The Order Journal

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EDITORIAL

The publication of the first issue of *The Order Journal* must surely be an event to be celebrated. That Order members do find time amongst their other pressing concerns to put pen to paper, that a vehicle for the dissemination of that work should be organised, and that some Order members are willing to use that vehicle to share the fruits of their study and reflection with other members of the Order, is in my eyes an event of some note.

Of course, the idea is not new. For many years several Order members have reflected upon the desirability of a literary-cum-Dharma journal and, becoming increasingly convinced that the literary output of the Order could sustain such a publication, I discussed the logistics of such an enterprise with Nāgābodhi several times during 1986-7. The immediate stimulus for this project, came however, during the 1987 Order Convention. Each morning was spent discussing issues of concern to the Order, and I was in the group dealing with study. It was clear that many people wanted to know more about the work of the increasing number of their fellows who were attending University and College courses. Moreover, aside of these, there are quite a few others who write upon various topics, but whose work is rarely seen. "Surely", we asked, "if people make the effort to write, would it not be of value for this material to be disseminated in some way through the Order?" As *Shabda* seems overburdened at times by the submission of longer contributions, it was therefore proposed that some means should be found for the cheap reproduction and circulation of interesting material at the soonest possible date. Given my own prior interest in the idea of a journal, I therefore volunteered to try and make this possible.

The hopes nurtured by some for the prompt appearance of a new publication were, probably inevitably, to be soon dashed. Firstly, the submission of material for inclusion in a journal, in response to my advertisements in *Shabda*, was slow. Secondly, although my brief was to disseminate the material 'cheaply', I felt that a certain minimum standard of presentation was essential. Long gone are the days when a handful of sheets, stapled together in the top corner could stand as a publication, and I thought that, at the very least, contributions should be transcribed so as to be printed in a uniform typeface, and that the whole should be bound. Moreover, the more substantial the medium used, then the more seriously Order members would take writing in general, and the value of their own work in particular. In addition, I also felt that the new journal would help fill a gap left by the demise of the old-style *Mitratā*, where single issues were written by Order members upon commission from Nāgābodhi. Hopefully a journal accepting medium length articles would once more encourage Order members to tackle subjects at a depth, which for some while had been prohibited either by the necessary shortness of contributions to *Golden Drum*, or the daunting prospect of writing a whole book - which two options have seemed the only ones available for several years. The result of these considerations was that, despite the wonders of computer technology, the preparation of the text of this issue was slowed by the need for the transcription of all but three of the articles. Finally, although I was

optimistic enough to suggest at one point that the first issue could be ready by December 1987, I found myself increasingly pre-occupied by my fast-approaching final examinations at University, and reluctantly decided to put preparations to one side till these were over.

Thus it is almost 15 months after the initial proposal that the journal now appears. As may be apparent from this 'potted history', I have my own views on the value and function of such a publication. These views undoubtedly reflect, in part, my own interest in the ideal of a spiritually committed Buddhist scholarship, which I see as a necessary adjunct to the creative interpretation of the Buddhist tradition - the seemingly endless variety of texts, doctrines and practices developed over the centuries. Our exemplar in this respect is of course our own teacher, Urgyen Sangharakshita, to whose guiding hand we are all so deeply indebted. At the same time, *The Order Journal* should not be seen as a purely 'academic' publication, and I hope that the contents listing for this issue shows a balance between scholarly and more popular styles, and between Dharmic and cultural material, which will be reflected in future issues. At its broadest level, I see *The Order Journal* encouraging perceptive and illumined thinking and an appropriate expression of that thought - in other words, helping to develop the *cinta-maya-prajñā* of the Order. Firmly grounded in our collective spiritual practice, and exploring the values of higher culture, it will become at best another vehicle for the Imaginal life of the Western Buddhist Order.

I should perhaps explain the title which it now bears. After racking my mind for some time over the issue, I decided that for the meantime it was expedient to give it the name by which it was naturally called by other Order members - viz. *"The Order Journal"*. Doubtless, rather in the manner of *Golden Drum*, if *The Order Journal* prospers, then in the natural course of time a more imaginative title will become apparent. It remains for me to wholeheartedly thank several people; firstly, all those who have submitted articles to this first issue, and all those who have offered me encouragement during the long process of its gestation; secondly, Elizabeth English for long hours spent transcribing, correcting copy, and general 'trouble-shooting'; and finally Ānanda for providing the cover artwork at such short notice.

This brings me to a final concern which I would like to air. I have just said, 'If it should prosper', and indeed, there is always the possibility that *The Order Journal* will not. I have therefore reflected a little upon some of the necessary conditions for the prosperity of our journal, and would include amongst them the following; firstly, Order members must write material suitable for publication and circulation within the Order [1]; secondly, they must submit it to the Journal; thirdly, other Order members must buy the Journal. It all seems very simple, and in the hopes that these conditions will be met with increasing enthusiasm, I offer this first issue to you.

STHIRAMATI

1. In this connection please read the note on 'Submissions', on page 77.

THE FOUR ĀRYAN TRUTHS: a new perspective

by Dharmachari Sāgaramati

As far as the Buddhist tradition informs us the Buddha's first attempt to communicate, in a systematic and conceptual form, the implications for mankind of his realization of enlightenment (*bodhi*), are contained within the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*.[1] This sutta was delivered to the five ascetics (who, prior to his enlightenment, had abandoned him) at Sarnath. The essence of this discourse is the Buddha's discovery of 'the Middle Way', or, in more philosophical terms, 'the principle of conditionality'. One practical expression of this principle is the doctrine of the 'Four Āryan Truths'.

We can at once divide these 'Four Āryan Truths' into two pairs. The first pair, ie. 'the Truth of *Dukkha*' and 'the Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha*' (*taṇhā* or 'thirst, craving') refer to the actual and existential state of humankind. To be an ordinary unenlightened being (*puthujjana*) is to experience unfulfilment, to be fundamentally unsatisfied, and on occasions, to suffer, both physically and emotionally. The second pair, 'the Truth of the Cessation of *Dukkha*' (*nirodha*), and 'the Way leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*' (*āryāṭṭaṅgikamagga*), refer to what is potential in us. Mankind, therefore, has a potential 'destiny', a destiny wherein each individual can transcend their present limited and unsatisfactory existence, and attain what to the Buddha was the meaning of existence, ie. *nibbāna*, cessation of *dukkha*, or ultimate satisfaction and liberation. However, to make what is potential into an actual will not come about by mere chance or accident. One has to start making changes in one's life and relationships, such as are indicated in the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. In this way one follows 'the Middle way', which, according to the Buddha, culminates in our realizing what is now only potential within us, ie. *nibbāna* or liberation from all forms of *dukkha*.

We mentioned earlier that the doctrine of the 'Four Noble Truths' was a practical working out of a more fundamental and essential principle, the 'principle of conditionality' - the Four Noble Truths being only one formulation of that principle. Therefore, what the Four Noble Truths are in essence will become clearer if we look more closely at this more essential principle, sometimes referred to in later Buddhist schools as 'the Principle of the Path'.

According to the *Āriyaparīyesanasutta*,[2] the newly awakened Buddha, having *"...gained the Doctrine (dhamma), profound, hard to perceive, hard to know, tranquil, transcendent, beyond the sphere of reasoning..."*, had some doubts as to whether it was worth his while to communicate his realization to mankind; *"For mankind, intent on its attachments, it is hard to see this principle, namely conditionedness, origination by way of cause (paṭiccasamuppāda)."* This 'principle' is often expressed in the formulation of the 'twelve links of conditioned origination'. However, as we shall see later, these twelve links are not the only expression of this type found in the Pali Canon.

As the Buddha was not merely a speculative philosopher, and desired to help mankind in a practical way, he applied this principle of conditionality to that aspect of human experience which is both personal and universal - he applied it to the fact of *dukkha*, the fact that we all experience unsatisfactoriness and, at times, real pain. The next stage is then to enquire as to the conditions whereby this experience of *dukkha* arises. The answer, according to the Buddha, is that *dukkha* arises primarily because we are creatures of desire: we thirst and crave experiences and objects, usually those we imagine will be pleasurable. (However, human nature can at times be somewhat perverse and seem to desire the opposite!) Therefore, *taṇhā* is the cause of *dukkha*. But *taṇhā* refers only to certain forms of desire, making 'desire' a too ambiguous term to translate *taṇhā* by. This can be clarified by reference to another Buddhist term, *chanda*, which is also sometimes translated as 'desire'. *Chanda*, according to the tradition, is twofold: *kāmacchanda* and *dhammacchanda*, the latter being a desire one is encouraged to develop as a Buddhist. From this we may equate *kāmacchanda* with *taṇhā*, bearing in mind that *taṇhā* also connotes clinging to 'wrong opinions' (*avijjā*), and ultimately any views (*diṭṭhi*). (The latter is, of course, also implied in *kāmacchanda*.) This leaves us with the interesting fact that not <u>all</u> human desires necessarily lead to *dukkha*: some desires (*ie. dhammacchanda*), instead of resulting in *dukkha and unsatisfactoriness*, can be the progenitors of ultimate fulfilment. Thus we could reformulate the Third Noble Truth as 'the satisfaction of desire'. With reference to the standard formulation, what ceases (*nirodha*) is *kāmacchanda*, and its consequences, such as 'wrong opinions' (*avijjā*).[3] The dharma that one desires is, of course, the Fourth Noble Truth, the way leading to the cessation of *taṇhā*, or, we can now say, the way leading to the satisfaction of *dhammacchanda*, the bliss of *nibbāna*.

