ca attaniye ca saccato tñtato anupalabbhamāne*), is it not complete and total folly to think: This world (*loka* here designating the twelve sense-sources, according to *Samyutta*, p. 87), this world is the ‘self’; after my death, I will be permanent (*nicca*), stable or everlasting (*dhuva*), eternal (*sassata*), unchanging (*avipariṇamadhamma*), and I will remain so for eternity (*sassatisamaṃ tath’ eva tñassāmi*)”? (*M. I*, p. 138). <1999>

The set of the conditioned factors (aggregates, sense-sources, sense-elements) designated by the demonstrative pronoun *idam* or by the noun *loka* is proclaimed to be empty of the ‘self’ and ‘mine’: *Suññāṃ idaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā* (*M. I*, p. 297, ; *II*, p. 263, 26-27; *S. IV*, p. 296, 33): *Yasmā ca kho suññāṃ attena vā attaniyena vā tasmā suñño loko ti vuccati* (*S. IV*, p. 54, 5-6). It is not just in the twofold aspect of ‘self’ and ‘mine’ that emptiness appears. It can also be envisaged in a number of other aspects (*ākāra*): the canonical texts distinguish four, six, eight, ten, twelve, and even forty-two (cf. *Cullaniḍḍesa*, p. 278-280; *Visuddhimagga*, ed. Warren, p. 561-562). Actually, it is a question there of synonyms rather than real distinctions: the emptiness is the same, only the expressions are different (*M. I*, p. 297: *dhammā ekaṭṭhā, byañjanam eva nānaṃ*).



The emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*) serves as antidote to the disastrous ‘afflicted view of self’ (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*). This is a wrong view (*dr̥ṣṭi*) mistakenly attributing a self to the five appropriative aggregates (*upādānaskandha*). Indeed, Śāriputra said that the five appropriative aggregates are called *satkāya* by the Buddha (S. IV, p. 259): *Pañcime upādānakkhandā sakkāyo vutto Bhagavatā*), and the Master himself stated that the five aggregates, form (*rūpa*), etc., must be present in order that the ‘afflicted view of self’ can occur (S. III, p. 185).

Led astray by this wrong view, the ignorant ordinary person considers

- (i) the form (*rūpa*) as the self (*ātman*) (*rūpaṃ attato samanupassati*), or
- (ii) the self as possessing the form (*rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ*), or
- (iii) the form as present in the self (*attani vā rūpaṃ*), or
- (iv) the self as present in the form (*rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ*).

And it is the same for the other aggregates: sensation (*vedanā*), conception (*saṃijñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*) (M. I, p. 300; III, p. 17; S. III, p. 3-4, 16-17, 42-43, 46, 56, 102, 113-14, 138, 150, 164-165; S. IV, p. 287, 395; A. II, p. 214-215; *Mahāvīyut.*, no 4685-4704). The ordinary person thus nourishing four prejudices or habitual adherences (*abhiniveśa*) in regard to each of the five aggregates, we speak of the *Vim̐satiśikharasamudgataḥ satkāyadr̥ṣṭisailaḥ*: the twenty-peaked mountain of the ‘afflicted view of self’ (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*) (Gilgit Manuscripts, III, 1, p. 21, 7-8; *Divyāvadāna*, p. 46, 25, 52, 24-25, 549, 16, 554, 20; *Avadānaśataka*, I, p. 385, 12).

The ‘afflicted view of self’ is not a defiled (*kliṣṭa*) view in the sense that it is not directly the cause of an offense and of hell. Actually, the person who believes in the self wishes to be happy after his death and, to this end, practices generosity, observes morality: all good actions assuring a rebirth in the world of humans or in the heavens (cf. *Kośa*, V, p. 40).

But belief in an ‘I’ is incompatible with the Buddhist spiritual life, the uprooting of desire, access to *nirvāṇa*.

Taking a small pellet of dung in his fingers, the Buddha said to a bhikṣu: “Belief in the existence of a permanent, stable or everlasting, eternal and unchanging self, be it as small as this pellet, will ruin the religious life that leads to the complete destruction of suffering (*brahmacariyavāso sammādukkhakkhayāya*: S. III, p. 144).

Therefore, the Buddha again said, “I do not see any adhesion to this view that does not engender sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair in those who cling to it” (M. I, p. 137-138). Furthermore, the ‘afflicted view of self’ leads to the sixty-two wrong views of which the *Brahmajālasūtra* speaks (S. IV, p. 287).

False views (*mithyādr̥ṣṭi*), afflicted view of self (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*) and afflicted view of self (*ātmānudr̥ṣṭi*) are closely linked: in order to destroy them, it is necessary to consider all the conditioned factors as impermanent (*anityatas*), painful (*duḥkhatas*) and without self (*anātmatas*); cf. S. IV, p. 147-148.

<2000>



Nevertheless, both in the canonical and the paracanonical scriptures, there are passages where the Buddha expressed himself in a more qualified manner. Under the most diverse terms (*ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva*, *puruṣa*, *pudgala*, *kāraka*, etc.), he spoke of the ‘soul or self’ as an obvious reality the existence of which is not challenged; to some disciples he affirmed the existence of the soul or self whereas to others he denied it; sometimes, also, when he was questioned about the existence or non-existence of the soul or self, he refused to express an opinion. How can these apparently contradictory texts be reconciled? The problem has occupied the old and the modern exegesis and a great many solutions half-way between categorical affirmation to complete negation have been proposed. The most interesting date from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The description and critique of them may be found in L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, Paris, 1925, p. 85-129. Unfortunately, without bias, I [Lamotte] will be very careful not to intervene in the debate and will limit myself here to summarize, as briefly as possible, the position adopted by the author of the *Traité*.

**a. The mundane point of view (*laukika siddhānta*); F 2000-2002**

When the Buddha speaks of the self (*ātman*) as a natural, obvious thing, he looks at things from a mundane point of view and adapts to everyday language. It is hard to think of a language not resorting to any process (e.g., pronouns or conjugations) to distinguish the one who speaks (*first person*), the one who is being addressed (*second person*) and the one who is being spoken about (*third person*); the mix-up of the ‘I’, the ‘you’ and the ‘he’ would make speech incomprehensible. It happens to us a hundred times each day that we pronounce the word ‘I’ without us considering it, for all that, as a spiritual principle, separable from the body and immortal. Besides, in regards to Sanskrit, the word *ātman* is not univocal: sometimes it can be a noun designating the spiritual soul or self, but it is also and most often a simple reflexive pronoun which, commonly used in oblique singular cases, applies to the three persons no matter what kind or what number (cf. H. von Glasenapp, *Vedānta und Buddhismus*, Ak. der Wissens. und der Literatur, II (1950), p. 1020; W. Rāhula, *L’enseignement du Bouddha*, Paris, 1961, p. 87).

