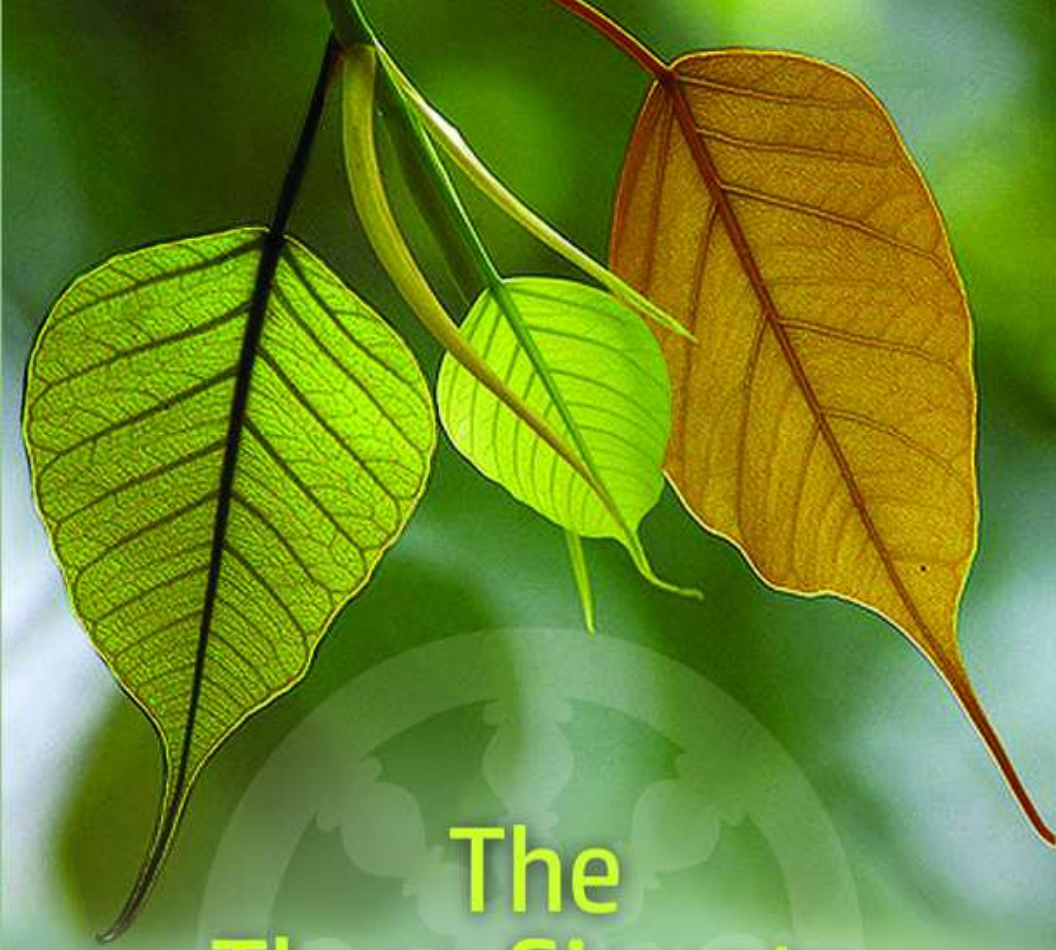

The Three Signata and Buddhist Concept of Mind

Dr. O. H. de A. Wijesekera

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The Three Signata: Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā

(With extracts from the Buddha's discourses)

and

Buddhist Concept of Mind

by

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THE THREE SIGNATA

1. Anicca

The concept of the three signata (*tilakkhaṇa*) forms the essential basis for understanding the Buddha's scheme of emancipation (*vimokkha).* The three signata, the three universal properties of all existing things of the phenomenal world, are *anicca* (impermanence, transience or transitoriness), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness, ill, suffering or painfulness), and *anattā* (non-self, absence of a permanent ego, or insubstantiality). It is the contemplation of these three universal characteristics of all compounded things and processes *(saṅkhāra)*, or of all phenomena (*dhamma*), that leads to true insight (*vipassanā*) and enlightenment (*bodhiñāṇa*). The realisation of these three fundamental truths can thus be regarded as the key to the highest spiritual perfection afforded by the Buddha Dhamma.

The first of the three signata, *anicca* (impermanence, transitoriness of all things in the universe), is a doctrine constantly and emphatically insisted upon in the Buddhist texts. According to the Buddha's Teaching, the Buddha Dhamma, there is nothing divine or human, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, which is permanent or stable, unchanging or everlasting.

This Buddhist concept of the transitoriness of all things, the Buddhist law of impermanence, finds classic expression in the famous formula *sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā* occurring in the Cūlasaccaka Sutta (MN 35), and in the more popular statement *aniccā vata*

saṅkhārā. Both these formulas amount to saying that all conditioned things or processes are transient or impermanent. This is not given as the result of metaphysical inquiry, or of any mystical intuition, but as a straightforward judgement to be arrived at by investigation and analysis. It is founded on unbiased thought and has a purely empirical basis. In the Mahāvagga of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN 7:62/A IV 100ff.) the Master admonishes his disciples thus: "Impermanent, monks, are [all] *saṅkhāras*, unstable [not constant], monks, are [all] *saṅkhāras*, [hence] not a cause for comfort and satisfaction are [all] *saṅkhāras*, so much so that one must get tired of all these *saṅkhāras*, be disgusted with them, and be completely free of them."

There is no doubt here as to what is meant by the term *saṅkhāra,* for the Master himself continues by way of illustration:

> There will come a time, monks, maybe hundreds of thousands of years hence, when no more rains will fall and consequently all plants and trees, all vegetation, will dry up and be destroyed with the scorching due to the appearance of a second sun; streams and rivulets will go dry; and with the appearance of a third sun, such large rivers as the Ganges and Yamunā will dry up; similarly, the lakes and even the great ocean itself will dry up in course of time, and even such great mountains as Sineru, nay even this wide earth, will begin to smoke and be burnt up in a great and universal holocaust … Thus impermanent, monks, are all *saṅkhārā,* unstable, and hardly a cause for comfort,

> so much so that one [contemplating their impermanent nature] must necessarily get tired of them.

It is easy to understand from this discourse in what an all-embracing sense the term *saṅkhāra* is used: it includes all things, all phenomena that come into existence by natural development or evolution, being conditioned by prior causes and therefore containing within themselves the liability to come to an end, to be dissolved from the state in which they are found.