Buddhism is often accused of fostering a somewhat negative and kill-joy attitude towards life, by appearing to require the denial of all our desires. But we can see from the above that all Buddhism requires for the attainment of the goal is the movement away from a life dominated specifically by *kāmacchanda* and its consequents, such as that view of life which, as we can see today, may bring about the very destruction of life as we know it. So far from being life denying, Buddhism is very life affirming. Putting this in a western philosophical garb we may conjecture that what Buddhism is attempting to bring to an end is what Schopenhauer calls *'the will to live'*. But it only does this as a means to affirming a Nietzschean *'Yes'* to life - that is a higher mode of life, one which, in Buddhist terms, is directed toward *nibbāna*.

To give a more traditional backing to this we must return to that fundmental principle, the principle of conditionality. In the *Nidāna-vagga* section of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, under the 'Ten Power Suttas', we find an interesting expression of the doctrine of *paṭiccasamuppāda.[4] Here, in addition to the usual twelve links* (*nidāna*) of conditionality, or conditioned origination we find another twelve links corresponding to that aspect of the principle of conditionality found at work in formulations of the 'Path', including the Noble Eightfold Path. To distinguish this latter form of conditionality from the more common form of conditionality, the Pali commentator Buddhagosa uses the term *sadisa-paṭibhāga* and *visabhāga-paṭibhāga*. The former term applies to that

aspect of conditionality which corresponds to the 'path', or dependent origination in a <u>progressive</u> order. The latter, to the other aspect of conditionality, known as *saṃsāra*, 'the round of becoming', or dependent origination in a <u>reactive</u> order.

Therefore, within this very existence, according to this view of conditionality, we find <u>two</u> tendencies, both of which are aspects of this one principle of conditionality. This latter tendency of *visabhāga-paṭibhāga*, or dependent origination in a reactive order, is rooted in wrong opinions (*avijjā*) and tends to lead, through the process laid down by by the following eleven links, to continual frustration, old age, disease and death - a process which is repeated again and again, and is also known as *saṃsāra*. However, at some point in this continual process one can wake up to this other more progressive tendency inherent in existence. This is a tendency towards *nibbāna*. In other word, we move from our present situation, as found in the first two Noble Truths, onto the 'Path' and its culmination, as found in the second two Noble Truths. Starting from an experience rooted in the former *saṃsāric* process, we wake up to the fact of *dukkha*. Here, instead of reacting to this experience by burying ourselves in the 'saṃsāric' tendency by craving (*taṇhā*) and grasping (*upādāna*) after some immediate satisfaction, thereby setting into motion the continuation of the *'saṃsāric'* process, we 'respond' with *saddhā*, or 'faith'.

This latter term is a difficult one to translate adequately, and when rendered by 'faith' we must bear in mind that it has no theological connotation. Also this standard formula does not bring out the important fact that it is faith <u>in</u> something. Traditionally, this 'something' would be the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - the *Ti Ratana*. Therefore it seems that *dukkha* itself is not a suffient condition for faith to arise, as an 'external' condition is also necessary. We may recall here the tradition of the Four Sights of the young Gautama - old-age, disease, death, and a religious mendicant. The first three correspond to *dukkha*, whereas the mendicant would correspond to what Gautama had 'faith' in. The first three sights were not sufficient in themselves for Gautama to leave home in a search for an answer to his existential crisis. Another factor - an alternative to the natural ways of the world - was necessary to <u>begin</u> his quest. But in order to <u>complete</u> his quest, the Buddha had to go beyond what that mendicant stood for, ie. the extant religious traditions of his time. Therefore, from the Buddha's point of view only faith in the Three Jewels leads to the fulfillment known as *nibbāna*. With faith in this latter sense this progressive order can then unroll its potential as, in dependence upon *saddhā*, arises *pāmojja*, or 'satisfaction and delight'. In dependence upon *pāmojja* arises *pīti*, or 'rapture', and in an ever ascending order, *passaddhi*, or 'calm', *sukha*, or 'bliss', *samādhi*, or 'concentration', *yathābhūtañāṇadassana*, or 'knowledge and vision of things as they really are', *nibbidā*, or 'withdrawal', *virāga*, or 'dispassion', *vimutti*, or 'freedom', and finally, *āsavakkhayañāna*, or 'knowledge of the destruction of the biases' - the goal corresponding to the Third Noble Truth.

Another traditional reference to this twofold tendency inherent in existence is found in the *Cūlavedalla Sutta*, of the *Majjhima Nikāya.[5] Here the Buddhist*

sister, Dhammadinnā is questioned by the lay follower, *Visākha*. Referring to the habitual human tendency to become attached to objects that give rise to pleasant feelings (*sukhavedanā*), *Visākha* asks whether this tendency is present in all pleasant feelings. *Dhammadinnā* replies that, "*...a tendency to attachment does not lie latent in all pleasant feelings...*". She then points out that what is to be eliminatd is only the tendency to attachment to "*...pleasures of the senses...* [which we could equate with *kāmacchanda* - *kāma* being associated with the physical senses]*... to unskilled states of mind...*". But by remaining "*...aloof from pleasures of the senses, aloof from unskilled states of mind...*", one can, with pleasant feeling as a basis, develop not the usual attachment to some object [corresponding to *taṇhā* and *upādāna* of the *saṃsāric* process], but "*...the first meditation...*", which is "*...born of aloofness, and is rapturous and joyful* [corresponding to the progressive process of *pīti* and *pāmojja*]. *It is by this means that he gets rid of attachment* [to sense objects]*...*".

From all this emerges the true connection between this principle of conditionality and the Four Noble Truths. The First and Second Truths are an expression of this cyclical or reactive order of conditionality (*visabhāga paṭibhāga*), whereas the third and fourth are an expression of this other tendency, wherein the unfoldment of events is of a progressive order (*sadisa paṭibhāga*). The link between them is *dukkha*.

To conclude then, we can now formulate an alternative and 'progressive' formulation of the Four Noble Truths wherein the standard third Noble Truth of cessation (*nirodha*) is replaced by the fulfillment of satisfaction of *dhammachanda*.

Notes:

1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V.356
2. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.167
3. See Matilal, *Logic, Language and Reality*, p. 319f., for discussion of the translation of *avijjā*.
4. see *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, V.1
5. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.299

BUDDHISM AND POETRY

by Dharmachari Ānanda

Buddhism and poetry are subjects that would not normally be seen in each other's company. At first sight they would seem to be a million miles apart, both in content and purpose. In fact one might imagine that Buddhism is above all characterised by having a purpose - the enlightenment of Humanity - while poetry is characterised by not having one. However, in the pages that follow I hope to make it clear that, far from having no common ground, they are in essence aspects of a single process. And in that word 'process' is the clue to their affinity.

Normally we think of Buddhism as a religion and poetry as an art. By religion we generally mean a system of beliefs about the nature and purpose of man and the universe. And by poetry we usually mean a particular kind of writing which uses a special diction, rhythm and structure in order to make observations about about the world we live in - usually from a romantic or philosophical point of view. These are not definitions in any strict sense; they are more in the nature of working guidelines which indicate the purpose of the activity in question.

But even having avoided strict dictionary definitions, we are already encountering a problem, a problem caused by the nature of words. Words of any sort are intrinsically a product of past experience. Their meanings are determined by past usage and by the needs of successive generations of people who have in common the need to communicate ideas. When we use words that have long histories - words like Faith, Truth, Love, God, Belief - we take on board all their many-layered accretions of meaning gathered to them through many centuries of daily use. We cannot use these words - or think about the concepts they represent - without invoking all these shades of meaning which usage has hung upon them, because language is itself part of our thinking process. And language fixes things that are essentially fluid in a continuous state of change.

So I would like to begin by throwing out of the window a few unwarranted assumptions which are connotated by the words 'Buddhism' and 'poetry'. First, Buddhism is not a religion, or a philosophy, or oriental, or essentially to do with the Buddha. And secondly, poetry is not an art, or a literary exercise, or something found in books, or essentially to do with language.

These statements may seem to be herecies of the first order, so I had better explain what I think they are. First, let's look briefy at how Buddhism has been described through its long history by those who have practised it. First, the Buddha himself, in the 5th century BCE., when asked by his own disciples how to recognise his teachings among the plethora of other teachings, said this:

> *"Whatever conduces to dispassion, not to passion; to detachment, not to bondage; to decrease of worldly gains, not to their increase; to frugality, not to covetousness; to contentment, not to discontent; to solitude, not to company; to energy, not to sluggishness; to delight in good, not in evil, of such teachings you may with certainty affirm, 'This is the Teaching, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's message'."* [1]

On other occasions Buddhism has been variously described as *"Whatever conduces to emancipation from suffering"*; *"Seeing things as they are"*; *"Doing good. Ceasing to do evil. Purifying the heart."*; *"Realizing your own true nature"*; *"Attaining Buddhahood"*; *"A set of disciplines and doctrines which aims at reproducing the spiritual experience of the Buddha"*.

Even a superficial glance at these statements shows that most of them have in common the idea of doing. They are all concerned with action which leads to experience. This is why Buddhism is so often described in terms of a path, because it is concerned with actions which have a common aim or direction, and which thus link together to culminate in a goal or end. Without this dynamic and practical element, the whole of Buddhism is reduced to a scholastic labyrinth of historical accretions, which makes nonsense of its essential teaching that humanity can perfect itself through the progressive opening of higher and higher faculties present within us.

So in comparing Buddhism and poetry, I must emphasise that it is only as dynamic processes which take place in our minds and lives that they can be compared, and all the historical schools, all the scriptures and commentaries, the Zen koans and scholastic conundrums, are only secondary material; to use the traditional image, they are only the finger pointing to the moon and not the moon itself.

The Buddha saw that human beings for the most part do not live the life of a human being. They live the life of an animal or a demon, or a starving ghost wandering the Earth in search of something that will satisfy him. They live the life of constant frustration and delusion. They live a life of fear and unfulfilment. They live in a state of confused aims and defeated ideals.