In some scriptural passages, the *ātman* and its synonyms are taken in a sense that has nothing philosophical about it and they should be translated, accordingly, without attaching great value to them:

1. *Dhammapāda*, v. 160, *Udānavarga*, XXIII, v. 11 foll. (*Traité*, F 29); *Attā hi attano nātho* – Each one (and not ‘the self’) is his own refuge.
2. *D.* II, p. 100; III, p. 58, 77; *S.* III, p. 42; V, p. 154, 163; Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, p. 200: *Attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññāsaraṇā*. – Remain by taking yourselves (and not ‘the self’) as island, by taking yourselves as refuge and not another; Nehmt euch selbst als Insel, nehmt euch selbst als Zuflucht, habt keine andere Zuflucht (E. Waldschmidt).
3. *D.* I, p. 82; *M.* I, p. 23, 348; II, p. 21; *Mahāvastu*, II, p. 283; *Lalita*, p. 344 (*Traité*, F 28-29): *So dibbena cakkhunā... satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne...* – With the divine eye, he sees people (and not ‘sentient beings’) being born and perishing...

4. A. I, p. 22 (Traité, F 29): *Ekapuggalo loke uppajjamāno uppajjati bahujanahitāya... Katamo ekapuggalo? Tathāgato araham sammāsambuddho.* – One person (and not a unique ‘person’), being born into the world, is born for the welfare of the many. Who is that? The Tathāgata, the perfected being and perfectly enlightened one. – Same interpretation in *Kośa*, IX, p. 259. <2001>
5. The Samodhānas that end the Jātaka tales and by means of which the Buddha establishes the connection between individuals of the present story (*paccuppannavatthu*) and those of the past story (*atitavatthu*) do not constitute any affirmation of a self. “Perhaps you are wondering if, at that time and place, such a one was not another than myself. Well then, no, you should not imagine that. Why? Because at that time and place, I was indeed that one (*aham eva sa tena kālena tena samayena asāv abhūvam*).” By means of this formula, comments the *Kośa*, IX, p. 272, the Bhagavat tells us that the aggregates that constitute his ‘self’ actually are part of the same stream (*ekasaṃtāna*) as the aggregates that constitute the individual in question, in the way that one says: “This same burning fire has moved” (*sa evāgnir dahann āgata iti*).

Other canonical passages where the term *ātman* and its synonyms have no metaphysical import may be found in chapter IX of the *Kośa* and in W. Rāhula’s *L’enseignement du Buddha*, p. 81-96. And we think it is wrong that good minds have seen in (1) the *Bhārasutta* and (2) the *Natumhāka* “the affirmation of an *ātman* distinct from the aggregates”.

(1) *Bhārasutta* in *Samyutta*, III, p. 25-26 (other references above, F 215, n. 1). – “O monks, I will explain to you the burden (*bhāra*), the taking up of the burden (*bhārādāna*), the laying down of the burden (*bhāranikṣepaṇa*) and the bearer of the burden (*bhārahāra*). The burden is the five appropriative aggregates (*upādānaskandha*); the taking up of the burden is the thirst that produces rebirth (*trṣṇā paunarbhaviki*); the laying down of the burden is the abandoning of thirst (*trṣṇāyāhi prahāṇam*); the bearer of the burden is such and such a person (*pudgala*), this venerable one who bears such and such a name, who is of such and such a family and such and such a caste, who eats such and such food, who experiences such and such satisfaction and suffering, who lives for so and so many years, who remains for such and such a long time.” The Vātsīputriyas use this *sūtra* as an excuse to speak about an inexplicable person (*pudgala*). But in his *Kośa*, IX, p. 257, Vasubandhu retorts: “It is just to conform to verbal convention that one says: ‘This venerable one of such and such a name, of such and such a family’ and the rest, so that it should be well understood that there person (*pudgala*) is inexplicable, impermanent, without an intrinsic nature... Therefore the person is not a real entity.”

(2) *Natumhākasutta* and parable of the Jeta Grove, S. III, p. 33-34; IV, p. 81-82, 128-129; *Majjhima*, I, p. 140, 33-141, 19; *Samyukta*, T 99, no. 269, k. 10, p. 70b; no. 274, k. 11, p. 73a). – “Monks, abandon whatever is not yours (*na tumhākaṃ*): form, sensation, conception, formations and consciousness are not yours, abandon them. When you have abandoned them, that will lead to your welfare and happiness. But if someone came into this Jeta Grove where we are and carried off the grass, the

sticks, the branches and foliage to burn them, would you say that he carried off and burned you? – No. Lord. – Why? – Because, Lord, these things are neither our self nor what belongs to our self. – So too, monks, abandon what is not yours.”

Abandoning the aggregates which are neither a self nor ‘mine’ does not in any way imply that one will find a self or ‘mine’ or that the self and ‘mine’ exist. The *Mahānidāsa*, II, p. 438-439 quite rightly brings together this parable of the simile of the chariot that does not exist apart from its parts (S. I, p. 135) and the well-known saying: *Suñño loko attena vā attaniyena vā* (S. IV, p. 54).

If the Buddha orders his monks to “abandon the aggregates”, it is not only because they are empty of self and ‘mine’, but perhaps also because they are empty of intrinsic nature and characteristic. Such is the opinion of the *Traité* (F 2108) which sees in the Buddha’s injunction to Rādha “These aggregates, O Radha, demolish them, shatter them, put them out of play” (S. III, p. 190) an affirmation of the emptiness of factors (*dharmasūnyatā*). <2002>

In summary, for ease and conciseness of language, the Buddha did not hesitate to use the terms *ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva*, *puruṣa*, *pudgala* which were current in his time: “Those are”, he said to Citta, “names, expressions, phrases, popular designations which the Tathāgata uses, but without being misled by them (D. I, p. 202: *Itimā kho Citta, lokasamaññā lokaniruttiyo lokavohārā lokapaññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan*).” They do not imply the existence of a permanent, everlasting or stable, eternal, unchanging entity; they are simply labels to designate conveniently a complex of impermanent, painful and impersonal conditioned factors (*saṃskṛta*).

To Māra who spoke to her about ‘a sentient being’, the nun Vajirā answered: “What do you mean, O Māra? That there is a sentient being (*sattva*)? Your doctrine is false. It is but a mass of changing conditioned forces (*saṅkhāra*). Just as there where the parts of the chariot appear assembled the word ‘chariot’ is used, so also, there where the five aggregates are, it is conventional to speak of ‘a sentient being’ (*sattva*)” (S. I, p. 135).

## b. The individual (*prātipauruṣika*) and therapeutic (*prātipakṣika*) point of view;

F 2002-2003

According to the *Traité* (F 31-38), the Buddha always varied his teaching according to the mode of thinking or intention (*āśaya*) and needs of his listeners: to some he taught the existence of the self, to others the non-existence of the self.