According to the Buddha, there is no "being," but only a ceaseless "becoming" (*bhava*). Every thing is the product of antecedent causes, and, therefore, of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppanna*).[1] These causes themselves are not everlasting and static, but simply antecedent aspects of the same ceaseless becoming. Thus we may conceive everything as the result of a concatenation of dynamic processes (*saṅkhāra*) and, therefore, everything created or formed is only created or formed through these processes and not by any agency outside its own nature. In Buddhism everything is regarded as compounded (*saṅkhata*). Thus *saṅkhata* in these contexts implies everything arisen or become (*bhūta*), which depends on antecedent conditions *(sahetu-sappaccaya).* It is for this very reason (namely, that everything conceivable in this world has come to be or become depending on antecedent conditions or processes) that everything is

1. See *The Wheel*, No. 15, *Dependent Origination,* by Piyadassi Thera.

to be regarded as liable to pass away. As it is declared in the Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN 12:31/S II 49): "Whatever has become is of the nature of passing away (*yaṃ bhūtaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ)*." This law, if one may call it so, holds in the case of the mightiest of gods, such as Mahā-Brahmā, as much as of the tiniest creature. In the 11th discourse of the Dīgha Nikāya it is regarded as ludicrous that even God or Brahma should imagine himself to be eternal. As Professor Rhys Davids remarked,

> The state of an individual, of a thing or person, distinct from its surroundings, bounded off from them, is unstable, temporary, sure to pass away. It may last as, for instance, in the case of the gods for hundreds of thousands of years; or, as in the case of some insects, for some hours only; or as in the cause of some material things (as we should say some chemical compounds), for a few seconds only. But in every case as soon as there is a beginning, there begins also at that moment to be an ending.[2]

The ethical significance of this law of impermanence is well brought out in the Mahā-Sudassana Suttanta (DN 17). There the Buddha tells Ānanda, his favourite disciple, about the glories of the famous king of the past, Mahā Sudassana; about his cities, treasures, palaces, elephants, horses, carriages, women, and so on, in the possession of which he led a wonderful life; about his great regal achievements; and finally his

2. *American Lectures.*

death; only to draw the moral conclusion: "Behold, Ānanda, how all these things (*saṅkhāra*) are now dead and gone, have passed and vanished away. Thus, impermanent, Ānanda, are the *saṅkhāras*; thus untrustworthy, Ānanda, are the *saṅkhāras*. And this, Ānanda, is enough to be weary of, to be disgusted with and be completely free of such *saṅkhāras*."

When the Buddha characterized all compounded things and conditioned processes as impermanent and unstable, it must be understood that, before all else, stood out that particular heap of processes (*saṅkhārapuñja*) that is called man; for at bottom it was with man chiefly that Buddha had to do, in so far as it was to man primarily that he showed the way to emancipation. Thus the chief problem was to find out the real nature of man, and it is precisely in this great discovery that the uniqueness of the Dhamma is visible. The Buddha's conclusion regarding man's nature is in perfect agreement with his general concept of impermanence: Man himself is a compound of several factors and his supposedly persistent personality is in truth nothing more than a collection of ceaselessly changing processes; in fact, a continuous becoming or *bhava*. The Buddha analysed man into five aggregates: *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa*, that is to say, material form, sensations, perceptions, dynamic processes and consciousness. In discourse after discourse, the Master has emphatically asserted that each of these aggregates is impermanent and unstable. In the famous discourse of the Dīgha Nikāya (DN 22/D II 301) entitled "The Discourse on the Establishment of Mindfulness" (Mahā

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta) the Master teaches the disciple to view all these categories as being of the nature of arising (*samudayadhamma*) and of passing away (*vayadhamma*): "Such is material form, such is its genesis, such its passing away; and so on with the other three groups: perceptions, dynamic processes and consciousness." In fact, the highest consummation of spiritual life is said to result from the true perception of the evanescent nature of the six spheres of sense contact. The 102nd discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya ends with the words: "This, indeed, monks, is the perfect way of utter peace into which the Tathāgata has won full Enlightenment, that is to say, the understanding, as they really are, of the six spheres of sense-contact, of their arising and passing away, their comfort and misery, and the way of escape from them free of grasping" (M II 237). It is these six spheres of sense-contact that cause the continuity of saṃsāra, in other words, *bhava* or becoming, and thus they are to be understood as involving the most important saṅkhāras. Hence the oft repeated stanza in the Pali Canon: "All compounded things indeed are subject to arising and passing away; what is born comes to an end; blessed is the end of becoming; it is peace."

II. Dukkha

The fact of impermanence as the leading characteristic of all compounded things and processes of the phenomenal world has been dealt with above. The next, according to the concept of the three signata (*tilakkhaṇa*), is the fact of *dukkha* which signifies the universal characteristic of all saṃsāric existence, viz. its general unsatisfactoriness. It must be admitted that this Pali word "*dukkha*" is one of the most difficult terms to translate. Writers in English very often use as its equivalent the English word "sorrow" or "ill" and some even translate it as "pain," "suffering" and so on. But none of these English words covers the same ground as the Pali *dukkha*, they are too specialized, too limited and usually too strong. The difficulty is increased by the fact that the Pali word itself is used in the Canon in several senses.

There is what one may call the general philosophical sense, then a narrower psychological sense, and a still narrower physical sense. It is as indicating the general philosophical sense of dukkha that the word unsatisfactoriness has been selected. This is perhaps the best English term, at least in this particular context of the "three signata."

Whatever some writers of Buddhism may have said, the recognition of the fact of *dukkha* stands out as the most essential concept of Buddhism. In the very first discourse after attaining Enlightenment the Master formulated this concept in the following terms:

> This, indeed, monks, is the Noble Truth of *dukkha,* namely the fact that birth itself is dukkha, disease

> is *dukkha*, death is dukkha; to be joined with what is unpleasant is *dukkha*, to be separated from what is pleasant is *dukkha*, failure in getting what one wants is *dukkha*, in short the five groups of physical and mental qualities making up the individual due to grasping are themselves *dukkha*. (Vin I 10; cp. S V 421)

This observation of the universal fact of unsatisfactoriness is, as any unbiased student of Buddhism will soon realize, the central pivot of the whole system of spiritual and moral progress discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha.

According to the Buddha, the beginning, continuity and ending of all experience (i.e. the whole world [*loka*]) for a sentient being, are centred in its own individuality (*nāma-rūpa*), that is to say, the five groups of grasping that constitute the individual (the *pañcupadānakkhandhā* viz. material form, sensations and feelings, perceptions [physical and mental], dynamic processes, and consciousness [*rūpa, vedanā saññā, saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*]). Now, the physical form or the body of the individual is the visible basis of this individuality, and this body, as every one knows, is a product of material components derived from the four great elements, viz. the watery, the fiery, the airy and the earthy (*āpo tejo, vayo, paṭhavī*). It is said to be built up of these four chief elements (*cātummahābhūtika*) and therefore, it is conditioned by these. As was explained in the previous article, the universal characteristic of the four great elements is their impermanence (*anicca*), and not much science is needed to understand this fact which is self-evident to the

thoughtful person. The Buddha says:

> "A time will come when the watery element will rise in fury, and when that happens, the earthy element will disappear, unmistakably revealing itself as transient and subject to ruin, destruction and vicissitude… There may also come a time when the watery element will dry up and no more water is left in the great ocean than will cover one joint of a finger. On that day this great watery element will unmistakably reveal itself as transient and subject to ruin, destruction and vicissitude. A time will come when the fiery element will rage furiously and devour the whole surface of the earth, ceasing only when there is nothing more to devour. On that day this great fiery element will unmistakably reveal itself as transient and subject to destruction. A time will come when the airy element will rage in fury and carry away village and town and everything upon the earth … till it exhausts itself completely. On that day this great airy element will unmistakably reveal itself as transient and itself subject to ruin, destruction and all vicissitude." (MN 28/M I 187)

Thus everything that is comprised within the four great elements shows itself subject to the universal law of transitoriness, and it is not a difficult inference to conclude that this fathom-long body which is a derivative of these four elements will itself go the way of its elemental source.