The Buddha saw, as a result of many years of self-denial and determined practice, that all this amounted to a state of perpetual suffering, repeated for lifetime after lifetime. He saw moreover, that it need not be like that. He saw that there is another state, a state more in tune with human ideals - more in tune, in fact, with human nature - which does not involve these endlessly repeated cycles of suffering. He called this state 'nirvāṇa': extinction. Extinction; that is, not of the personality or the individual's experience, but of the negative, self-oriented states of mind, and of all the fear and craving associated with them. The Buddha also created simple practices which could help people attain these 'higher' states, not merely in isolated flashes of insight, but as permanent states of being, 'abodes' in which people could dwell all their lives if they so wish.

These insights made it impossible for the Buddha to accept unquestioningly the mental and physical conditions in which everyone lives, as a matter of course. In the light of such insight, human life itself becomes a travesty of the ideal life, the perfected life, and one wonders how anyone can possibly take any of it seriously when measured against this norm.

The Buddha's vision of the deep unsatisfactoriness of life of course is not unique. Many saints and philosophers - not to mention poets and artists - have had a similar insight. It's nothing new for us to hear or read that life is a sorry unsatisfying affair. Nowadays the arts in particular are criticised for being despairing and nihilistic, for seeing the ugliness and hatred in the world rather than the beauty and the harmony. But what makes the Buddha's case unique is his totally thorough approach to the problem. Having had the experience that radically changed his life - what we now call his 'enlightenment' - he went back to its root, analysed the process from top to bottom, and articulated a path of practical steps from it which any human being of average capability could understand and practise, and which would lead that person to a state where he could have the same experience. And it is this path, this sequence of steps, formulated by the Buddha two and a half thousand years ago that we now call Buddhism.

So we can now perhaps agree that Buddhism has little to do with religion in the sense of a system of belief; if it is a system at all, it is a system of practices carried out in the belief that they will change one's life. And if it is anything to do with the Buddha at all, it is that he was the discoverer of the efficacy of these practices, and the first human to carry them through to their complete conclusion.

The Buddha was above all a practical man. He recognised that people are driven by hidden forces that they cannot control, that they have hungers and needs that they only dimly understand. But he went further and saw that no intellectual remedy would be effective; no system would affect those levels of the psyche where chaos and suffering have their roots. Even today, commentators and political leaders are fond of telling us that, in spite of the terrible hells all around us on this planet, with the right approach, the right economic system, the right distribution of wealth and labour, proper control of the means of production, and of course with the right people leading it all, everything will be put right in time. Christianity also never tires of telling us that if we only have faith in His love, and in the wisdom of the Church, God will not abandon us.

But the Buddha said that this utopianism is nonsense. No system or external remedy can solve the problem of suffering, because its roots are in us, at the very heart of the relationship of mind with phenomena. What does this mean? What we all desire, and therefore what we constantly try to get through the means of our behaviour in the world, is something that the world cannot ever provide; we want something permanent from a world which is itself impermanent; we want something unchanging from a world whose essence is change; we want something ultimately real from a world which is itself only a shadow of

reality. In short, we want something ultimately in harmony with our own nature when stripped of its unreal conditioning and habitual forms. The paradox in human existence now stands revealed in terrible simplicity. We are intoxicated, literally poisoned, by the idea of getting happiness from that which is incapable of giving us happiness; and it is our ceaseless striving to achieve happiness by means of things which inherently cannot provide it that itself is the source of the world's conflict. In Yeat's phrase - so eloquent in its simplicity - "*man is in love with what vanishes*". This is the real meaning of the statement for which Buddhism, at least in the West, has become notorious: *sabbe sankhara dukkha*: all that exists is unsatisfactory; suffering is inherent in existence.

We would appear to have an insoluble problem on our hands, After all, we cannot just decide not to desire something because we know it's going to lead to trouble; if we repress our desires, it simply leads to a deep split in the psyche, to self-hatred, depression, psychoses of various kinds, violence, and often to suicide. And modern psychology, although so knowledgable about the causes and processes involved in these ills, does not seem to be able to deal with the problem at all; if pressed, it simply proposes red-herrings and temporary palliatives, or involves people in years of fruitless self-questioning, finally getting itself hopelessly bogged down in the labyrinths of language and self-referring jargon. Hence the destructiveness and cynicism which we find in our present culture: conventional religion, philosophy and psychology are no longer taken seriously by the majority of aware people.

But we still have this hunger, this longing for the substantial and permanent, and as society gets more and more sophisticated, it gets worse, not less, and the associated social problems become more acute. We can't abolish it, because its not under our control; we can't satisfy it, because there is nothing in the world that can satisfy it; so we have an endlessly descending spiral of frustration and conflict, just about held in check by society's ethical codes, habits, customs, and our own inbuilt fear of change. Positive emotions - love, compassion, imagination - do not figure in this process; the motivating factors are fear: fear of authority, fear of the unknown, and of the new, fear of being ostracised by society and friends.

In Buddhism there is a well known image representing this process of endless reaction. And rather than try to convey the endless complexities of a spiritual teaching over two millenia old in words, I would like to give you this image. It is called the Wheel of Life, and its use goes back well into the formative years of Buddhism. At its heart, in the bull's eye of this wheel, we find three animals: the pig, the cock, and the snake. They are depicted as chasing each other in a circle, as if intent on devouring each other. These creatures symbolise the three fundamental causes of human suffering: greed, hatred and ignorance, and they are at the centre of the wheel because the entire edifice built up by the reactive, conditioned mind has its source in these three mental states.

Next to them are the ascending and descending paths, the creative and reactive phases of existence, represented by beings tumbling headlong into darkness on the one hand, and monks - or those whose consciousness is characterised by positive or creative states - on the other.

Further out still from the centre are images of the six traditional states of conditioned existence, the Six Realms or Lokas: the realms of the gods, warriors, animals, beings in hell, hungry ghosts, and humans. These can be interpreted as being actual physical places inhabited by the different classes of beings, or they can be seen as the fruits of accumulated mental states, as it were frozen into the different physical worlds. We can of course see every one of these worlds around us at any moment, whenever we care to look.

Finally, around the rim of the wheel are what are known as the Twelve Links, and it is with these links that I am mainly concerned in this talk. In a sense they are the place where poetry and Buddhism most nearly coincide. Together with their positive counterparts they form the area of operation of the creative imagination, the place where we are most open to the influences of our environment.

The images and their associated mental states are, going in clock-wise order, as follows:

1.	a blind man with a stick	ignorance
2.	a potter with a wheel	karma products
3.	a monkey climbing a tree	consciousness
4.	a ship with four passengers	mind and body
5.	an empty house	the sense organs
6.	a man and woman embracing	contact
7.	a man with an arrow in his eye	feeling
8.	a woman offering a drink	craving
9.	a man gathering fruit	grasping
10.	a pregnant woman	becoming
11.	a woman in childbirth	birth
12.	a man carrying a corpse	old age and death

The sequence of these images around the rim of the wheel illustrates how the whole chain of destructive mental reactions which gives rise to the external world is put together. It's a chain which has been going on continually since consciousness first arose on this planet, and it goes on mainly at an unconscious level, so that we are seldom aware of what is taking place: all we normally see is the external shell of behaviour, and we assume that this shell is the only reality. At the same time that this is going on in other people, it's also going on within us, so that the overall effect is a bit like a hall of distorting mirrors - one reaction triggering another in an endless chain reaction which has its tap-root in the bed-rock of the basic poisons: ignorance, hatred, fear and greed.

So this is the real reason that Buddhism exists, to do something about the endless chain of negative reactions in our minds which goes under the (one might say rather misleading) heading of 'human life'.

It will of course be objected here that this is not in fact the sum total of human life; that many people's lives are very different to this; what about our great philosophers, our great mystics, or great artists and poets? Have they not risen above this maelstrom of misery? And does the fact that such people have existed and indeed continue to exist despite the boredom, insignificance or catastrophes that beset most people's lives, not redeem life from the accusations of futility and suffering laid upon it?

However one may argue for this, the fact remains that so many people's lives are beset with suffering and dissatisfaction and that neither religion nor the arts seem to alter this state of affairs substantially. We come back to the painful fact that intellectual solutions, theoretical explanations do not alter in any way that fact that we must experience the insufficiency of our own lives face to face as it were, without any intellectual palliative. Another man's solution cannot be our solution. What may be an answer to someone living in India or Japan is not an answer for us unless we have the means at our fingertips to partake of his experience. We cannot simply be handed experience on a plate; it comes only as a result of effort and practice sustained over a long period.

The Buddha said, in words which are reproduced in the Dhammapada, "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love." This is the root fact upon which Buddhism lays its entire teaching. For we may extend this truth to many other situations. Greed is not removed by satiating it, but only by removing its cause. Ignorance is not eliminated by filling the mind with facts and opinions, but only by introducing self-awareness. So Buddhism tries to do just this: it inculcates awareness and love by means of meditation and practical precept. Gradually by these means a subtle but very profound change takes place in the practitioner's consciousness. There comes about a deep reorientation, a seminal redirection of the mind's basic energy, which in turn leads to the spontaneous arising of a continuous texture of 'positive mental events'.

Traditionally these positive events - or the mental state which their sustained presence invokes - are as follows:
Trust; faith in oneself; desire for the good; detachment; acceptance; clarity; energy; alertness; awareness; equanimity; peace.
Developing these positive states of mind one could say is the real work of the Buddhist. It's the touchstone, the thing that decides whether you're really on the spiritual path or not. It's the thing that, practised by enough people over a long enough period, will fundamentally and finally change the world.