Influenced by nihilistic views (*ucchedadṛṣṭi*), some of his disciples had doubts as to the afterlife, the reward for the good and punishment for the wicked throughout lifetimes, removing in this way any sanction by morality. The Buddha therefore taught them that “there where a self (*ātmabhāva*) is born, there its action ripens and when this action is ripe, the self is subjected to the retribution of this action either in the present life, in the next life or in future lives (A. I, p. 134: *yatth’ assa attabhāvo nibbattati tattha taṃ kammaṃ vipaccati, yattha taṃ kammaṃ vipaccati tattha tassa kammaṃ vipākāṃ paṭisaṃvedeti diṭṭh’ eva dhamme uppajje apare vā pariyāye*).

On the other hand, drawn to eternalistic views (*śāśvatadr̥ṣṭi*), others imagine that they go from existence to existence, that they abandon one body to take up another and undergo, from age to age, the consequences of their own actions. They do not endanger the norms of morality, but nonetheless they fall into the disastrous ‘afflicted view of self’ (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*), the root of desire and the source of wrong views. To them the Buddha explains that the mechanism of retribution functions perfectly in the absence of any agent or any transmigrating entity. In the *Paramārthaśūnyatāsūtra* (see below, F 2136), he asserts that there is action and retribution, but that there is no agent to abandon these aggregates and to assume others. To Phalguna who asked him: “Then who makes contact (*phussati*), who senses (*vedayati*)?”, the Master answered: “I deny that anyone makes contact or that anyone senses. Your question is badly put. You should have asked me what is the condition (*paccaya*) of contact and what is the condition of sensation, and I would have answered [that, in terms of dependent origination], contact has the six internal sense-sources as condition and that sensation has touching as condition” (S. II, p. 13; cited by the *Traité*, F 32F, 1683-84).

In affirming in turn the existence and non-existence of the substantial self, the Buddha is obviously contradicting himself but, nevertheless, the two answers are valid. As the *Traité* will comment (F 2102), the Buddha denies the *ātman* more often than he affirms it, for the good reason that people, moved by the instinct of self-preservation, <2003> long for eternal survival rather than for a total and near annihilation. If people had opted for annihilation, the Master would not have omitted insisting on survival. Both being true, the opposing theses have not, however, the same truth potential. From the Hinayānist point of view at least, (i) the doctrine of selflessness (*anātmavāda*) holds in absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*), for the aggregates alone exist. (ii) The doctrine of the self (*ātmavāda*) itself fits into the category of conventional and provisional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) in that it corrects the errors of the nihilists. Now, the *Traité* will tell us (F 2101), a useful opinion is never wrong.

### c. The refused questions; F 2003-2005

The Buddha often remained silent (*tūṣṇīmbhāva*) on the questions under consideration here, and for him, this silence is by itself an answer, a *sthāpanīyavyākaraṇa*, an answer by not answering (cf. F 156). He refuses to express an opinion not only about the existence of the self (*ātman*) but also about the various modalities of the latter.

*Ānandasutta* (S. IV, p. 400-401; *Samyukta*, T 99, no. 961. k. 34, p. 245b; T 100, no. 195, k. 10. p. 444c). – One day the wandering mendicant Vatsagotra came to the Buddha and asked: “Does the self exist (*atth’ attā*)?” but the Master remained silent; thereupon Vatsagotra asked: “Does the self not exist (*natth’ attā*)?” and again the Buddha remained silent. The wandering mendicant having gone, the Buddha justified his silence to Ānanda: “If I had answered that the self exists, I would have been siding with the eternalists (*śāśvatavāda*) and I would have been preventing Vatsagotra from reaching the cognition (*jñāna*) for which all factors are without self (*Sarve dharmā anātmānaḥ*). On the other hand, if I had answered that the self does not exist, I would have been siding with the nihilists (*ucchedavāda*) and poor Vatsagotra would have asked himself: ‘But did I not previously

exist? And now I no longer exist!" – Here, and despite his reluctances, the Buddha allows us to imply that he is intimately persuaded of the selflessness of all things.

In regard to the modalities of this self in the case where it would exist, the Master is even more careful. He declares the fourteen 'difficult questions' which his disciples did not cease to ask him: eternality and infinity of the world (*loka*) and of the self (*ātman*), survival of the Tathāgata (or the perfected being liberated from desire) after death, connection between the living being (*jīva*) and the body (references above, F 154 seq.) to be indeterminate points (*avyākṛtavastu*). Here the Buddha makes no effort to justify his silence, and the reasons that he invokes are not lacking. Two especially should be remembered: the first practical in nature, and the second logical in nature

a. If the Buddha was silent, it is because knowledge of these things does not make for progress in the holy life since they are of no use to peace and enlightenment (*D. I*, p. 188-189; *III*, p. 136; *M. I*, p. 431; *S. II*, p. 223).

b. Since everything is empty of 'self' and 'mine', there is no self and, since there is no self, it is absurd to wonder if it is eternal or transitory, finite or infinite, the same as the body or different from it. One does not go on and on (i) about the height of the son of a sterile woman and a eunuch, (ii) about the length of the hair of a tortoise, (iii) about the color of a sky-flower, (iv) about the shape of the sixth finger of one's hand, (v) the number of liters of milk produced by a cow's horn. The author of the *Traité* comes back to this subject a number of times (e.g., F 155-158, 423, 913-919) and he concludes (F 1684): "It is the nonself (*anātman*) that is true", not without immediately adding, as a good Mādhyamikan, that one cannot grasp its characteristic. <2004>

That having been said, the Buddha is perfectly aware of the scandal that his doctrines were to provoke. The theory of dependent origination which explains, without the intervention of a substantial entity, that the mechanism of action and retribution is a profound truth which is difficult to see, difficult to understand, pacifying, sublime, surpassing any dialectic, abstruse, comprehensible only to the wise (*Vin.*, I, p. 4; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 108; *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 314; *Lalitavistara*, p. 392). As for emptiness – if it refers only to that of the self and 'mine' – "it is distasteful to the entire world" (*sarvalokavipratyāyika*).

The Buddha foresaw that, in future centuries, some bhikṣus would not listen, would not lend an ear and would not want to understand 'the Sūtras uttered by the Tathāgata, profound sūtras, deep in meaning, superhuman and dealing with emptiness' (*S. II*, p. 267; *V*, p. 407; *A. I*, p. 72; *III*, p. 107: *suttantā tathāgatabhāsītā gambhīrā gambhīratthā lokuttarā suññatāpaṭisaṃyuttā*).