Now the Buddha goes on to show the impermanence or transitoriness of the remaining components

of our individuality which are based upon the body and its organs:

> The corporeal form, monks, is transient, and what underlies the arising of corporeal form, that too is transient. As it is arisen from what is transient, how could corporeal form be permanent? Sensations and feelings are transient; what underlies the arising of these [viz. the sense organs, depending on the body] is also transient. Arisen from what is transient, how could sensations and feelings be permanent? Similarly, perceptions, dynamic processes of the mind, and consciousness: all these, arising from the transient, cannot but be transient. (SN 22:15/S III 23)

In all these are observed arising, vicissitude and passing away. This real, impermanent nature of everything constituting the individual can only lead to one conclusion: that as they are transitory and by nature unabiding, they cannot be the basis for a satisfactory experience dependent on them. In short, whatever is transient, is (by that very fact) unsatisfactory (*yad-aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ*, SN 22:15). Hence is established the great Truth of Buddhism that the whole personality or individuality (wherever that may take shape, whether in this world or in another, as is possible in saṃsāra) and therefore the whole world of experience which simply depends on this individuality, all this is unsatisfactory or *dukkha*.

What do you think, monks; is the body permanent or is it transient?

It is transient, Sir.

Now, that which is transient: is it satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

It is unsatisfactory, Sir.

What do you think, monks, sensation, perception, mental processes and consciousness: are all these permanent or transient?

They are transient, Sir.

Now, what is transient: is it satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

It is unsatisfactory, Sir. (SN 22:57).

Thus this general unsatisfactoriness is to be regarded as the universal characteristic of all saṃsāric experience, and this fact constitutes the Noble Truth of dukkha. To the intelligent person all this must sound axiomatic. But, then, why are the large majority of people unconvinced of, or unconcerned with, this great Truth which forms the bedrock of the Buddha Dhamma? To answer this we have to probe into the working of man's own mind which alone can realize this conception of the universality of dukkha.

The Master has said that the sentient being is psychologically so constituted that he seeks what is pleasurable and shuns what is non-pleasurable (*sukhakāmo dukkhapaṭikkūlo*); to use the above employed terminology, he hankers after what is satis-

factory for himself and recoils from what is unsatisfactory. Critics of Buddhism may wonder whether it is justifiable to regard the whole psychology of the sentient being as being so strongly ruled by this principle of hankering for the pleasurable and shunning what is unpleasant. That a similar conclusion was arrived at by Freud, the founder of the modem school of psychoanalysis, should cause such critics or sceptics to pause and reflect upon the scientific validity of such an observation. Freud begins his famous dissertation on "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" with the following significant words: "In the theory of psychoanalysis we have no hesitation in assuming that the course taken by mental events is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle. We believe, that is to say, that the course of those events is invariably set in motion by an unpleasurable tension, and that it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension, that is, with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure." Freud thus introduces what he calls an "economic" principle into his study of mental processes, and is it not a noteworthy fact in the history of human ideas that the Buddha had nearly twenty five centuries earlier formulated the same principle in practically the same terms? Now, if man by nature is driven by his own unconscious processes to seek for the pleasant and avoid what is unpleasant, it stands to reason that he would be unwilling to accept a philosophy whose basic idea is the characterization of all his experiences as impermanent and therefore liable to bring unhappiness or dukkha. That is why the Buddha soon after

his Enlightenment considered that only a very few in the world had their vision sufficiently clear to grasp this great Truth of the universality of *dukkha*.

Before concluding this brief exposition of dukkha a doubt should be cleared which is often seen to cloud this conception and erroneously leads certain people to conclude that if the fact of dukkha is such a universal characteristic of experience, Buddhism must be regarded as a profession of pessimism. That such a view is totally wrong is seen clearly from certain passages of the Canon itself. According to Buddhism there is a point of view from which experiences, that is to say, sensations and feelings (*vedanā*) can be considered to be threefold: they can be pleasant or happy (*sukha*), or they can be unpleasant or unhappy (*dukkha*), or they can be neutral, i.e. neither pleasant nor unpleasant (*adukkhamasukha*). From this lower or relative point of view which holds good for all individual experience, there is what may be called happiness in the world just as much as unhappiness, the degree of predominance of the one over the other varying according to personal and environmental conditions prevailing at a given moment. But further contemplation of such happiness and unhappiness and neutral feelings shows unmistakably that there is a common denominator between all these three types of experiences, namely, the fact that all three are subject to the universal property of impermanence or transience. Thus the Venerable Sāriputta assures the Master that if questioned on the real nature of sensations and feelings, he would reply: "Threefold, indeed, friend, are those feelings and sensations: pleasant, unpleasant

and neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant; but, friend, [all] these three [experiences] are transient, and when one realizes that whatever is transient [and fleeting] must give rise to dukkha [in other words, is unsatisfactory], no hankering after them arises."

It can easily be seen that in the last sentence, *dukkha* is used in the wider philosophical sense, as referred to at the beginning of this article. Hence is the Master's joyful approval of Sāriputta's words: "Well said, well said, Sāriputta, this exactly is the manner in which one should summarily dispose of such a question: Whatever experience there is, such [being transitory] must fall within the category of *dukkha*" (*yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ tam dukkhasmiṃ*; SN 12:32/S II 53). All saṃsāric experience is in this sense *vedayita* and thus arises the incontrovertible proposition that all becoming in saṃsāra (*bhava*) is dukkha or unsatisfactory from the highest point of view (*paramattha*). Herein is also based that absolutely certain optimism of Buddhism, viz. that there is a way out of this saṃsāric dukkha, a haven of utter peace and tranquillity, which is the absolute happiness of Nibbāna: *Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*.