The process of change at this level of the mind also stirs up, by the well-known process of action and reaction, a counter-process; in the same way that a varying electrical current flowing in a conductor will generate a counter

current flowing against it and effectively increase the resistance of the conductor, change in mental energy gives rise to forces which oppose change, oppose any move towards greater freedom or the destruction of existing patterns of thought. This is why any evolution in man's consciousness is always so difficult, so slow and so painful. We rely on things not changing; our ability to cope with everyday life depends upon habits and patterns with which we are familiar, and Buddhism is in effect changing this *status quo*. It so happens that there is help at hand. The human organism is not merely a floating mind with appetites attached, isolated from its environment. The essential elements which compose our bodies - and thereby support consciousness - are found also in stones, minerals, vegetation, birds and the food we eat; on the molecular level there are no boundaries: everything is literally part of everything else. By virtue of this fact, this universal condition, we have a resonance with everything outside us; everything that happens outside has a counterpart within us, whether or not we perceive it. We have a very intimate relationship with this world at every level of its structure.

An image that often recurs to me in this context is that of the umbilical cord, the birth cord; it is a potent image in poetry because it implies a strong and essential conection between inner and outer; when we are in the womb we have a deep connection with the earth - both the element earth and the planet - through the medium of the mother. These are the conditions in which our individual consciousness begins its existence: a state of profound contact with its environment. But at a certain point in that existence there occurs a break in that state of unity; an irrevocable fragmenting takes place. And it is here in this moment of severing that many problems begin. Because the birth-cord has an important dual function: it doesn't merely tie the child to its mother, preventing evolution to a higher state; it nurtures, and provides all the necessary elements for the evolution of the foetus during those crucial months of existence before birth. T. S. Eliot says, in his poem *The Dry Salvages*, "*the river is within us, the sea is all about us*". In this case it is quite literally so: he's referring to the bloodstream, the river of life, and the limitless system of veins and capillary vessels which permeate our entire organism.

It is precisely because of this intimate relationship between what is inside and what is outside that poetry has meaning for us, and is able to be of great help in the process of spiritual transformation. Given the difficulty of the task, we must make use of everything that can help us in this process. The poet Seamus Heaney has spoken of words as doors:

> "*Janus (the Roman god of doorways and boundaries) is to a certain extent their deity; looking back to a ramification of roots and associations and forward to a clarification of sense and meaning. And in* Door into the Dark *there are a number of poems that arise out of the almost unnameable energies that, for me, hovered over certain bits of language and landscape.*"
> [2]

This is, I feel, a key passage in the understanding of the role of poetry and language in the spiritual life. Man lives his life in two worlds and two

elements: the day and the night, the revealed and the hidden; he inhabits the earth, the solid light-resisting element, which surrounded him during his existence in the womb; and he inhabits the air, the element he moves in for the remainder of his earthly life. But he is also inhabited by these elements: in the form of the earth element of which his blood, flesh and bones are composed, and the air element in the process of breathing: such inhabiting is the very thing which keeps him alive, the elements having their lives within our own.

Similarly language inhabits, or points us towards, two worlds, two directions: inwards, into earth and darkness; and upwards, outwards into the air and the light. Heaney goes on to talk about this doubleness of language as exampled in his poem *Undine*:

> "*It was the dark pool of the sound of this word that first took me: if our auditory imagination were sufficiently attuned to plumb and sound a vowel, to unite the most primitive and civilised associations, the word undine would probably suffice as a poem in itself.*" [3]

So the uttering of any word is an invocation which works in two directions. it evokes primitive origins, roots, half-conscious echoes of our own mysterious ancestry as drifting fragments of the human race. It asks us, in effect, the sphinx-like question: "*Where have you come from? What are you that you should call me up into the light?*"

But the word also faces forward to "*a clarification of sense and meaning*". It embodies the 'clear-seeing' aspect of consciousness, as well as the roots and shadows, the mysterious and the implicate; it articulates, defines, and delineates; it focuses, spotlights a particular area, limits the protean ambiguity of things to something we are able to deal with; it renders measurable, humanises, and by the magical process of naming, re-establishes the link between ourselves and the other, the alien, and reaffirms the connectedness of things beneath the level of superficial differences. So the poet, because of this peculiar kind of relationship he has with the world is in the position of the oracle or shaman. In primitive types of society this is the essential function of the poet. He is the one who is 'well-connected'. But his connections, far from being social, are much deeper: they are with the great primary forces of the universe which primitive man imaged in the form of animals, gods and spirits. the birth-cord, severed on the physical level, remains intact in another sense to nurture and inspire. By its means, a certain part of his consciousness remains always attuned to the voices that come from those places which civilised man likes to think he has left well behind.

This aspect of the poetic nature is exemplified in Wordsworth's famous autobiographical poem *The Prelude*. There is a passage I would like to quote from the section of the poem dealing with the events of the French Revolution. Wordsworth is in Paris during the revolution in 1792, in a small room high over the city, sitting at his desk in the middle of the night, and tuning in to the vibrations in the air all around him:

> "..... *But that night*
> *I felt most deeply in what world I was*
> *What ground I trod on, and what air I breathed.*
> *High was my room and lonely, near the roof*
> *Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge*
> *That would have pleased me in more quiet times;*
> *Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.*
> *With unextinguished taper I kept watch*
> *Reading at intervals; the fear gone by*
> *Pressed on me like a fear to come.*
> *I thought of those September massacres*
> *Divided from me by one little month,*
> *Saw them and touched: the rest was conjured up*
> *From magic fictions or true history,*
> *Remembrances and dim admonishments.*
> *The horse is taught his manage, and no star*
> *Of wildest course but treads back his own steps;*
> *For the spent hurricane the air provides*
> *As fierce a successor; the tide retreats*
> *But to return out of its hiding-place*
> *In the great deep; all things have second birth;*
> *The earthquake is not satisfied at once;*
> *And in this way I wrought upon myself*
> *Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried*
> *To the whole city, "sleep no more".* [4]

This passage very clearly shows an image of the poet as one who responds. He seems like a reed responding to every minute movement of wind. But of course it is an active, not passive, response. The response is evoked by the environment and the events taking place, but it is shaped by the poet's own character and conscious craft; his historical awareness, his sensibility to the pattern of events, his deeper intuitions of man's inner nature.

Implicit in this is a binding process, a process bringing together the harmony in the structure of the universe and the apparently random and disconnected events which form our everyday lives. This is not at all a thought-out process; the poet does not set out with a conscious program before him of making order out of random experiences. According to Robert Frost, "*a poem begins as a lump in the throat, a homesickness, a lovesickness.*" Very often this feeling is not given any conscious significance by the poet. We're dealing with the seed of the seed, as it were; the thing that comes before the physical event or phenomenon, because this is the point at which creativity in the spiritual sense, happens.

And equally often, I think, it happens through chaos. Maybe because there is so much of it manifested in our daily lives, we tend to underestimate the importance of chaos. But for the poet chaos can be the seeding ground for very important experiences. The great Finnish poet, Edith Södergran, who died in 1923, wrote:

"Every poem shall be the tearing-up of a poem
Not a poem, but clawmarks." [5]

This is a pretty radical view of poetry, at least by English standards. It suggests that the poem is identical to something already happening in the poet's mind, the visible remains of a struggle, the afterglow from a great conflagration. It suggests something violent, savage even, something which tears down obstacles and irrelevances. This quality of poetry - its uncompromising effort to get at the truth no matter what the cost - is reflected in Södergran's own life which was one of continuous struggle against entrenched bigotism and extreme poverty.

A poem may be appreciated aesthetically; it may be analysed; it may be set as the subject of an examination; it may be anthologised, even held up as a great masterpiece of literature, and eulogised in critical journals as a landmark in poetic expression. But all this means nothing at all, if we as individuals do not enter into the blood of the poem and experience it from the inside. But how rarely this happens! We are content that there are those who write masterpieces and have significant aesthetic experiences; we feel vaguely satisfied that 'culture' exists to support and propagate such writing; we commend ourselves for recognising the value that great art has for a civilised society; but for us as individuals the products of this process never touch us. That is, not in the depths, where it matters. That is why Södergran so powerfully states, as every true poet must, that the poem itself is not the important thing; even further, the essence of a poem is its own destruction. Otherwise we end up admiring it as a finished, immutable object, hermetic in its perfection, which has no power to enter into us and change us.

Ultimately the poem, as an end product, is irrelevant to the poet. What is central for him is the image which enables him to encounter himself, which the poem captures. The poetry is in the act of encountering oneself and the world. The poem as a pattern of words, rhythms and images is merely the residue from that reaction. If the reaction does not take place, there is no poetry. It follows that the test of a great poem must necessarily be whether or not a related reaction takes place in the listener or reader, given that such a reader is able to assimilate what the poem has to give fully. A great poem which nobody is able to respond to is a contradiction in terms.

So process is primary, form is secondary. Everyone one of us, I'm sure, has had the experience at some time or other of being deeply moved by something totally incomprehensible, whether the occasion be a painting, a poem or a piece of music. The Spanish poet, Lorca, speaks of a great singer who had this power to cast aside mere ability, mere comprehensibility, and contact something altogether different, the *duende* :

"At that moment La Nina de los Peines got up like a woman possessed, broken as a medieval mourner, drank without pause a large glass of cazalla...and sat down to sing without voice, breathless, without subtlety, her throat burning, but...with duende. She succeeded in getting rid of the scaffolding of the song, to make way for a furious and fiery duende, companion of sand-laden winds, that made those who were listening tear their clothes rhythmically, like Caribbean Negroes clustered before the image of St. Barbara." [6]

Form is something that takes care of itself when the duende is present, and if we are too occupied with idea of perfection we will scare off this dark primitive spirit and we will be left with a perfectly shaped, brilliant but heartless gem.