If ever a prediction was realized, it is certainly this one. In the early centuries of Buddhism, several schools, in any case those of the Vātsīputriyas and the Sāṃmitiyas (cf. p. 43, F, n. 4), already professed personalist views (*pudgalavāda*) in such an insidious way that one wonders if, yes or no, they were still Buddhist (cf. preliminary note of L. de La Vallée Poussin to chap. IX of the *Kośa*, F 228). Throughout history, efforts were made to introduce into the holy Dharma the self (*ātman*) of the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta. Even in our times, some critics maintain the following reasoning: The Buddha denied that the conditioned factors (*saṃskṛta*) are a self or belong to a self, but he did

not formally combat an *ātman* transcending the world of contingencies. The late Professor E. Frauwallner, in his *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*, Berlin, 1956, expressed himself thus: *Der Buddha wird nicht müde, immer wieder zu betonen, dass keine der fünf Gruppen (skandha), aus denen sich die irdische Persönlichkeit zusammensetzt, für das Ich gehalten werden darf. Ihm selbst lag es zwar fern, damit das Vorhandensein einer Seele überhaupt zu leugnen.* [The Buddha never tires of emphasizing again and again that none of the five groups (*skandha*) that constitute the worldly personality can be held to be the self. It was certainly not his intention though, to thereby deny completely the existence of a soul. (Excerpt from Lodrö Sangpo's forthcoming translation, under the supervision of Ernst Steinkellner.)]

But this *argumentum ex silentio* bears no weight in face of dialogues similar in every respect, exchanges between Śāriputra and Yamaka (S. III, p. 111-112), between the Buddha and Anurādha (S. IV, p. 383-384) on the existence of the *tathāgata*, a term that here means not the Buddha but more generally the noble person freed from desire. There it is said that the *tathāgata* is not any of the five aggregates (*rūpa, vedanā, saṃjñā, saṃskāra, vijñāna*), does not occur in them **nor elsewhere** (*anyatra*), is not the collection of the five aggregates and yet is not separate from them. In conclusion: *Ettha ca te, āvuso Yamaka, diṭṭh' eva dhamme saccato thetato tathāgato anupalabbhiyamāno.*

This finale has been translated and understood differently by H. Oldenberg (*Buddha, sein Leben*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., 1959, p. 296: "So ist also, Freund Yamaka, schon hier in der sichtbaren Welt der Vollendete für dich nicht in Wahrheit und Wesenhaftigkeit zu erfassen" ["Thus, friend Yamaka, the *tathāgata* is then already here in this visible world not to be grasped, in truth and substantiality, by you" (translation Lodrö Sangpo)], and by L. de La Vallée Poussin who understands: "Donc, mon ami, même maintenant, tu ne perçois pas le Bouddha comme existant réellement, vraiment" ["Thus, my friend, even now, you do not perceive the Buddha as really and truly existing"] (*Le bouddhisme*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1925, p. 172), or "Donc, Yamaka, dans ce monde même, le *tathāgata* n'est pas perçu, constaté, comme vrai, réel" ["Thus, Yamaka, in this very world, the *tathāgata* is not perceived, observed, as true, as real" (Nirvāṇa, 1925, p. 104). Oldenberg sees in this phrase the affirmation of a transcendent *ātman*, the *ātman* of the Upaniṣads; de La Vallée Poussin finds in it the same negation of the *tathāgata* of which one cannot say that he perishes at death for the good reason that in order to perish, it is necessary to exist. <2005>

In his fine work, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le bouddhisme ancien*, Paris, 1973, p. 67, K. Bhattacharya writes: "The controversy between Oldenberg and de La Vallée Poussin seems unreasonable for it is placed on two distinct levels." In fact, however, the learned Indian scholar sides with Oldenberg and Frauwallner by adding: "What this text and others similar to it mean is this: 'The *ātman*, the Absolute, cannot be the object of 'grasping'... But that which escapes 'grasping' is not 'non-existent'; its objective 'non-existence' is, on the other hand, its metaphysical 'existence' par excellence; its 'non-grasping' is its 'grasping' par excellence."

But the Omniscient One knew very well what he needed to say and what he needed to be silent about, and it is in vain that one would search in the canonical *sūtras* of explicit and definitive

meaning (*nītārthasūtra*) for any support for an *ātman* both immanent and transcendent, permanent (*nitya*), everlasting or stable (*dhruva*), eternal (*śāśvata*) and unchanging (*avipariṇāmadharma*), whereas they endlessly say and repeat that all things without exception, conditioned or unconditioned, are not a self (*sarve dharmā anātmānaḥ*) and that the most disastrous ignorance, whatever the forms it takes on, is the ‘afflicted view of self’ (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*).

Under these conditions and until proof of the contrary, it is best to stick to the recommendation of the Master: “What I have left undeclared, hold that as undeclared, and what I have declared, hold that as declared” (M. I, p. 431: *Abyākatañ ca me abyākatato dhāretha, byākatañ ca me byākatato dhāretha*). It is by conforming to this golden rule and by trying hard to realize by themselves the profound meaning of the teachings of the Blessed One that, for over twenty-five centuries, numerous bhikṣus have found in the doctrine of non-self the pacifying of the mind and the joyful heart. On this subject, see W. Rahula, *L’enseignement fondamental du bouddhisme in Présence du bouddhisme*, Saigon, 1959, p. 265-266; *L’enseignement du Buddha*, Paris, 1961, p. 77-96.

“In conclusion”, writes the author of the *Traité* (F 747), “look for the *ātman* in heaven or on earth, internally (*adhyātmam*) or externally (*bahirdhā*), in the three times (*tryadhvan*) or in the ten directions (*daśadiś*), nowhere will you find it. Only the meeting of the twelve sense-sources of consciousness [*dvādaśāyatana*, i.e., the six sense-faculties and their respective objects] produces the six consciousnesses (*ṣaḍvijñāna*). The meeting of the three [*trikaṣaṇnipāta*, or the meeting of the sense-faculties, objects and consciousnesses] is called contact (*sparsa*). Contact produces sensation (*vedanā*), conception (*saṃjñā*), the act of intention (*cetanā*) and other mental factors (*caitasikadharmā*). According to the Buddhist system, it is by the power of ignorance (*avidyā*) that the ‘afflicted view of self’ (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*) arises. Because of the ‘afflicted view of self’, one affirms the existence of the self (*ātman*). This ‘afflicted view of self’ is destroyed by the vision of the truth of suffering (*duḥkhasatyadarśana*): the cognition of the doctrine with regard to suffering (*duḥkhe dharmajñāna*) and the subsequent cognition with regard to suffering (*duḥkhe ‘nyajñāna*). When the ‘afflicted view of self’ is destroyed, one no longer sees that there is a self (*ātman*).”

## B. EMPTINESS OF FACTORS (DHARMAŚŪNYATĀ); F 2005-2008

The canonical scriptures do not teach the emptiness of sentient beings alone, but they also occasionally talk about the emptiness of factors (*dharmāśūnyatā*): factors are empty of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and also of characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*), and they are similar to a magic show. This premature Madhyamaka occurs in some <2006> sūtras of the Tripiṭaka, in theories attributing to concentration (*samādhi*) a complete control over factors and especially in the philosophical interpretation given to the Middle Way (*madhyamā pratipad*).