III. Anattā

The above discussion of the two signata of impermanence and unsatisfactoriness naturally leads to the basic Buddhist concept of *anattā,* non-self or insubstantiality.[3]

Every student of Buddhism knows that this concept is the most controversial of all the basic ideas of the system, and that a hundred and one interpretations have been suggested by commentators, scholars and critics. To the Western student of Buddhism the so-called "*anattā*-doctrine" has been the hunting-ground, not always a happy one, for the display of personal ingenuity and dialectical jumbling, and it is significant that this idea has been the cause of the most glaring contradictions among themselves, and even within the writings of the same authority. Even our own historical schools of Buddhist interpretation have found this concept the most difficult. The main difficulty confronting the interpreters has, in my opinion, been the lack of a clear definition of the term *attā.* It is curious how writers, particularly those of the West, have plunged into discussions of this doctrine equipped with no other definition of it than the ideas of Soul or Ego borrowed from theistic and pantheistic systems of philosophy or religion, as they were accustomed to before taking up the study of Buddhism. It is not intended to pursue the criticism of such interpretation in this article, but to emphasize

3. See Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta in *Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Ñāṇamoli Thera (*The Wheel*, No. 17).

the important fact that by the word *attā* or *atta* books of the Pali Canon refer to a number of historical concepts that prevailed in India about the sixth century before Christ, and, therefore, the term must be defined accordingly in relation to the particular context under review. Here then we shall confine ourselves to those contexts where the adjective *anattā* is used as the universal characteristic of all *dhammas (sabbe dhamma anattā*) which is the third of the three signata or *tilakkhaṇa*.[4]

The two previous articles dealt with the facts of the impermanence of all compounded things and processes, and of the general unsatisfactoriness of all states derived from these, namely, the five groups of physical and mental properties dependent on grasping *(pañcupadānakkhandhā);* in particular those feelings and sensations that go to make up individual experience *(vedanā)* which could be classified as pleasant, unpleasant, and neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant. The relevant texts were cited to show that the latter characteristic of general unsatisfactoriness is derived directly from the first characteristic of impermanence. It is now opportune to show how as a necessary corollary of this general unsatisfactoriness of all experience arises the realization of the third and last verity included in the three signata, *viz.* the universal characteristic of all physical and mental states and phenomena as *anattā.*

4. See *Vedanta and Buddhism* by H. von Glasenapp (*The Wheel,* No. 2) pp, 6ff. and *Anattā and Nibbāna* by Nyanaponika Thera (*The Wheel,* No. 11).

In the words of the Master himself: "Physical form, monks, is transient [*anicca*], and whatever is transient is unsatisfactory [*dukkha*] whatever is unsatisfactory, that is *anattā* [non-self]; and whatever is non-self, that is not of me, that I am not, that is not my self." This same rigorous logic is in turn applied to the four other groups constituting individuality viz. the feelings and sensations (*vedanā*), perception and cognitions (*saññā*), mental processes and reflexes (*saṅkhāra*) and finally, the individual's consciousness itself (*viññāṇa*). This last application of the universal characteristic of non-self to consciousness is in several ways the most significant act in this statement, and when we remind ourselves that the Pali word *viññāṇa* includes even the innermost mental experiences of the sentient being, we can see clearly the exact force of the *anattā* characteristic as conceived by the Buddha. The most rarified concept of Self or Ego that any philosopher, before or after the Buddha, ever conceived was somehow or somewhere concerned with a state of self-consciousness, the consciousness that "I am I."

To the Buddha, even this self-consciousness or "I-ness" is subject to the inexorable characteristics of impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, and since whatever is subject to these characteristics is non-self, this I-consciousness must be regarded as an illusion or an error. This is, in short, the significance of the adjective *anattā* as used in the above mentioned doctrine. In the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) a detailed analysis of this concept occurs:

> "If any one regards the eye (i.e. seeing) as the self, that does not hold, for the arising and the passing away of the eye is (clear from experience). With regard to that which arises and passes away, if anyone were to think, 'myself is arising and passing away' (such a thought) would be controverted by the person himself. Therefore, it does not hold to regard the eye as the self. Thus the eye (or seeing) is (proved to be) non-self. Similarly if anyone says that the forms (*rūpā* or visual objects) are the self, that too does not hold."

So both the eye and the visual objects (cognized by it) are non-self. The same argument applies to visual perception or the eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*) if one were to consider this as self. Similarly, it applies to visual sense-contact (*cakkhu-samphassa*), so that the eye, its sense objects, visual consciousness and visual sense-contact are all four non-self (*anattā*). It applies also to feelings (that arise due to the above four), so that the eye, its sense-objects, visual consciousness, visual sense-contact, and the resultant feelings, are all five non-self. It applies lastly to the [instinctual] craving (*taṇhā*) that is associated with above five, so that the eye, its sense objects, visual consciousness, visual contact, the resultant feelings, and the craving behind them all, these six are non-self. And, what thus applies to the eye or the sense of sight, applies equally to the other five senses (the last being the mind (*mano*) as an organ of sense). Thus, if it be said that the mind is self (*mano attā' ti*), that too does not hold. Similarly, it is inadmissible to assert that the mind, or its sense-objects (*dhamma*) or mental-con-

sciousness (*manoviññāṇa*), or mental contact (*manosamphassa*), or the feelings (*vedanā*) that result from all the craving (*taṇhā*), that is associated with all these, are the self. They are non-self, all of them. The way that leads to the origination of the (concept of) permanent individuality or personality (*sakkāya-samudaya*) is to regard as mine, or as "I am this," or as "This is my self" either the sense of seeing, or the visual data, or visual consciousness, or visual contact, its feelings or its craving or similarly, to regard hearing and the four other senses (including mind) with their adjuncts. The way that leads to the cessation of the (view of) permanent personality (*sakkāya-nirodha-gāmaṇi-paṭipadā*) is to cease regarding as mine and so forth, either (the functions of) seeing, or hearing, or smelling, or tasting, or touching, or thinking, or their adjuncts."

Now, the Buddha goes on to discuss the ethical implications of this view of self (*attā*) or permanent personality (*sakkāya*):

> "From sight and visual objects arises visual consciousness and the meeting of all three is contact, from which contact come feelings which may be pleasant, or unpleasant, or neither. When experiencing a pleasant feeling, a man rejoices in it, hails it and clings tight to it, and a trend to passion [attachment] ensues. When experiencing an unpleasant feeling a man sorrows, feels miserable, wails, beats his breast and goes distraught, and a trend of repugnance ensues. When experiencing a feeling that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant he has no true and causal comprehension of that feeling's origin, disappearance, agreeableness,

> perils and outcome, and a trend of ignorance ensues. It can never possibly result that, without first discarding the pleasant feeling's trend to passion, without first discarding the unpleasant feeling's trend to repugnance, and without getting rid of the neutral feeling's trend to ignorance, without discarding ignorance, and stopping it from arising, he will put an end, here and now, to dukkha. And what is true of sight, is equally true of the other five senses."