There are many forms that the process of poetic creation can take, and they will vary according to the preoccupation of the age. In our present age, with the world split by so many factional groups motivated by power and nationalistic pride, the 'struggle to truth' for the poet will often manifest as a struggle against authority, against systems, mechanistic thinking and the power mode. An outstanding example of this struggle may be seen in the life and work of the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. All his life he was set squarely against organised fascism, against military consciousness, agains mob thinking and the ugliness and brutalism of the self-appointed power-hungry elite. Neruda wrote:

"We have to demand of the poet that he take his place in the street and in the fight, as well as in the light and in the darkness. Perhaps the poet has always had the same obligations throughout history...poetry is rebellion. The poet was not offended when he was called subversive. Life transcends all structures." [7]

The struggle towards truth may not always be fought out on a public stage, though it sees clear that at some point it must connect with the struggle taking place in the community at large, at the level of institutions, nations and entire cultures. Many of our present poets are very private, even isolated, in their chosen themes and lifestyle. But I do believe that the same process, the same attempt to face and resolve universal conflicts, to embody in his work some kind of transforming energy, must take place in the most unsocial of poets if they are to be worthy of the name of poet. Conflict, 'the mire and fury of human veins', is almost always a condition for creativity. In the words of Sangharakshita, my own Buddhist teacher:

"Mankind progresses for the same reason that the amoeba evolves - from irritation. There was never any flower of human achievement but some great sorrow lay at its root." [8]

However, it cannot be overemphasised that this great sorrow, this 'love-sickness', this state of exile from oneself, is only the beginning of the process, the first step on the thousand-mile journey, and not the whole of the journey. But by the same token, the journey cannot be made without taking that first step.

Many poets find that the initial sorrow or conflict is followed by a negative period of 'aimlessness', aridness, a directionless dusk in which nothing

seems to be happening. In spiritual terms, this could be called 'the dark night of the sense', a state of fear with no tangible cause or object. Our instinctive reaction when in such a state is to get distracted by some other activity, and this is what so many people would do. But for the artist or poet any distraction at this point is fatal. The 'dark night' is actually a period of germination, of "*coming into being in darkness* ", in which what will eventually be revealed as a poem first receives its laws and governing images. It is at this stage that the poet should be most inwardly directed, sensitized to every slight movement and process within and around him, awake to nuances of sound and light which will nurture the gathering process. Gradually images seen will begin to assume a new significance; sounds heard at random in the street or in the country will take on an evocative sonority; words will begin to cluster around an image, and technique will be called upon for the first time. Seamus Heaney again:

> "*Technique is what allows that first stirring of the mind round a word or image or a memory to grow towards articulation:...the seminal excitement has to be granted conditions in which, in Hopkins' words, "it selves, goes itself...crying 'what I do is me, for that I came'."*
>
> *Technique ensures that the first gleam attains its proper effulgence...the crucial action is pre-verbal: to be able to allow the first alertness, or come-hither, sensed in a blurred or incomplete way, to dilate, and approach as a thought, or a theme or a phrase.*" [9]

"*...the crucial action is pre-verbal* " I think this is itself a crucially important statement. Although the poet is a person essentially involved with language - a man for whom the audible word exists, one might say - all the important things happen before words enter the arena. I think that those who insist that words are the initial catalyst in the forming of a poem are missing out a very important part of the creative process. In the primitive history of the human race, image creation preceded word creation, and it may be surmised that the phase of image creation was itself preceded by a long epoch of unarticulated intuitional activity of which we can know little. Similarly the process of individual poetic creation may be expected to recapitulate the development of the racial faculties in its own time scale.

This process of forming the 'soul' of the poem is well hinted at in Heaney's phrases "*seminal excitement* " and "*first alertness* "; they have an animal freshness about them which pulls us back into a world where poetry is the natural mode of communication, in which its images and intuitions are self-evident and need no mediation. Notice also how Heaney's language in these passages suggests something alive, something sentient, something capable of action and initiative independent of the poet himself. It is as if our instinctive metaphors of the muse - goddess, dragon, fairy, unicorn, princess, sorcerer, goblin, or witch - were literally present in the physical world, and merely awaited language to give them tangible reality. And it is worth remembering that up until the Industrial Revolution this was how the majority of 'uneducated' people did experience the world. It was a world in which intuitions outweighed concepts in significance in the matters of daily life; a world in which

poetry and myth were the touchstones of behaviour rather than moral codes and scientific demonstration.

Buddhism is particularly rich in images of these essences or souls, although such methods of describing them are often frowned on as being too theistically centred. Jung of course introduced to western culture the concept of the psychic archetype which manifests in the unconscious, and this has given us a useful way around the problem of relating to such contentious incarnations of the mind.

At the heart of Buddhism are various often-invoked spiritual qualities: wisdom, energy, compassion, patience, purity, and so on. Each of these qualities or faculties of human consciousness is embodied in the figure of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. There are many hundreds of such figures; at least one to correspond with every higher (that is, more conscious, less egotistically-centred) state of mind that has ever been experienced by man. However the most important ones can be listed quite briefly:

ĀVALOKITEŚVARA	Compassion
MAÑJUŚRI	Wisdom
VAJRASATTVA	Purity
VAJRAPĀNI	Energy
TĀRĀ	Essence of Compassion
PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ	Transcendental Wisdom

There are also five DHYĀNI BUDDHAS representing the five basic aspects of Wisdom as manifested in the human mind:

VAIROCANA	The Wisdom which knows the essence of Reality
AMOGASIDDHI	The Wisdom which is all-accomplishing
RATNASAMBHAVA	The Wisdom which goes beyond making unreal distinctions
AKṢOBHYA	The Wisdom of the perfectly-stilled consciousness
AMITĀBHA	The Wisdom of the intuitive inner vision

These images may be regarded as the 'stars principal' in the Buddhist sky. Through the process of meditation we are gradually enabled to see these brilliant sources of light, and to open our hearts to their intrinsic qualities, thereby beginning the task of remaking ourselves, of allowing our true humanity to manifest, of bringing our daily lives into line with the quality of being implied by these images. Through meditation we set in motion the "*surrender to the otherness* " which Seamus Heaney suggests is the life-pulse of true poetic creation; we begin to dissolve the hard knot of the ego which served to give us an identity and protection against a universe perceived as alien.

Poetry in this purer sense of the experience of poetic images allows this process of ego-dissolving to happen in a way which we do not perceive as threatening to us, because we have established a relationship, a connectedness with it through the medium of symbols and sounds. When so-called primitive man heard the wind howling around his village in the middle of a winter night, and

began singing or beating his hands in sympathy with it, he was doing just this: creating a poetic relationship so that the world and its gods and demons would not seem so alien, and would therefore be sympathetic to his own needs.

To come nearer our own culture and time, William Blake recognised the great power of the imagination in shaping the way we perceive the world, and how we behave in it - and hence how the world actually is, because if one's behaviour changes, it is clear that the world, which is no more than the result of the behaviour of all the sentient life forms in it, will also change. Blake, like his fellow poets John Clare and Christopher Smart, was dismissed in his own day as an obsessive eccentric, a 'radical free-thinker' - almost a term of abuse at that time within educated circles. Shunned by his own literary and artistic acquaintances, he was a man alone, a man following his own demon, whatever the cost. Now, a century and a half after his death, he is recognised not only as one of the greatest of our poets, but also as a visionary and philosopher. We are beginning to see that what emanates from the creative imagination cannot be so lightly dismissed as obsession and eccentrism.

Blake saw the world as a manifestation of eternity, that is, of the timeless, undivided state of grace which Buddhists call transcendental wisdom, consciousness undivided from reality. He did not regard art as a pleasant diversion after the real business of living is over; "*The whole business of Man is the Arts* ", he wrote; Art is the primary activity of Man. His proper business - that is, the business proper to his nature, because it is the nature of Man to transform himself into something beyond Man: man as he naturally is, is nothing more than the blue-print: the building which Man describes has yet to be built. This, in Blake's vision is the task of Art: to create the building.

Luckily, you don't need to be Blake (or even a Buddhist) in order to practise Art. You can practise it walking down to the bus stop or in conversation with a friend, just as much as in composing a poem or a string quartet. For the practice of Art is nothing other than the cultivation of the faculties of imagination, energy, and love, and this can be done in any situation and at any moment, with no other apparatus than our memory, limbs, and senses. How is this?

Action is a form of change, re-creation. We act in accordance with what we feel and what we know at any moment; normally this means re-creating the past in the present, with all its faults and negative assumptions. This is the mechanism of the 're-active' mind, rather than the 'cre-ative' mind. But if we allow the imagination to guide us at the critical moment, the negative, closed action and reaction process will be transformed into a positive, open and creative one; if we are connected at that moment with the imagination, by means of sound or image, internal or external, we will be able to transform not only ourselves, but our immediate environment. By virtue of that connection with the imagination we align ourselves with spiritual forces beyond the limits of what we normally define as 'our experience'. We will begin to imbibe the spirit of something entirely beyond our normal existence. We will enter into the realm of magic, the mind of the Shaman - one who, by virtue of his empathy with the

world, and the image of the world, becomes someone other. In traditional terms, we will have replaced the cyclical karmic links of conditioned co-production around the rim of the wheel of life with the spiral path of the positive links - those creative states of mind which are both the fruit and the means of liberating us from states of suffering, reactivity, mechanistic behaviour, selfishness and all the rest, and which culminate, over a long period of practice, in the state of freedom and wholeness which Buddhists through the ages have called Supreme Enlightenment. This switching of points from the circle to the spiral mode of activity is the central and essential task of the spiritual life. As Sangharakshita, in his book *A Survey of Buddhism*, says:

> "*The transition from sensation to craving, from passive feeling to active desire, is the psychological fact standing behind all myths of the Fall of Man from paradise to earth, from a blissful to a miserable state and sphere of existence. The interval between these two nidānas is the battlefield of the spiritual life, and to experience feelings yet check desires is that victory over oneself which the Buddha declared to be greater than the conquest of a thousand men a thousand times.*" [10]

It is important not to forget that this fundamental change of perspective is what the exercise is all about. It's not ultimately anything to do with poems any more than it is to do with shaving your head or being celibate. These are the (perhaps necessary) outward forms; but the real business of poets, as of Buddhists, is freedom, fulfilment, and ultimately self-transcendence through the radical transformation of the mind and the environment - self and other - which I believe is our purpose in being here on this much-abused, much contested planet. And this transformation is done, not in a blinding flash of lightning, but in a thousand tiny stages, each one a kind of revolution in itself, occurring every moment of our lives: the replacing of fear with faith, craving with equanimity, revulsion with compassion, ignorance with insight, alienation with empathy.