### 1. Sūtra with regard to the emptiness of factors; F 2006

Early Buddhism holds conditioned factors, stemming from causes, to be impermanent, painful and selfless, but as a general rule, does not question their reality; it recognizes their intrinsic nature and definite characteristics. Some sūtras, nevertheless, seem to move away from this realism and lean



toward nihilism: they would have taught the twofold emptiness of sentient beings and factors, or only the emptiness of factors. Twice, without pretending to be complete, the *Traité* has tried to draw up a list of them: (1) *Mahāśūnyatāsūtra*, *Brahmajālasūtra*, *Pasūrasutta* (F 1079-1090), (2) *Śreṇīkaparivṛājakasūtra*, *Mahāśūnyatāsūtra*, *Dirghanakhasūtra*, *Sattvasūtra*, *Kolopamasūtra*, and a few sūtras of the *Pārāyana* and the *Arthavarga* (F 2141-2144F). The reader who is interested is referred to the indicated pages.

Candrakīrti likewise thinks that the world lacking reality has been taught in the *sūtras* dealing with the path of the hearers (*śrāvaka*) and gives as sample the *Phenāsutta* (S. III, p. 140-143) and the *Kātyāyanāvavāda* (S. II, p. 17): see *Madh. avatāra*, p. 22 (transl. Muséon, 1907, p. 271).

## 2. Supremacy of concentration (*samādhi*); F 2006-2007

The path of *nirvāṇa* is a path of deliverance, of detachment in regard to the three realms, of renunciation of the five objects of sensory enjoyment, renunciation of the taste of the meditations and equipoises spread over the form realm, the subtle form realm and the formless realm. This detachment follows a pure discrimination (*prajñā anāsrava*) which cannot be acquired without the support of concentration (*samādhi*). The practices of the path described in preceding chapters (chap. XXXI-XXXVIII) are concentration (*samādhi*) insofar as they are practiced in a state of concentrated mind. They are aimed at detaching the mind from contingencies. The practitioners who are concentrated obtain a mastery of mind (*cetovaśita*), a mental aptitude (*cittakarmanṇyate*) that makes them capable of seeing factors as they wish and even of transforming them at will. The power of resolution (*adhimuktibala*) appears particularly in the meditation on the repulsive (*aśubhabhāvana*), the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*), the eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), the eight perception-spheres of mastery (*abhivyāyatana*) and the ten perception-spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*).

By the strength of manipulating and working with the object at will, the practitioners end up by finding it to be empty of a specific characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*), of a specific sign (*nimitta*), and show no wish to consider it (*apraṇihita*). Those are the three gates of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*) opening directly onto the destruction of the three poisons and *nirvāṇa*. Having reached this stage, the hearer practitioner (*śrāvaka*) practically joins the bodhisattva in the awareness of the true nature of factors which is none other than the absence of nature. For all of this, see *Traité*, F 1213-1232.

A disciple of the Buddha, well known in the Pāli as well as the Sanskrit tradition, without being burdened by preliminary considerations, had instinctively found the formula for good meditation. The *Samthakātyāyanasūtra* (see references above, <2007> F 86, n. 2) tells us that he had destroyed all cognitions in regards to everything (*sarvatra sarvasaṃjñā*) and that he meditated by not meditating on anything (*na sarvaṃ sarvaṃ iti dhyāyati*). And the gods congratulated him saying: “Homage to you, excellent man, for we do not know on what you are meditating (*yasya te nābhijānimaḥ kiṃ tvaṃ niśritya dhyāyasi*).” This precursor of Nāgārjuna, Bhāvaviveka, Candrakīrti and Śāntideva had undoubtedly found the truth by not seeing it.



### 3. Interpretation of the Middle Way; F 2007-2008

Hearers (*śravaka*) and bodhisattvas are also in agreement on the philosophical interpretation given to the *Madhyamā pratipad*, except that the latter have attributed to it a strictly unlimited extension.

In the Sermon at Benares (*Vin.* I, p. 10; *M.* I, p. 15-16; *III*, p. 231; *S.* IV, p. 330; *V*, p. 421; *Catuṣpariṣad*, p. 140; *Mahāvastu*, *III*, p. 331; *Lalitavistara*, p. 416), Śākyamuni revealed to his first disciples the Middle Way which “opens the eyes and the mind, which leads to calming, to special knowledge, to enlightenment, to *nirvāṇa*”: this is the noble eightfold path.

In the aforementioned sources, this path is a Middle Way insofar as it places itself in equal distance between hedonism and rigorism, between a life of pleasure (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) and a life of mortification (*ātmaklamathānuyoga*).

However, other canonical passages see in it a Middle Way insofar as it dismisses both parties of a series of extreme and opposing philosophical views: “By not adopting these extreme groups of pairs, the Tathāgata expounds the Dharma by means of the Middle Way” (*etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamyā madhyamayā pratipadā tathāgato dharmaṃ deśayati*).

Here are some of the extremes which the Buddha challenges:

1. (i) To say “Everything exists” is one extreme, (ii) to say “Everything does not exist” is another (*sabbaṃ atthiti ayaṃ eko anto, sabbaṃ natthiti ayaṃ dutiyo anto*): *S.* II, p. 17, 21-23; 76, 23-27; *III*, p. 135, 12-13.
2. (i) For those who exactly see the origin of the world with right discrimination, that which in the world is called ‘non-existence’ does not exist; (ii) for those who see exactly with right discrimination the cessation of the world, that which in the world is called ‘existence’ does not exist (*lokasamudayaṃ yathābhūtaṃ samyakprajñayā paśyato yā loke nāsthitā sā na bhavati, lokanirodhaṃ yathābhūtaṃ samyakprajñayā paśyato yā loke ‘sthitā sā na bhavati*): *Nidānasamyukta*, p. 169 = *S.* II, p. 17, 10-13.  
  
(i) The wrong view of existence, the eternalist view, does not occur in the person who sees exactly, by right discrimination, the causal origin of conditioned forces. (ii) The wrong view of non-existence, the nihilist view, does not occur in the person who sees exactly, with right discrimination, the causal cessation of the conditioned forces (*sahetusamṣkārasamudayaṃ yathābhūtaṃ samyakprajñayā paśyato yā bhavadrṣṭi śāśvatadrṣṭi sā na bhavati, sahetusamṣkāranirodhaṃ ca yathābhūtaṃ samyakprajñayā paśyato yā vibhavadrṣṭi ucchedadrṣṭi sāpi na bhavati*): *Mahāvastu*, *III*, p. 448, 8-10.
3. The *Acelasūtra* has come down to us in its Pāli recension (*S.* II, p. 19-22) and its Sanskrit recension (*Nidānasamyukta*, p. 170-178) between which one finds several divergences. The Buddha denies that suffering (*duḥkha*) – meaning the world of suffering – is (i) made by oneself (*svayaṃkrta*) or (ii) made by another (*parakṛta*). (i) Those who claim that it is made by oneself fall into the eternalist heresy <2008> (*śāśvatadrṣṭi*); (ii) those who believe that it is made by another fall into the nihilist heresy (*ucchedadrṣṭi*). For the same reasons, one

cannot say (i) that the person who acts is identical with the person who suffers (*so karoti so paṭisaṃvediyati*) or (ii) that the person who acts is other than the person who suffers (*añño karoti añño paṭisaṃvediyati*); one cannot say (i) that sensation is identical with the one who senses (*sā vedanā so vediyati*) or (ii) that sensation is other than the one who senses (*aññā vedanā añño vediyati*). Avoiding these groups of extremes, the Buddha expounds the dependent origination of phenomena.