Thus the Buddha admonishes his disciples to analyse the whole conception of self or abiding personality and thereby the whole of experience (*loka*) along with every single component of the process, whereby the fallacy of Self or abiding personality arises, viewing this whole process of the arising of individuality (*nāmarūpa*) in a perfectly objective manner.

From all this it becomes clear that the three concepts of *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā,* the three signata or *tilakkhaṇa,* are the three corner-stones of the whole edifice of Buddhism. To be convinced of their validity is to accept the Dhamma in its entirety and therefore there can be no half-way house in this process of conviction. It behoves each one of us, who call ourselves Buddhists, to contemplate these three permanent characteristics of the world as we experience it, both objectively and subjectively, and apply in our individual and social lives the ethical principles that, as the Master pointed out, derive from such conviction and lead us to that state free from these three signata, viz. the eternal bliss of Nibbāna.

THE THREE SIGNATA

Gleanings from the Pali Scriptures

These texts have been selected by the editors of this series and partly adapted from various translations.

Anicca—Impermanence

Whatever has origination, all that is subject to cessation. (MN 56)

> "There is no materiality whatever, O monks, no feelings no perception, no formations,[5] no consciousness whatever that is permanent, everlasting, eternal, changeless, identically abiding for ever." Then the Blessed One took a bit of cowdung in his hand and he spoke to the monks. "Monks if even that much of permanent, everlasting, eternal, changeless individual Selfhood (*attabhāva*), identically abiding for ever, could be found, then this living of a life of purity (*brahmacariya*) for the complete eradication of ill (*dukkhakkhaya*) would not be feasible." (SN 22:96)

Here a monk abides contemplating rise and fall in the five categories affected by clinging thus: "Such is materiality, such its origin, such its disappearance, (and so with the other four)." Cultivating this kind of concentration conduces to the eradication of taints

5. *Saṅkhāra* is rendered elsewhere in this essay as "dynamic processes." It means "kamma formations."

(*āsavakkhaya*). (DN 33)

Monks, formations are impermanent; they are not lasting; they provide no real comfort; so that that is enough for a man to become dispassionate, for his lust to fade out, and for him to be liberated. (AN 7:62)

Here, monks, feelings, perceptions and thoughts are known to him as they arise, known as they appear present, known as they disappear. Cultivating this kind of concentration conduces to mindfulness and full awareness. (DN 33)

When a man abides thus mindful and fully aware, diligent, ardent and self-controlled, then, if pleasant feeling arises in him, he understands, "This pleasant feeing has arisen in me; but that is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on this body. But this body is impermanent, formed and dependently originated. Now how could pleasant feeling, arisen dependent on an impermanent, formed, dependently arisen body, be permanent?" In the body and in feeling he abides contemplating impermanence and fall and fading and cessation and relinquishment. As he does so, his underlying tendency to lust for the body and for pleasant feeling is abandoned. Similarly when he contemplates unpleasant feeling his underlying tendency to resistance [paṭigha] to the body and unpleasant feelings is abandoned; and when he contemplates neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling his underlying tendency to ignorance of the body and of that feeling is abandoned. (SN 36:7)

Monks, when a man sees as impermanent the eye [and the rest], which is impermanent, then he has right view. (SN 35:155)

Consciousness comes into being [*sambhoti*] by dependence on a duality. What is that duality? It is the eye, which is impermanent, changing, becoming-other, and visible objects, which are impermanent, changing and becoming-other; such is the transient, fugitive duality [of eye-cum-visible objects], which is impermanent, changing and becoming-other. Eye-consciousness is impermanent, changing and becoming-other; for this cause and condition [namely eye cum-visible objects] for the arising of eye-consciousness being impermanent, changing and becoming-other, how could eye-consciousness, arisen by depending on an impermanent condition, be permanent? Then the coincidence, concurrence and confluence of these three impermanent dhammas is called contact [*phassa*]; but eye-contact too is impermanent, changing becoming-other; for how could eye-contact arisen by depending on an impermanent condition, be permanent? It is one touched by contact who feels [*vedeti*], likewise who perceives [*sañjānāti*]; so these transient, fugitive dhammas too [namely, feeling, choice and perception] are impermanent, changing and becoming, other. (And so with ear-cum-sounds, nose-cum-odours, tongue-cum-flavours, body-cum-tangibles, mind-cum-ideas.) (SN 35:93)

When a monk abides much with his mind fortified by perception of impermanence, his mind retreats, retracts and recoils from gain, honour and renown, and does not reach out to it just as a cock's feather or a strip of sinew thrown on a fire retreats, retracts and recoils and does not reach out to it. (AN 7:46)

Perception of impermanence should be cultivated for the elimination of the conceit "I am," since perception of not-self becomes established in one who perceives impermanence; and it is perception of not-self that arrives at the elimination of the conceit "I am," which is extinction [*nibbāna*] here and now. (Ud 4.1)

Fruitful as an act of [lavish] giving is, yet it is still more fruitful to go with confident heart for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and undertake the five precepts of virtue … Fruitful as this is, yet it is still more fruitful to cultivate even as little as a whiff of fragrance of loving-kindness. Fruitful as that is, still more fruitful it is to cultivate the perception of impermanence even for only as long as the snapping of a finger. (AN 9:20)

Better a single day of life perceiving how things rise and fall than to live out a century yet not perceive their rise and fall. (Dhp 14)

When a monk sees six rewards it should be enough for him to establish unlimitedly perception of impermanence in all formations. What six? "All formations will seem to me insubstantial. My mind will find no relish in all the world. My mind will emerge from all the world. My mind will incline towards Nibbāna. My fetters will come to be abandoned. And I shall be endowed with the highest in monkhood." (AN 6:102)

All life and all existence here
With all its joys and all its woe,
Rests on a single state of mind,
And quick passes that moment by.

Nay, even gods whose life does last
For four and eighty thousand *kalpas*,
Do not remain one and the same,
Not even for two single thoughts.

Those groups that passed away just now,
Those groups that will pass later on,
Those groups just passing in between,
They're not in nature different.

Not in the future moment does one live,
One now lives in the present moment.
"When consciousness dissolves, the world is dead";
This utterance is true in the highest sense.

No hoarding up of things passed by,
No heaping up in future time!
And things arisen are all like
The mustard seed on pointed awl.

The groups of life that disappeared
At death, as well as during life,
Have all alike become extinct,
And never will they rise again.

Out of the unseen did they rise,
Into the unseen do they pass.
Just as the lightning flashes forth,
So do they flash and pass away. (Vism Ch. 20)

The monk in deepest solitude,
Grown still and tranquil in his heart,
Feels superhuman happiness
Whilst clearly he perceives the truth.

Whenever he reflects upon
The rise and passing of the groups,
He's filled with rapture and with bliss
Whilst he beholds the Deathless Realm.

(Dhp 373f.)