John Keats said much the same kind of thing when he coined the phrase "*soul making* ". In a letter to his cousins George and Georgiana, he writes:

> "*Call the world if you please 'The Vale of Soul-making'. Then you will find out the use of the world - how then are souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them - so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this?...Man was formed by circumstances, and what are circumstances but touchstones of his heart? And what are touchstones but proving of his heart? And what are provings but fortifiers or alterers of his nature? And what is his altered nature but his Soul?* " [11]

We've travelled a long way in the course of these few pages: from a man in India in the fifth century before Christ who once realized that "*suffering is inherent in all compounded things* ", to a young poet in Hampstead in 1820 CE. who saw that "*Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty* ". And this link between them -

this "*love imagined into words*" is the instrument whereby the mind, and thereby ultimately all of civilisation, can reshape itself.

I'd like to end with part of a poem by William Blake which seems to me to embody all that we've been talking about: this entire process of self-knowing and soul-making through 'contraries'. It is the famous poem *Auguries of Innocence* :

"Man was made for Joy and Woe
And when this we rightly know
Thro' the world we safely go;
Joy & Woe are woven fine
A Clothing for the Soul divine
Under every grief & and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine

Every Night & every morn
Some to Misery are born.
Every Morn & every Night
Some are born to sweet Delight.
Some are born to sweet Delight
Some are born to endless Night.
God appears and God is Light
To those poor souls who dwell in Night
But does a Human form Display
To those who Dwell in Realms of Day." [12]

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Notes:

(This article' is a revised version of a talk given as part of the Avon Poetry Festival on 28th November, 1986. My thanks are due to the Festival Committee and to FWBO (Bristol) for organising the event.)

1. paraphrased from Sangharakshita, 'Survey of Buddhism', Bangalore 1957, p.53
2. Saemus Heaney, *Preoccupations*, London 1980, p.52
3. *Ibid.* p.52
4. Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book X, 63-93
5. Edith Södergran, *Collected Poems*, trans. David McDuff, 1984
6. Lorca, *Theory and Function of the Duende*, Harmondsworth 1960, p.131
7. Pablo Neruda, *Memoirs*, Harmondsworth 1978, p.294
8. Sangharakshita, *The Path of the Inner Life*, London 1975, p.46
9. Saemus Heaney, *op.cit.*, p.47-8
10. Sangharakshita, *Survey...*, p.108
11. *Letters of John Keats*, ed. Page, Oxford 1954, p.266
12. *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Keynes, London 1943, p.118-121

A RENDERING OF THE *HEART SUTRA*

by Dharmachari Tejānanda

For a long time I have been rather unhappy with the version of the *Heart Sūtra* usually used in pūjā in the FWBO and the WBO. I became dissatisfied with it upon reading Edward Conze's translation and commentary in his *Buddhist Wisdom Books*, which gives the original Sanskrit version that presumably the version which we use (translated by students of Roshi Philip Kapleau) is ultimately derived from. However, in the course of being translated from Sanskrit to Chinese, from Chinese to Japanese, and finally from Japanese to American, strange things seem to have happened, resulting in something which is very much more a paraphrase of the *Heart Sūtra*, than the *Heart Sūtra* itself. Worse than this, the paraphrase contains serious inaccuracies in parts of the sūtra. To give a particularly glaring example, in the 'Kapleau' version of the sūtra, we have:

"All things are the primal void
Which is not born or destroyed;
Nor is it stained or pure,
Nor does it wax or wane."

The original Sanskrit (with literal translation, based on Conze) runs:

Iha	*Śāriputra*	*sarva-dharmāḥ*	*śūnyatā-lakṣaṇā*
here	Śāriputra	all dharmas	emptiness marked

anutpannā	*aniruddhā*
not produced	not stopped

amalā	*avimalā*
not defiled	not immaculate

anūnā	*aparipūrṇāḥ*
not deficient	not complete

So, where this *"primal void"* comes from, I'm really not sure. The sūtra is simply stating that all *dharmas* are 'marked', or characterised, by emptiness; the translation seems to suggest that some kind of ontological entity, the *"Primal Void"*, 'is' all things, which seems complete nonsense, and in any case is a complete misconstrual of what the *Heart Sūtra* in the Sanskrit is saying at this point. Likewise, the *"wax or wane"*, in the final line quoted above, effectively reiterates the meaning of the second line, and is clearly a mistranslation.

Other parts of this translation which are faulty, or downright wrong, are, briefly:

"*And sundered the bonds that caused him suffering.*" No equivalent to this in the Sanskrit at all.

"*Nor even act of sensing.*" This is recognisable as a paraphrase, but is so remote from the actual words of the sutra as to be unacceptable.

"*Not even wisdom to attain! / Attainment too is emptiness* " Again, this bears a remote resemblance to the words of the sūtra (na prāptir na aprāptiḥ, "*no attainment and no non-attainment* ", according to Conze), but too remote to be acceptable.

"*...Holding to nothing whatever* ". This is a lovely line, and there is nothing wrong with it 'dharmically', but unfortunately it bears no resemblance to anything that the Sanskrit of the sūtra says here. This does admittedly seem to be one of the most complex and problematic sections of the entire sūtra for translators, but none of the other translations that I have examined, nor the literal meaning so far as I have been able to work it out, bear out this meaning.

"*Hear then the great dhāraṇī,...*" The word *dhāraṇī* is not found in the Sanskrit, only *mantra*.

Finally, Śāriputra, to whom Āvalokiteśvara addresses the sūtra, is not mentioned at all in the 'Kapleau' version, despite being named five times in the Sanskrit.

All of this suggested the need for another translation of the sūtra, or to revert to chanting the sūtra in Sanskrit in FWBO/WBO pūjās. While I think that the latter is no bad idea, I have made the following attempt at a 'rendering' of the sūtra in English. I approached it by firstly using Conze and another translator to produce a word for word literal translation of the Sanskrit. Then, following Conze as closely as possible, but also occasionally utilising other translations (including acceptable bits of the 'Kapleau' version), I tried to produce a 'semi-metrical' version which could be recited in unison (Conze's own translation, as it stands, would not be suitable for such recital). Unlike the 'Kapleau' version, this is not a paraphrase: it sticks as closely to the words of the Sanskrit version as possible - in some instances, I think, even more so than Conze's own version does.

I do not present this as a 'final' version; in fact, I would be very pleased if readers (especially poets and Sanskritists!) could offer any suggestions for improving it. I will then revise it and print it in *Shabda*, with the suggestion that we adopt the new version in place of the inadequate one which has been in use for so long.

(Lines in square brackets would, I suggest, not be recited aloud, as it is difficult to make them 'fit' recitation.)

THE HEART SŪTRA

Homage to the richly endowed, noble Perfection
of Wisdom

Āvalokiteśvara, the noble Bodhisattva,
dwelt deeply in cognition
of transcendent wisdom;
looking down he could see nothing
but five grasping *skandhas*,
which in themselves were empty.

Here, then, Śāriputra,
form is only emptiness,
emptiness only form;
form is nothing but emptiness,
emptiness nothing but form;
that which is form is emptiness,
that which is emptiness, form.
The same is true of feeling,
perception, impulse and consciousness.

Here, Śāriputra,
All *dharmas* are marked by emptiness:
they neither arise nor cease,
they are not defiled or pure,
nor lacking or complete.

Therefore. Śāriputra,
in emptiness, no form,
no feeling, perception, impulse,
nor is there consciousness;
no eye-ear-nose-
tongue-body-mind;
no shape, sound, smell,
taste, touch or object of mind;
no sight-element and so forth until:
no element of mind-consciousness;
no ignorance, nor cessation of it,
until no decay-and-death,
no cessation of decay-and-death;
no pain, nor cause of it,
nor cease, nor path from it;
no wisdom nor attainment of wisdom,
no non-attainment of wisdom.

Therefore, Śāriputra,
not holding to attainment,
but relying on perfect wisdom,
a Bodhisattva dwells
with mind quite unobstructed;
in the absence of mind-obstruction,
he knows himself totally fearless;
overcoming all perverse vision,
he finally wins to nirvāṇa.

All Buddhas who appear,
in present, past and future,
awake to the full and utmost
perfect knowledge and vision
by depending on perfect wisdom.

So know transcendent wisdom
as the great all-seeing mantra,
the utmost, incomparable mantra,
allayer of all pain;
in truth, it does not deceive:
Perfect Wisdom has given this mantra:

[Thus:]

Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā

[So ends the Heart of Perfect Wisdom.]

ωωωωωωωω

THE IRREDUCIBLY HUMAN

by Dharmachari Chakkhupāla

The landscapes of John Constable are as familiar as his name. So familiar are his pleasant rustic scenes that in viewing one we might easily imagine ourselves there. No less will known, perhaps, are the seascapes of J.M.W. Turner, yet 'familiar' seems an inappropriate epithet for his dangerous seas.