4. According to the *Avijjāpaccayā* (S. II, p. 61; *Nidānaṣaṃyukta*, p. 154, 155), (i) to think that the living being is identical with the body (*taj jivam tac chariram*) and (ii) to think that the living being is other than the body (*anyaj jivam anyac chariram*) are two extreme views that make the religious life (*brahmacaryavāsa*) impossible.

Avoiding all these extremes, the Buddha preaches the Dharma (especially the dependent origination [*pratityasamutpāda*]) by means of the Middle Way.

It is true that in these old canonical *sūtras* the refusal of the extremes is especially directed against the 'afflicted view of self', but the simultaneous refusal of the *asti* and the *nāsti*, of the *astitā* and the *nāstitā*, confines the philosophy to a neutral position where it is impossible for it to affirm or deny what is. This is the position adopted by the *Madhyamaka*, and later (k. 43, p. 370a25-b10) the *Traité* will comment that it does not come up against any limit. To practice the *Madhyamā pratipad* in the spirit of the *Prajñāpāramitā* is to reject all extremes: eternity (*śāśvata*) and annihilation (*uccheda*), suffering (*duḥkha*) and satisfaction (*sukha*), emptiness (*śūnya*) and reality (*tattova*), self (*ātman*) and nonself (*anātman*), factors that are material (*rūpin*) and non-material (*arūpin*), visible (*sanidarśana*) and invisible (*anidarśana*), resistant (*sapratigha*) and non-resistant (*apratigha*), conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*), impure (*sāsrava*) and pure (*anāsrava*), mundane (*laukika*) and supramundane (*lokottara*), ignorance (*avidyā*) and destruction of ignorance (*avidyākṣaya*), old age and death (*jarāmaraṇa*) and cessation of old age and death (*jarāmarañanirodha*), existence (*astitā*) and non-existence (*nāstitā*) of factors, bodhisattvas and six perfections (*pāramitā*), buddha and enlightenment (*bodhi*), the six inner sense-faculties (*indriya*) and the six external objects (*viṣaya*), the perfection of discrimination and the non-perfection of discrimination. – The old canonical *sūtras* are not yet there but they are on the way.

Why does the *Tripiṭaka* go on at length about the emptiness of sentient beings and pass rapidly over the emptiness of factors? In the words of the *Traité*, there are several reasons.

- First, because the *Tripiṭaka* is addressed to the hearers (*śrāvaka*) who, having weak faculties, understand the first more easily than the second. The bodhisattvas, on the other hand, are better prepared to understand the doctrines of the *Prajñāpāramitās* (cf. F 2061).
- Secondly, because sentient beings cling especially to eternity and satisfaction and much less to impermanence and suffering. The ordinary person is more attracted to the eternal satisfaction of the afterlife than to annihilation on death (F 2102).

- Thirdly and finally, for pedagogical reasons: the doctrine of the nonself serves as introduction to that of the emptiness of factors and it is fitting to speak of it first (F 2138). <2009>

## 2. THE EMPTINESS IN THE HĪNAYĀNIST SECTS; F 2009-2013

The *Traité* (F 106-108), in a few lines, has summarized the history of the first centuries of Buddhism: “When the Buddha was in this world, the Dharma encountered no obstacles. After the Buddha had passed away, when the Dharma was recited for the first time, it was still as it was at the time when the Buddha lived. One hundred years later, king Aśoka organized a grand five-yearly assembly and the great Dharma masters debated. Because of their differences, there were distinct sects (*nikāya*) each having a name and which subsequently grew.” Each sect, or rather each school, set out their particular views in manuals of scholasticism (*abhidharma*) to which they attributed canonical value, and in treatises (*śāstra*) signed with the names of illustrious authors.

Comparing the doctrines of the Sūtrapiṭaka, recognized more or less by all the schools, to the teachings put down in the Abhidharmas and the Śāstras, the *Traité* (F 1095) remarks as follows: “Whoever has not grasped the Prajñāpāramitā system [will come up, in the interpretation of the Dharma, against innumerable contradictions]: (i) if he takes up the teaching of the Abhidharma, he falls into realism; (ii) if he takes up the teaching of emptiness, he falls into nihilism; (iii) if he takes up the teaching of the Piṭaka (= Sūtrapiṭaka), he falls [sometimes] into realism and [sometimes] into nihilism.”

Although this comment concerns particularly the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, it also has a more general range. As we have seen in the preceding section, the canonical *sūtras* teach mainly the emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*), but sometimes also the emptiness of factors (*dharmaśūnyatā*), and those who read them fall sometimes into realism and sometimes into nihilism. The Abhidharmas, as a general rule – there are some exceptions! – insist on the emptiness of sentient beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*), but remain silent on the emptiness of factors (*dharmaśūnyatā*); thus they expose their readers to the risk of falling into realism. The Mahāyānasūtras that teach both the emptiness of sentient beings and factors are difficult to interpret, and a superficial exegesis frequently ends up in nihilism.

In regard to the problem of emptiness, the Hīnayānist sects, traditionally eighteen in number, may be divided up into three classes:

- A. the personalists, F 2009-2010
- B. the realists, F 2010-2012
- C. the nominalists, F 2013.

### A. The personalists (*pudgalavādin*); F 2009-2010

Among the sects believing in the person, the best known is that of the Vātsīputriya-Saṃmittiya. We know their theories roughly by the criticisms their adversaries addressed to them and from an original work, the *Saṃmittiyanikāyaśāstra*, translated into Chinese (T 1649). Other authentic sources, notably the *Kārikās*, have been found by G. Tucci and are presently being studied.

The sect accepts a *pudgala*, i.e., a person, nevertheless acknowledging that it is neither identical with nor other than the *aggregates*. It is not identical with the aggregates for it would be condemned to annihilation (*uccheda*); it is not other than the aggregates for it would be eternal (*śāśvata*) and thus unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). It behaves towards the aggregates like fire in regard to fuel: fire is not identical with fuel for “what is burned” would be mixed up with “what burns”; it is not other than fuel for fuel [in burning material] <2010> would not be hot (*Kośa*, IX, p. 234). For the sect, the person is the only factor (*dharma*) to transmigrate (*saṃkrāmati*) from this world to the other world: at death, it abandons the aggregates of the present existence to assume those of the future existence, and at the stopping of its transmigration, it remains in a *nirvāṇa* of which we cannot say that it does not truly exist.