Transient are formations all.
Their law it is to rise and fall.
Arisen—soon they disappear.
To make them cease is happiness.

(SN 6:15, DN 16)

DUKKHA—SUFFERING OR UNSATISFACTORINESS

This only do I teach: suffering, and its end. (MN 22)

Suffering only arises when anything arises; suffering only ceases when anything ceases. (SN 12:15)

Suffering is threefold: intrinsic suffering [*dukkha-dukkha*], suffering in change [*viparināma-dukkha*] and suffering due to formations [*saṅkhāra-dukkha*]. Bodily and mental painful feeling are called intrinsic suffering because suffering is their very nature, their common designation and because they are in themselves suffering… . Bodily and mental pleasant feeling are called suffering in change because they are a cause for the arising of pain when they change. Neutral feeling and the remaining formations of the three planes of existence are called suffering due to formations because they are oppressed by rise and fall. (Vism XVI)

Pleasant feeling is agreeable while it lasts and is disagreeable when it changes; painful feeling is disagreeable while it lasts and is agreeable when it changes; the neither pleasant-nor unpleasant feeling is agreeable when there is knowledge and disagreeable when there is no knowledge. (MN 44)

A heedless man is vanquished by the disagreeable in the guise of the agreeable, by the unloved in the guise of the loved, by suffering in the guise of happiness. (Ud 2.8)

In the past, sense-pleasures were a painful experience, intensely burning and searing; in the future too, sense-pleasures will be a painful experience, intensely burning and searing; and also now in the present, sense-pleasures are a painful experience, intensely burning and searing. But these beings have not yet lost their greed for sense-pleasures, are consumed by craving for sense-pleasures, burning in feverish passion for sense-pleasures; and with their faculties clouded, they have, in spite of that painful experience, the illusion of happiness. (MN 75)

Whoso delights in materiality, in feeling, in perception, in formations, and in consciousness, he delights in suffering; and whoso delights in suffering, will not be freed from suffering. Thus I say. (SN 22:29)

The arising, presence and manifestation of materiality, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness is but the arising of suffering, the presence of maladies, the manifestation of decay and death. The cessation, the stilling, the ending of materiality, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness is but the cessation of suffering, the stilling of maladies, the ending of decay and death. (SN 22:30)

Inconceivable is the beginning of this saṃsāra; not to be discovered is a first beginning of beings who, obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, are hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths. Which do you think, O monks, is more: the flood of tears which, weeping and wailing, you have shed upon this long way, hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths, united with the unde-

sired, separated from the desired; this or the waters of the four great oceans? Long have you suffered the death of father and mother, of sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. And whilst you were thus suffering you have, indeed, shed more tears upon this long way than there is water in the four great oceans. And thus, O monks, have you long undergone torment, undergone misfortune, filled the graveyards full; verily, long enough to be dissatisfied with all forms of existence, long enough to turn away and free yourselves from them all. (SN 15:3)

> How can you find delight and mirth
> Where there is burning without end?
> In deepest darkness you are wrapped!
> Why do you not aspire for light?
>
> Look at this puppet here, well rigged,
> A heap of many sores, piled up,
> Diseased and full of greediness,
> Unstable and impermanent!
>
> Devoured by old age is this frame,
> A prey to sickness, weak and frail;
> To pieces breaks this putrid body,
> All life must truly end in death! (Dhp 146–48)
>
> For those who know not Ill and how Ill grows,
> who neither know how Ill is stilled and quenched
> nor know the Way to lay Ill to rest,
> —those miss Release, alike of heart and mind;
> they cannot end it all and reach the goal;
> they tramp the round of birth, decay and death.

> But they who know both Ill and how Ill grows,
> and also know how Ill is stilled and quenched
> and know the Way that lays all Ill to rest;
> —these win Release of heart, Release of mind;
> these surely end it all and reach the goal;
> these nevermore shall know decay and birth.
> (Sn 724–727)

When a monk sees six rewards, it should be enough for him to establish unlimited perception of suffering in all formations. What six? "The thought of turning away from all formations will be established in me, like unto a murderer with drawn sword. My mind will emerge from all the world. I shall see peace in Nibbāna. The underlying [evil] tendencies will be eliminated in me. I shall be dutifull and I shall attend well upon the Master, with a loving heart." (AN 6:103)

ANATTĀ: NOT-SELF OR EGOLESSNESS

Give up what does not belong to you! Such giving-up will long conduce to your weal and happiness. And what is it that does not belong to you? Materiality, feelings, perception, formations and consciousness; these do not belong to you and these you should give up. Such giving-up will long conduce to your weal and happiness. (SN 22:33)

All ascetics and brahmins who conceive a self in various ways, all those conceive the five groups [as the self] or one or another of them. Which are the five? Herein an ignorant worldling conceives materiality, feeling, perception, formations or consciousness as the self; or the self as the owner of any of these groups; or that group as included in the self; or the self as included in that group. (SN 22:47)

It is impossible that anyone with right view should see anything [or idea, *dhamma*] as self. (MN 115)

The learned and noble disciple does not consider materiality, feeling, perception, formations, or consciousness as self; nor the self as the owner of these groups; nor these groups as included within the self; nor the self as included within the groups. Of such a learned and noble disciple it is said that he is no longer fettered by any group of existence, [his] own or external. Thus I say. (SN 22:117)

It is possible that a virtuous man while contemplating the five groups as impermanent, woeful, ... empty, not-self may realize the Fruit of Stream-entrance. (SN 22:122)

One should not imagine oneself as being identical with the eye, should not imagine oneself as being included within the eye, should not imagine oneself as being outside the eye, should not imagine: "The eye belongs to me." And so with ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. One should not imagine oneself as being identical with visual objects, sounds, odours, tactile and mental objects. One should not imagine oneself as being included in them or outside of them; one should not imagine: "They belong to me." One should not imagine oneself as being identical with eye-consciousness… ear-consciousness… nose-consciousness… body-consciousness… mind-consciousness; should not imagine oneself as being included within mind-consciousness; should not imagine oneself as being outside of mind-consciousness, should not imagine: "Mind-consciousness belongs to me." One should not imagine oneself as being identical with the totality of things [the All, *sabbaṃ*] should not imagine oneself as being included in the totality of things; should not imagine oneself as being outside the totality of things; should not imagine: "The totality of things belongs to me." Thus not imagining any more, the wise disciple clings no longer to anything in the world. Clinging no longer to anything, he trembles not. Trembling no longer, he reaches in his own person the extinction of all vanity: "Exhausted is rebirth, lived the holy life, the task is

done, and nothing further remains after this." Thus he knows. (SN 35:90)

It would be better for an untaught ordinary man to treat as self [*attā*] this body, which is constructed upon the four great primaries of matter [*maha-bhūta*], than mind. Why? Because the body can last one year, two years … even a hundred years: but what is called "mind" and "thinking" and "consciousness" arises and ceases differently through night and day. (SN 12:61)

Consciousness is not-self. Also the causes and conditions of the arising of consciousness, they likewise are not-self. Hence, how could it be possible that consciousness, having arisen through something which is not-self, could ever be a self? (SN 35:141)

When a monk sees six rewards it should be enough for him to establish unlimited perception of not-self concerning all things [dhamma]. What six? "I shall be aloof from all the world. No impulses of 'I' [egotism] will assail me. No impulses of 'mine' will assail me. With extraordinary insight shall I be endowed. I shall clearly see causes and the causally-arisen phenomena."