There is another kind of 'scape', another sort of view which is both as reassuringly familiar as Constable's fields and as forbiddingly sublime as Turner's seas. This 'scape' too has its artist, though not a painter of pictures but of words; I mean the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins and his poems and poetic theory of *inscape*. In a journal entry Hopkins describes what he means by his coinage *inscape* as "*the immediate scape of the thing, which unmistakably distinguishes and individualises things.*" Much later in life, in a letter to Robert Bridges, Hopkins writes:

> "*As...melody is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I above all aim at in poetry.*"

Hopkins's small but dazzling contribution to our literature consists of his attempts to *inscape* his poetry; to infuse his poems with the distinctive individual quality of things - to distil their quintessential nature; and also to make of the poems themselves, by rhythm pitch and rhyme, something equally vivid, individual and distinctive. His success in the attempt has been well expressed by R.W. Dixon, in his now famous observation that Hopkins's poems had "*a right temper which goes to the point of the terrible; the terrible crystal.*" The following two examples of his poetic style have in them, perhaps, something of Constable and Turner respectively: In the first, Hopkins captures an exuberance of poppies in a field of ripe wheat -

> "*Today the sky is two and two*
> *With white strokes and strains of blue.*
> *The blue wheat-acre is underneath*
> *And the braided ear breaks out of the sheath,*
> *The ear in milk, lush the sash*
> *And crush-silk poppies aflash,*
> *The blood-gush blade-gash*
> *Flame-rash rudred*
> *Bud shelling or broad-shed*
> *Tatter-tassel-tangled and dingle-a-danglèd*
> *Dandy-hung dainty head.*"
>
> *The Woodlark*

Or, by stark contrast, he paints the cold monochrome fury of the sea in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* -

> "*Into the snow she sweeps,*
> *Hurling the haven behind,*
> *The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps*
> *For the infinite air is unkind,*
> *And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,*
> *Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;*
> *Wiry and white-fiery; and whirlwind-swivelled snow*
> *Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.*"

Gifted with acute powers of observation, and endowed with a keen conscience, Hopkins came while at Oxford in the 1860's under the influence of Ruskin and Pater, and under the sway of Newman and the Oxford Movement. He was not first and foremost a poet. His primary vocation was the Jesuit priesthood. His practice of *inscaping* his prose and verse was not merely the exercise of his theories of poetic diction, but an elaboration, an exegesis, of his religious philosophy. His aesthetic sensibilities were married to an ascetic discipline. When Hopkins examined nature, his perceptions were imbued with and augmented by a profound religious sense. In his journal he writes:

> "*I do not think I have seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.*"

and again, in his sonnet to Spring:

> "*The glassy peartree leaves and blooms: they brush*
> *The descending blue. That blue is all in a rush*
> *With richness.*"

When he looks at the peartree, Hopkins sees "*that there works through the frail perfection of its leaves and blossoms the same spirit of life whose creative impulse he feels in the depths of his own being.*" He intended his poems to be not merely enjoyed for their undoubted technical and evocative brilliance, but to be the expressions of his spiritual insight. Perhaps the most concise and beautiful statement of this insight is to be found in his sonnet *As Kingfishers Catch Fire.*

> "*As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;*
> *As tumbled over rim in roundy wells*
> *Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's*
> *Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;*
> *Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:*
> *Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;*
> *Selves - goes itself;* myself *it speaks and spells;*
> *Crying* What I do is me: for that I came."

The ring of stone on stone, the tone of a bell, the red flash of a dragonfly in flight: all these things are, in the poet's eyes, the outward manifestation of some innate individualising characteristic, some essential quality of being. "*Each thing just by being itself, seems to sing itself forth from the inner depths of its own identity.*" Each thing *selves*, declares itself.

The poet's vision is of each creature fulfilling itself in some beautiful cosmic harmony. Each creature, that is, except man. The primitive harmony of the animal realm may indeed have a primordial beauty - but it is also a savage beauty. It is the harmony of hunter and prey, kill and be killed. It is the brute beauty of Blake's *Tyger* - beneath good and evil, beyond morality. Man stepped outside that realm as he walked blushing out of Eden. He forsook that simple harmony as he took his first faltering steps towards awareness, towards the self-consciousness of the individual.

What then is the *inscape* of Man? What does Man sing forth from the inner depths of <u>his</u> identity? What is the innate characteristic of his self-awareness? Hopkins continues:

> "*I say more: the just man justices;*
> *Keeps grace: that keeps all his going graces:*
> *Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is -*
> *Christ - for Christ plays in ten thousand places,*
> *Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his*
> *To the Father through the features of men's faces.*"

For Hopkins, as for every Christian, the soul, the seat of morality, is the conditional gift of God. Nothing pleases God more than to see us doing what he says we must. Any reasonable created person will acknowledge this debt of service to his Creator. This acknowledgement of service is called grace, and its supreme and most beautiful exemplar is Christ - crucified. In the final analysis, God has a monopoly of justice - as indeed he has a monopoly of everything else. As Buddhism admits of no soul, no personal creator God, no debt of service, no grace, no bleeding Messiah and no monopoly of justice or of anything else, we must here part company with Hopkins - at least with Hopkins the Jesuit, if not with the poet.

In the hierarchy of consciousness, man may by his own efforts attain to any level of being, from the palest flickering of reflexive consciousness, to beyond mere divinity, to the Infinite Light of the supreme consciousness which is Buddhahood. Man's being, and his expression of his being, is not fixed or static, but fluid and dynamic. Man's *inscape* will depend on his individual attainment of consciousness.

Our examination of the *inscape* of man will take as its schema a broad categorisation of the ascending consciousness. This is the threefold categorisation of the levels of the psychological, the spiritual and the transcendental, which corresponds to the Buddha's Threefold Way of Morality,

Meditation and Wisdom. Firstly, the psychological, which broadly speaking corresponds to the ethical dimension of being.

In one degree or another we are all familiar with the experience of embarrassment. It might be the passing prickly discomfort of the *faux pas*, or the sweet pain that attends the casual glance of one secretly admired, or we may even share with T.S. Eliot's *Prufrock* the intense impotent agony of feeling "*formulated, sprawling on a pin* ", "*pinned and wriggling on the wall* ". But whatever the degree or situation, the experience of embarrassment is a potent emotional and physical reminder of our self-consciousness. The pulse begins to race, then deepens and pounds. The palms perspire; and no matter how studiously we examine them, our hands seem to develop a will of their own, and rush one behind our back, the other into the dark comfort of our pocket. We may try whistling a few nonchalant bars, but all to no avail. Ignoring the silent plea of our downcast eyes, the ground beneath our feet remains resolutely shut, while the inexorable crimson wave washes upwards over our face and ignites the twin vermilion beacons of our ears. "*Blushing* ", said Darwin, "*is the most peculiar and most human of all expressions.*"

The factors involved in evincing a blush may be many and complex, depending on the individual's psychological constitution and on the particular situation. There are though certain fundamental components which generally apply, and these are that the sense of self is heightened, that it is measured, and that it is betrayed. The social psychologist Erving Goffman writes:

> "*By showing embarrassment...the individual...demonstrates that while he cannot present a sustainable and coherent self on this occasion, he is at least disturbed by the fact and may prove worthy at another time.*"

When we blush we burn with a sense of self, we become acutely aware of our limitations or wrongdoings, and we display our shame. This individual capacity for shame is the key thread in our social fabric. In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* the Buddha says:

> "*These two bright factors guard the world: self-respect and decorum. If these two bright factors did not guard the world...(it) would fall into promiscuity and act like goats and sheep, fowl and swine, cattle and wild beasts.*"

The two *lokapālas*, guardians of the world, here translated as self-respect and decorum, are *hirī* (Sanskrit: *hrī*) and *ottapa* (Sanskrit: *apatrāpya*). Turning to the Theravāda Abhidhamma, to the *Atthasālinī*, a work attributed to Buddhaghosa, we find these two bright factors or 'positive mental events' *hirī* and *ottapa*, analysed according to four aspects, that is: basis (*samuṭṭhāna*); decisive significance (*adhipatī*); intrinsic nature (*sabhāva*); and general characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*).

i) basis (*samuṭṭhāna*)

The basis of *hirī*, self-respect, is oneself, while the basis of *ottapa*,

decorum, is the world. Both are then relative to several conditions, e.g. one's age, upbringing and degree of understanding, one's immediate environment and the mores of the particular culture in which one lives; all these factors will affect and qualify the ethical sense. There is no question of any abstract evaluation of an absolute good and evil meted out by some equally abstract absolute celestial potentate. Nor, on the other hand, does this suggest that Buddhist thought inclines towards a form of moral relativism. The Buddhist ethic is grounded neither in tabloid dogma nor shifting sophistry, but in the knowledge of direct personal experience.

ii) Decisive significance (*adhipatī*)

The decisive significance of *hirī* rests in one's individuality. Ethical responsibility is at root an individual one, and to the extent that one has mastery of one's actions, to that extent one possesses *hirī*. With *ottapa*, on the other hand, it is the opinion of the world that has decisive significance. It here becomes necessary to qualify the meaning of 'the opinion of the world'. After all, the world may be, in fact generally is, in most of its opinions quite wrong. To do what the world recommends may on occasion be expedient, even prudent - but only so far as one's individual conscience, *hirī*, is not compromised. Unto Caesar should be rendered the bare minimum.