These theories provoked a lively reaction in the orthodox circles and one wondered if the Pudgalavādins were still Buddhists (cf. *Kośa*, preliminary note to chap. IX, p. 228). At any rate, the conception of emptiness, whether it refers to the emptiness of sentient beings or the emptiness of factors, remained foreign to them.

The *Traité* makes some allusions to the Vatsīputriyas (F 43, 112, 424, 616) and attests the existence of a *Vatsīputriyābhidharma* (F 43, 424).

## B. The realists; F 2010-2012

The epithet renders only imperfectly the basic doctrinal position adopted both by the Theravādins of Ceylon and the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas of the Indian continent. Concerned about rendering faithfully and clearly the mind of the Buddha, the two schools have elaborated, at the same time but independently of each other, a scholasticism of voluminous dimension. Let us cite, for the record, (i) the seven books of the Abhidhamma and Visuddhimagga in Pāli on the Theravādin side; (ii) the *Ṣaṭpādābhidharma* grouping six works around the *Jñānaprasthāna* of Kātyāyaniputra, and the *Mahāvibhāṣā* of the Kashmirian arhats on the Sarvāstivādin side. E. Frauwallner, in the course of ten years, has thrown a new light on this literature [see WZKSA, VII (1963), p. 20-36; VIII (1964), p. 59-99; XV (1971, p. 69-102; 103-121; XVI (1972), p. 95-152); XVII (1973), p. 97-121]; translated into English in: *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems*].

The two schools may be described as realists because, while rejecting the existence of an eternal and unchanging self (*ātman*), they recognize a certain reality in factors (*dharma*). In a word, they combine the doctrine of selflessness of the aggregates (*nairātmyavāda*), the negation of the person, with the doctrine of aggregates only (*skandhmātravāda*), the affirmation of the existence of the five aggregates alone (besides the unconditioned factors [*asaṃskṛta*]).

The author of the *Traité* seems to be unaware of the existence of the Theravādins of Ceylon; on the other hand, he had at his fingertips the works of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas to which he often refers (see, e.g., F 109-110, 111, 245, 285, 377, 424, 614, 616, 786, 787, 1383, 1697, 1715, etc.). He was broadly dependent on this school: one could say that it is to them that he addresses his work. Here we must say a few words about this.

To begin with, the Sarvāstivādins distinguish two categories of things:

- i) those that exist by designation or as a provisional entity (*prajñaptisat*), as conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*),
- ii) those that really exist or exist as a real entity (*dravyasat*, *vastusat*), as absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*): cf. *Kośa*, II, p. 186, 214.

The first are only names serving, by convention, to designate collections, groups that are valid only insofar through their parts as far as these are not in turn subdivisible. Thus an army is reduced to the soldiers that compose it, a forest to its trees; cloth to its threads. The chariot does not exist by itself, but only as a designation of the parts that enter into its manufacture: body, shaft, wheels, etc. In the same way, the *ātman*, the soul, the self, is a simple label applied to the groupings of aggregates (*skandha*), sense-sources (*āyatana*) or sense-elements (*dhātu*): there is no substantial entity there, no one to be, to act or feel.

Nevertheless, there do exist – and it is in this that the Sarvāstivādins show themselves as realists – <2011> simple given data, resistant to analysis, which truly exist, brief though their duration may be, with an intrinsic nature or specific characteristic (*svabhāva* = *svalakṣaṇa*) and some generic characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). These are, for example, the color atom which cannot be broken, sensation, conception, mental formations and consciousness, each separately forming an indivisible entity.

The Sarvāstivādins have carefully analyzed these realities and, without neglecting the classifications already proposed by the canonical scriptures, have drawn up a new list of them: the *Pañcavastuka*. The dharmas amount to seventy-five in number and are divided up into five classes:

- a. the three unconditioned factors (*asaṃskṛta*): (1) space (*ākāśa*) which does not hinder matter and is not hindered by it; (2-3) the two kinds of *nirvāṇa*: (i) the cessation of suffering due to discrimination (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*) that consists of the understanding of the truths and the disconnection from impure factors; (ii) the cessation of suffering not due to discrimination (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*) that consists of the absolute hindering of the arising of future factors.

The factors (*dharma*) that follow in the list are seventy-two in number and are all conditioned factors (*saṃskṛta*), conditioned or produced by causes. They are divided up into four groups:

- b. the 11 forms (*rūpa*), material factors, namely: (1-5) the 5 sense-faculties (*indriya*), (6-10) the 5 object-fields (*viṣaya*), and (11) the unmanifest form (*avijñapti*).
- c. the mind (*citta*), also called mental sense-faculty (*manas*), or consciousness (*vijñāna*). It refers to the simple awareness, without any content.
- d. the 46 mental events (*caitta*), mental or psychic factors, concomitants of the mind and cooperating with it.
- e. the 14 formations dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) which are neither matter nor mind. Among these are the four ‘characteristics of conditioned factors’

(*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*): birth (*jāti*), aging (*jāra*), continuance (*sthiti*) and termination (*anityatā*), by virtue of which conditioned dharmas arise, endure for a brief instant, deteriorate and disappear.

Like the aggregates, sense-sources and sense-elements listed by the canonical *sūtras*, the 72 factors of conditioned factors (*saṃskṛtadharma*) of the Sarvāstivādins constitute everything (*sarvam*), suffering (*duḥkha*), the world (*loka*) of suffering. Causes and that which is caused that are impermanent, painful, empty of self and of 'mine', form a stream (*saṃtāna*) that transmigrates through the existences of the three times, that defiles and purifies itself on the grounds of the ignorances and the defilements (*kleśa*), on the grounds of actions (*karman*). These factors are true, but under the action of their generic characteristics, the characteristics of the conditioned factors, their manifestation lasts only a very short time, so short that they perish there where they are born, which renders movement impossible.

By recognizing in the factors a true nature and true characteristics, the Sarvāstivādins show themselves as realists; by limiting their duration to a strict minimum and refusing to them any self (*ātman*) worthy of this name, they turn to phenomenalism and thus put their own system in danger..

The Sarvāstivādins were to be attacked head on by one of their subjects, that of the Sautrāntikas, so called because they rejected the Abhidharmas in order to admit authority only to the canonical *sūtras* alone. Their most qualified spokesperson was Vasubandhu, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, who lived, according to E. Frauwallner, <2012> between 400 and 480 AD. He was certainly later than the author of the *Traité*, but although the latter, and for a very good reason, makes no mention of the *Kośa*, he was perfectly aware of the Sautrāntika doctrines, even if this was only by consulting the *Mahāvibhāṣā*. In the criticisms that he raises against the Sarvāstivādins, for example, in regard to the three times (F 1690-1694), he encounters and uses the Sautrāntika argumentation. However, in the present state of information, it is not possible to know with any certitude who was the borrower and who was the lender.