(AN 6:104)

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF MIND

It is in no wise an exaggeration to claim that of all the religions it is Buddhism that gives the greatest importance to mind in its scheme of deliverance. That is to say, Buddhism is the most psychological of religions. Even ethics and logic in Buddhism are studied from the psychological standpoint. This remains a fundamental characteristic of Buddhism throughout all its stages of historical development. There are some who believe that this trait is confined to the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the subsequent literature, but no serious student of the subject can agree with such an opinion. The principal doctrines regarding the nature of man's mind are to be found already in the early discourses, ascribed to the master himself, as preserved in the major books of the Sutta Piṭaka, such as the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas. In fact it may be asserted without the slightest fear of contradiction, that the later Buddhist books show no idea that is fundamental to the religion, which is not found in the early Nikāyas. They are the very main-spring of all that Buddhism is, whether in the psychological, ethical, or generally philosophical aspect.

This importance of psychology in Buddhism is well brought out by Mrs. Rhys Davids in one of her earlier works. All serious departures in religion and ethics, she points out, have striven to cope with the tendency to let life be swallowed up in the quest of

sensuous gratification. And, among the remedies sought, have been pure ascesis, or the suppression to the utmost limit consistent with life, of the channels of sense- impression, and again the cultivation of the object-world apart from sense-pleasure, namely, in relation to ethical and intellectual interests. A third course is so to study and regulate the subject-world, or mind, that we can regard it as one object among other objects. Now, the extent to which the Buddhist initiated and developed this third course is a notable and practically unique feature in the Buddhist religious culture.

Early Buddhism and Asceticism

In Early Buddhism asceticism, as such, is clearly rejected. In the very first sermon ascribed to the Buddha, he declared his method to be a middle way (*majjhima-paṭipadā*) between asceticism and self-indulgence. In another dialogue he is reported to have asked a young man called Uttara, a pupil of a Brahmin teacher, whether and how Parasariya, his master, taught a method of disciplining the senses. "Yes," was the student's reply, "one does not see sights with the eyes nor hear sounds with the ear. This is his method." "On that basis," rejoined the Buddha, "the blind and the deaf would have their senses the best under control." Then he proceeds to show this Brahmin student how his own method of spiritual training differed. According to him, the sense-impressions are to be consciously discriminated psychologically, as agreeable or disagreeable or neither, and then the resultant

attitudes of loathsomeness or unloathsomeness towards them are to be discarded, and finally replaced by equanimity accompanied by mindfulness. Man must study his own mind, cognize and analyse his mental components, and learn to dictate to his own feelings. By this method the trainee would acquire two results: control over sense and impulse on the one hand, and on the other insight into the compound and conditioned nature of the mind itself, which appears to the ignorant to be a unitary Ego, unchanging and abiding in experience.

"Psychological Ethics"

Thus we see that the main task of the Buddhist, as he commences his spiritual training, is to study and analyse his own mind, to observe its inner nature and how it works; and how good and bad ethical states arise therefrom. That is why in Buddhism so much emphasis is laid on the psychological aspect of ethics. In fact, it is perfectly correct to describe the Buddhism of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka as "psychological ethics." The motive of Buddhist psychology is not just a scientific curiosity having no bearing on living, but the ultimate desire to cultivate the good mind, avoiding all evil psychological states. The mind has to be made wholesome by a particular method, which is seven-fold, according to the Sabbāsava Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. Both in its method and in its purpose of bringing about peace and harmony of mind, Buddhism agrees far more with modern psycho-analysis than with any system of theoretical psychology. While, however, Buddhism

is the most psychological of religions, it is not a mere system of psychology, but a perfect scheme of deliverance. Now it should be clear that the concept of mind that is found in early Buddhism forms a most important factor in the whole religion. But what exactly does one mean by using the English word "mind" with reference to Buddhism? It does not need much reflection to realize that the word is used in several senses in English. The best way to get even a rough idea of the Buddhist use is first of all to see what the Pāli terms are for the English word "mind."

Students of Buddhism will know that there are several terms in Pāli that have been translated in some context or other by the English word "mind," the three common ones being *mano, citta,* and *viññāṇa.* Each of these terms may sometimes indicate in Pāli what may be called the "nonphysical factor" in man and other living beings, as is implied in the Dīgha Nikāya, when it condemns the erroneous opinion of some metaphysicians that: "Whatever there is to be called *citta* or *mano* or *viññāṇa*, that is the soul, permanent, constant, eternal, unchanging, etc." This shows that in the common usage of the times these three terms were applied more or less synonymously for the "mind." But the more technical applications of these, in the psychological parts of the Canon, reveal significant differences in their use in certain contexts. *Mano* is employed generally in the sense of the instrument of thinking, that which cogitates, and, sometimes, in the sense of that which purposes and intends, *citta* has more or less the sense of "heart" (*hadaya*), the seat of feeling, and refers to the affective

aspect of mind as experiencing. The term *viññāṇa*, usually taken as cognitive consciousness, has also a deeper connotation than the other two, and in certain contexts indicates the psychic factor, which is the cause for the rebirth of an individual after death. One may say that these particular shades of meaning are typical of these three terms in the early Discourses. There is no doubt that they all indicate some aspect of the inner, immaterial or subjective nature of man, and as such, they are all included in the Buddhist concept of mind, using that English word in a general sense.