Be that as it may, without lapsing into eternalism or nihilism, the Sautrāntikas seriously demolished the realism of the Sarvāstivādins. The latter, as their name indicates, rested their system on the existence of the factors of the three times, past, present and future "because the Bhagavat said it, because the mental consciousness proceeds from the sense-faculty and the object and because the past bears an effect." The Sautrāntikas reject any temporal distinction "because if past and future factors really would exist, the factors produced from causes (*saṃskṛta*) would always exist and would thus be eternal. Now scripture and reasoning declare that they are impermanent." On this subject, see *Kośa*, V, p. 50-65, and *Documents d'Abhidharma*, published by L. de La Vallée Poussin in MCB, V, 1936-1937, p. 7-158.

In addition, the Sautrāntikas noticeably reduced the list of 75 factors recognized as real by the Sarvāstivādins. For them, the three unconditioned factors are false, for space (*ākāśa*) is the simple absence of matter, and *nirvāṇa* is, after the destruction of the defilements and the factors of existence, the absence of their renewal. *Nirvāṇa* is the outcome, negative and unreal, of a dependent

origination which was positive and real; it is a *paścad abhāva*, non-existence following existence, a *nirodha*, cessation, so more than that (*Kośa*, II, p. 282-284). – The Sautrāntikas accept the existence of the mind, but reject the mental events (*caitta*) completely or partially (*Kośa*, II, p. 150, n.). – Finally they consider the 14 formations dissociated from the mind (*viprayuktasaṃskāra*) as purely inventions of the mind. In particular, birth, continuance, aging and termination of the conditioned factors are not real entities, distinct from the factors that arise and perish, but simple modifications of the stream which begins, continues, changes and perishes (*Kośa*, II, p. 226-238). Destruction is spontaneous (*ākasmika*): the factor perishes incessantly by itself and incessantly rearises from itself under normal conditions. The factor-cause produces the factor-effect in the same way that one balance-beam rises when the other comes down (*Kośa*, IV, p. 4-8).

Thus, not content with eliminating a number of factors, the Sautrāntikas reduced the duration of those that it wanted indeed to spare practically to zero. The factors are instantaneous (*kṣaṇika*), for it is in their nature to perish as soon as they arise.

In order to carry out these grim cuts in the Sarvāstivādin forest, the Sautrāntikas claimed to take their inspiration, among other sources, from a sūtra where the Buddha said: “Here, O monks, are five things that are only names, designations, conventions, manners of speaking, namely: the past, the future, space, *nirvāṇa* and the person (*pudgala*)” (cf. *Madh. vṛtti*, p. 389; *Kośa*, IV, p. 5, n. 2). However, their nominalism was not complete, for by maintaining a number, however restricted, of real entities like form (*rūpa*) and mind (*citta*), and above all, by accepting the mechanism of dependent origination as the nature of factors, these merciless critics remain ‘realists’ on the philosophical level. <2013>

### C. The nominalists; F 2013

In terms of the old canonical *sūtras*, the collection of the conditioned factors (*saṃskṛtadharma*) defined by the five aggregates, the twelve sense-sources, the twelve sense-elements, constituted a reality called *sarvaṃ*, the all or everything (S. IV, p. 15), *loka*, the world (S. IV, p. 52, 54) or also *duḥkha*, suffering (S. IV, p. 28). It is on this realist basis that the Sarvāstivādins and the Sautrāntikas elaborate their respective systems. On the other hand, a Hināyānist sect derived from the Mahāsāṃghikas saw in the aggregates, sense-sources and sense-elements simple entities of the intellect alone, without having the least reality. The practitioners of this sects were designated by the name Prajñaptivādins, i.e., ‘Nominalists’.

In his syllabus of the sects, the *Samayabhedaoparacanacakra* (transl. Hiuan-tsang, T 2031, p. 16a17-18), the historian Vasumitra, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century after the *nirvāṇa*, attributes the following three theses to the Prajñaptivādins: 1) suffering (*duḥkha*) is not the aggregates (*skandha*); 2) the twelve sense-sources are not really true; 3) the conditioned forces (*saṃskāra*) that combine through interdependence and succession are metaphorically (*prajñapyante*) called suffering (*duḥkha*).” To express oneself thus is to deny any reality to conditioned factors and their dependent origination; it is complete Madhyamaka.

Moreover, the Prajñaptivādins had inaugurated the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyavāda*) by drawing up a list of ten emptinesses. In the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 104, p. 540a20, we read: “The Prajñaptivādins (Che-chö-louen) say that there are many emptinesses: 1) emptiness of internal factors (*adhyātma-śūnyatā*), 2) emptiness of external factors (*bahirdhā-śūnyatā*), 3) emptiness of internal and external factors (*adhyātmabahirdhā-śūnyatā*), 4) emptiness of conditioned factors (*saṃskṛta-śūnyatā*), 5) emptiness of unconditioned factors (*asaṃskṛta-śūnyatā*), 6) absolute emptiness (*atyanta-śūnyatā*), 7) emptiness of the nature (*prakṛti-śūnyatā*), 8) emptiness of the non-functioning [of *saṃsāra*] (*apravṛtti-śūnyatā*), 9) emptiness of the absolute (*paramārtha-śūnyatā*), 10) emptiness of emptiness (*śūnyatā-śūnyatā*). These ten types of emptiness are explained in detail in other places (cf. *Vibhāṣā*, T 1545, k. 8, p. 37a12-15; T 1546, k. 4, p. 27a17-19). Why in this way distinguish so many emptinesses? Because their practice serves as nearest counter-agent (*pratipakṣa*) to twenty kinds of ‘afflicted view of self’, [to *viṃśaśīkharasamudgata satkāya-dṛṣṭiśāila*]. These twenty kinds of ‘afflicted view of self’, roots of all the defilements (*sarvakleśamūla*), persist in *saṃsāra* and do not end up in *nirvāṇa*: they are serious faults and this is why the emptinesses which are their nearest counter-agents, are often spoken of.”

Are the Prajñaptivādins the inventors of these ten emptinesses or were they borrowed from the Mahāyānists? These are questions that cannot be answered at the moment because of the absence of any definite information. But it will be noted that in the opinion of the *Vibhāṣā*, the ten emptinesses of the Prajñaptivādins were directed solely against the ‘afflicted view of self’, even though they perhaps also countered the reality of factors.

In any case, and as the *Traité* would have it, it should be recognized that, taken altogether, the study of the Abhidharmas and the Hinayānist Śāstras leads to a nuanced realism rather than a complete nihilism.

### 3. THE EMPTINESS ACCORDING TO THE MADHYAMAKA; F 2013-2027

[omitted]

### 4. THE EMPTINESSES IN THE GREAT PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀSŪTRA; F 2027-2040

[omitted]