Analysis of Man

Buddhism analyses the whole of man into five aggregates, the *pañcupādānakkhandha,* namely, the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*), the aggregate of feelings and sensations (*vedanā*), the aggregate of perception (*saññā*), the aggregate of disposition (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). It will be seen that in this scheme the last four are non-physical factors in man, which are generally implied by the word "mind." In Pali these five aggregates are said to be the *nāma-rūpa* (body and mind) comprising an individuality, which shows that the last four, viz. *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* are collectively regarded as *nāma* which is generally rendered "mind." Of these four *nāma* components, it is to be pointed out that the first two, *vedanā* and *saññā*, are phenomena that arise depending on *rūpa*, or the material basis of individuality, which alone determines the duration of their continuous rise and passing away. That is to say, feeling and perception (or cognition) can take place only where there are senses

(*indriya*) and these exist only in the physical body. But the other two, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*, are rooted deeper in the flux of *bhava* or *saṃsāric* continuity, and they are in some sense the cause for that continuity. This is seen in the two famous postulates of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula namely,[6] *saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇa-paccayā nāmarūpa.* Thus we must understand the two terms, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa,* as occurring in the *pañcupādānakkhandha* analysis, in the narrow sense of those dispositions and acts of consciousness, which manifest themselves only so long as the body and mind are together. But they have a deeper significance in the formula of dependent origination. It is their saṃsāric aspects that receive emphasis in that context. That is why the formula says: *viññāṇa-paccayā nāmarūpam,* that *nāmarūpa* arises depending on *viññāṇa*, and hence in a passage in the Aṅguttara Nikāya both *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* seem to be grouped under the term *bhava* which means "becoming" or continuity of the flux of saṃsāric life. In view of these considerations it will not be difficult to understand now the significance of the important idea that occurs in the Dīgha Nikāya that the *nāma-rūpa* depends on *viññāṇa* and *viññāṇa* depends on the *nāma-rūpa*. In modern terms this would mean that the individual as a compound of body and mind is dependent on the presence of the (individual) psychic-factor for his continued existence, and the psychic-factor in turn, has to depend on a body-mind compound to have any

6. See The Wheel No. 15: *Dependent Origination* (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) by Piyadassi Thera.

empirical existence.

Students of modern philosophy will not fail to see how close this analysis of the individual approaches the "Compound Theory" of Professor Broad, the Cambridge philosopher, as put forward in his famous treatise *The Mind and its Place in Nature*. "Might not what we know as a 'mind'" he writes, "be a compound of two factors, neither of which separately has the characteristic properties of a mind. … Let us call one of these constituents the 'psychic factor' and the other the 'bodily factor'. The psychic factor would be like some chemical element which has never been isolated, and the characteristics of a mind would depend jointly on those of the material organism with which it is united." It must be remembered that Professor Broad uses the term "psychic factor" exactly as a Buddhist would use the word for *viññāṇa* when referring to the factor in man which causes saṃsāric continuity, that is to say, becomes the cause for a new birth after death.

A Complex Concept

Now, it would be clear that the Buddhist concept of mind is a far more complex one than the notion of Western psychologists, who understand by it what are generally called the affective, cognitive, and conative functions in man. Like the modern schools of psycho-analysis Buddhism regards mind as both conscious and unconscious in its working. Such concepts as *saṅkhāra* and *bhavaṅga*, occurring in the early Pāli literature, show that the Buddhists knew of the existence of unconscious states of the mind long

before the West. An analysis of the term *saṅkhāra* will clearly establish this point. The Buddhism of the Pāli Canon is largely devoted to the examination and analysis of the mind, both in its conscious and unconscious aspects. This examination, which is in this case self-examination and introspection, is held to be fundamentally important in the practice of the religion. The importance of self-examination, the correct observation of how the mind works and the good and evil mental states arise, are necessary if we are to practise the Noble Eightfold Path. Right effort consists in suppressing the rising of evil mental states, in eradicating those which have arisen, in stimulating good states and perfecting those which have been brought into being. Thus, as Professor Radhakrishnan has pointed out, the Buddhist has to consider that "the habit of self-observation is an effective way to deal with the underworld of the human mind, to root out evil desires and craving, to maintain an equilibrium between the conscious mind and the other part of our equipment, the complicated psychic and physical apparatus." In fact, the whole of Buddhist psychology is meant for this purpose. This is the sole motive of the Abhidhamma analysis.

Man Slave to Mind

Man is by nature more a slave of his own mind than its master. As Mahā Moggallāna once explained to Sāriputta one must have the mind under control (*cittaṃ vasaṃ vatteti*) and not allow the mind to get the better of one (*cittassa vasena vattati*). The great optimism of Buddhist psychology, unlike for instance

the Freudian system, is that man can restrain, curb and subdue his mind by his own mind (*cetasā cittaṃ abhiniggaṇhati*), and thus check and eliminate evil propensities by himself, without necessarily going to an analyst. It has to be remembered that the will in Buddhism, though an aspect of the mind, can yet act as the controller of the mind, both in the conscious and the unconscious spheres. This is possible because as the Aṅguttara Nikāya says the mind if cultivated is the most pliable (*kammaniya*) thing to handle. By 'cultivated' (*bhāvita*) is here meant the process of mental culture which is called *bhāvanā* in Buddhism. This is possible because Buddhism holds that causation is as true of the mind as of external things.

Hence the fundamental ethical teaching of the Buddha is that the mind must be trained and cleansed of evil propensities. "To purify one's mind" (*sacittapariyodapanaṃ*) is said to be the sum-total of the Buddha's ethical teaching. The Abhidhamma takes up and enlarges upon this teaching of psychological ethics. For instance, there the immoral mental states are said to be fourteen, viz., dullness, impudence, recklessness of consequences, distraction, greed, error of judgment, conceit, hate, envy, selfishness, worry, sloth, torpor and perplexity. These have to be suppressed and eliminated. Among the nineteen psychological properties said to be good and therefore to be cultivated are the following: Confidence, mindfulness, prudence, discretion, disinterestedness, amity, balance of mind, calming of the bodily impulses, buoyancy of these, etc.

Mind No Permanent Entity

But the greatest good that comes to the practising Buddhist by this self-examination and analysis of his own mind, is the uprooting of that heresy (*micchādiṭṭhi*), which regards the mind or any of its derivative states as a Self or Soul, that is to say, as an abiding and permanent, subject or entity. Buddha does not deny a subject-object relationship in experience but this subject (whose innermost being is simply the flux of *viññāṇa*) is not in any sense a permanent and unchanging Soul. Buddhism even asserts the activity or agency of the subject (*attakāra, purisakāra*) but it is not simply "the mind as man" which Mrs. Rhys Davids held to be the same as Upanishads soul or *atman,* in her later writings. Buddhism does not say that ideas and feelings are just scattered about the world as loose and separate existences, to use a phrase of the psychologist McDougall, but for Buddhism just as for McDougall they cohere in systems each of which constitutes a mind. The difference between the Buddhist and most other psychologists pertains to the real nature of this mind or the individual psychological unit. As I have attempted to show in this essay the individual mind does not consist of such solid metaphysical stuff as the Self or Soul of certain religions and philosophies is made of. It is whether conceived as *citta* or *mano or viññāṇa* just an aspect of those dynamic vital impulses (*saṅkhāra*) which are categorically stated in Buddhism to be *anicca,* impermanent, *dukkha,* subject to ill and pain, and *anattā,* void of any abiding

substances. To the Buddhist, mind is only a flux, a derivative ripple on the surface of the stream of becoming (*bhavasota*). The Buddhist can, therefore, in no way entertain the belief that the mind in any sense can be an unchanging entity, a permanent ego. And this indeed is the most important lesson taught by the Buddhist analysis of the concept of mind.

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