'Decorum' as a translation of *ottapa* is obviously inadequate. Perhaps a better rendering would be 'respect for the opinion of the wise'. Until we develop in ourselves the complete ethical sovereignty of the individual, we need the guidance of our spiritual friends.

iii) intrinsic nature (*sabhāva*)

The intrinsic nature of *hirī*, the ethical sense, is as we have seen the experience of embarrassment and shame. The word *hirī* is in fact related to a verb meaning to blush - *ottapa* is also a burning shame, but this shame is provoked by fear of blame. The commentator Sthiramati says:

> "'*Such action has been blamed in the world; if the world would know me to act in such a way they would blame me* " - *out of fear of reproach one feels ashamed of evil.*"

Fear of blame is thus an alternative rendering of *ottapa* and here we must quickly distinguish between fear of blame and the sense of irrational guilt. Shame and fear of blame are both indications of a breach of natural ethics, whereas guilt arises when we contravene a moral convention. Having through some mis-demeanour, real or imagined, lost the approval of the group - whether family, friends, church, state or nation - we feel outcast, miserable, dejected, resentful, bitter and above all, guilty. The one thing we don't really understand is whether or not we have done wrong. *Hirī* and *ottapa*, that is real shame, includes a clear recognition of the wrong done, and a heartfelt desire to do better next time. To fully experience this positive shame is vital to our spiritual development. *Hirī* is like a torch-flame of self-transformation, casting the light of critical self-examination in our minds and burning away its impurities.

iv) general characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*)

The general characteristic of *hirī* and *ottapa* is the practice of what one has learned. It is a careful evaluation of one's own worth in relation to the worth of others and to one's surroundings. It is a deference, care and concern for oneself and one's fellows. It is warmth and recognition.

To sum up these four aspects, we may say that this deep respect for self and other connotes an integrity of being which we experience when, through ethical action, we are in harmony with the voice of conscience, the voice of our inner knowledge. Before passing on to the second level of the *inscape* of man, which is the level of the spiritual and corresponds to the realm of meditation, there remains one important trait in the psychology of embarrassment which demands our examination. I have remarked earlier that the fundamental components of the blush are three - that is, the sense of self is heightened, measured and betrayed. These three component factors may be seen as being all symptoms of a failure of communication.

To understand this failure of communication we may draw from our own experience of growing up. The blush comes most readily to the face of those in a transitional phase of their normal development. In particular it comes with the advent of self-* and other-awareness as the infant enters childhood, and again with the onset (or perhaps onslaught) of adolescence as the child enters puberty. These stages mark, or should mark, the ages of reason and of discretion. In both cases what should be achieved is a broadening of experience, an expansion of being. The growing individual transcends the existing confines of his limited subjective experience by embracing the experience of another. The infant's playmates become the child's friends; the child's friends become the youth's lovers. It seems the natural tendency of the individual is to communicate itself. When this desire is frustrated, say by adolescent awkwardness, the irrepressible blush clearly demonstrates both the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh (or perhaps vice-versa).

We feel for the blushful uncertainty of the adolescent a certain sympathy. We respond not with censure but with encouragement. Perhaps this is because we intuitively recognize that the child stands tiptoe at the threshold of adult discretion.* If only momentarily, the hardening shell of egoistic self-protection is overturned, exposing the tender underbelly of a more genuine humanity. We catch a glimpse of the adolescent's *inscape*.

As in these specific instances, so generally we may identify a desire within ourselves to communicate with that outside ourselves. This heartfelt desire to communicate is how Shelley defines Love:

> "*Thou demandest what is love? It is that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void, and seek to awaken in all things that are, a community with what we experience within ourselves. If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's; if we feel, we would*

> *that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own, that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood. This is Love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists.*"

Why then should we fail so to communicate ourselves? If this urge towards Love dwells at the core of our essential humanity, what should prevent its expression? Paradoxically, it is the sense of self itself that hinders us - it is the ego. When reflexive awareness dawned in the human consciousness, it provided simultaneously the possibilities of mutual communication and individual isolation. Adam's apple stuck in his throat. The ego is the tool of alienation as well as integration. Alienation results from the ego-awareness remaining in a contracted state of narcissistic subjectivity, characterised by greed, hatred and stubborn ignorance. Integration is achieved by the progressive expansion of ego-awareness, and this state is characterized by the development of generosity, love and wisdom.

The Buddha's Threefold Way of Morality, Meditation and Wisdom may be seen in terms of this expansion of awareness, in terms of the progressive transcendence of our limited modes of thought, feeling and action. In these terms, we may conceive of *sīla*, the Buddhist code of ethics, as consisting in not doing those things which limit or constrain the expansion of being of ourselves and others, and in encouraging those things which promote it. Specifically, this means we must eradicate the three unhealthy roots (*akusalamūla*) of greed, hatred and delusion, and develop the three healthy roots (*kusalamūla*) of generosity, love and wisdom. In this connection it is interesting to note that *hirī* and *ottapa* are accorded the importance of a second appearance in the *Atthasālinī*. Along with generosity, love and wisdom, self-respect and respect for wise opinion form the five courses of action (*kammapatha*) of the healthy mind. We might also note in passing that this conception of *sīla*, as the promotion of the expansion of being, is given full expression in the tantric precepts. We might say that *hirī* is the tantric ethic.

We saw earlier that *hirī* in its positive aspect represents an integrity of being on the ethical plane, at the psychological level. We now move on to the spiritual association of *hirī*, and pass from the first to the second step of the Threefold Path - that is, from morality to meditation.

Meditation is the systematic development of expanded states of consciousness, achieved by working directly on our mind, with our mind. In the Buddhist iconographical tradition, the perfection of meditation is given expression in the form of Amitābha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. In the *maṇḍala* of the five archetypal Buddhas, Amitābha occupies the western quarter, realm of the setting sun. He lives in paradise, in the paradise called *Sukhāvatī*, 'Land of Bliss'. He sits absorbed in deep meditation, his hands resting quietly in his lap, and on his lips a smile of peace and profound happiness. With Amitābha, it is not just his lips that burn with the heart's best blood. His whole body glows with a warm red blush, pervading all space with the radiant red

illumination of Universal Love (*Mahāmaitrī*). And at the very heart of this *Mahāmaitrī*, representing the quintessence of Amitābha, the *inscape* of Love, burns the fiery symbol HRĪḤ.

At this sublime level of being, the *bīja-mantra* or seed-syllable HRĪḤ possesses a significance far wider and much deeper than the sense of shame we examined earlier. Amitābha's rich vermilion glow is not a blush of shame but a flush of pride - that is, *vajra*-pride or diamond pride, which is the selfless certainty of a perfect morality. With no blemish of conceit, Amitābha's unselfconscious, immaculate pride has the brilliance of a diamond of the first water. He cannot do otherwise than behave perfectly.

But the spiritual associations of HRĪḤ go still further. The mantric seed-syllable HRĪḤ has the nature of a flame. It has its warmth, intensity and upward drive. It has its power of radiation and its alchemical property of transformation. Amitābha is associated with the *khandha saññā* (Sanskrit: *skandha saṃjñā*), the faculty of perception, and what is transformed, in our meditation, by the power of HRĪḤ, is our whole way of seeing, our mode of perception. Our mode of perception changes from one of appropriation to one of appreciation.

While we remain bound in psychological considerations, we see the world in terms of what we can get from it. Our ethical considerations consist largely in balancing our own selfish desires with the equally selfish desires of others. This is often a precarious balance, as evidenced by the many marriages that topple into divorce. In meditation we refine our mode of perception from the appropriative to the appreciative. Instead of taking what we can justifiably get from others, usually by endless compromise, we simply appreciate them for what they are. We enjoy their qualities, their character - their *inscapes*. In short, we leave behind the merely good, in favour of the also beautiful. At this level, to quote Wittgenstein, "*ethics and aesthetics are one* ". Amitābha, after all, enjoys with all the other Buddhas the mutual bliss of paradise, the *saṃbhogakāya*. At the heart of our meditation practice, our desire to communicate, to love, gives us new eyes, which see with their own light, the light of HRĪḤ.

It is not, of course, that we see the world through rose-tinted spectacles. Our new mode of perception is not a wash of pastel sentiment. Our meditation practice develops wisdom as well as love. The warmth and recognition of the good man is taken to a higher power and becomes the Love (*Maitrī*) and Discriminating Wisdom (*Pratyavekṣanajñāna*) of the Yogī. Since Amitābha's perception is not clouded by any self-reference, he sees all things and all people for what they really are. And since his unselfconscious love transcends the veils of ego that separate one from another, he feel for others as he feels for himself. Thus equipped he descends to the world as Āvalokiteśvara, with one thousand arms of Compassion, and in each palm the eye of Discriminating Wisdom, to give to each exactly what they need.

In Amitābha and through Āvalokiteśvara, we can see, at least in imagination, the fulfilment of human communication. The endless compromises of morality at

the psychological level are overcome in meditation, transcended by the level of the spiritual. D.H. Lawrence writes:

> *"Love is a thing of twoness, and is lovely*
> *like the living life of the earth*
> *but below all the roots of love lies the bedrock of naked pride,*
> *subterranean*
> *and deeper than the bedrock of pride is the primordial fire of*
> *the middle, which rests in connection with*
> *the further forever unknowable fire of all things*
> *and which rocks with a sense of connection, religion*
> *and trembles with a sense of truth, primordial consciousness*
> *and is silent with a sense of justice*
> *- the fiery primordial imperative* "

Thus far we have examined the *inscape* of man, the irreducibly human, at two levels. We have seen *hirī* as the psychological basis of a natural morality, and as the spiritual source of a dynamic meditation; but what of the third level, the transcendental realm of absolute wisdom?

In considering the ethical and spiritual dimensions of man we have dealt with the recognizably religious nature of Buddhism, the pursuit of the highest Good and contemplation of the most Beautiful. But these considerations by no means exhaust the scope of a Buddhistic examination of man's essential nature. As Sangharakshita has clearly demonstrated in his essay *Buddhism As Philosophy And As Religion*, the philosophical doctrines of both original and developed Buddhism form a consistent, comprehensive view of the whole of existence - that is, they demonstrate the Truth. The foundation of Buddhist philosophy rests on the empirically observable fact of impermanence, of change. There is no abiding unchanging phenomenon, no absolute being - all things are caught up in the hurl and sweep of the Heraclitean fire. But whereas Heraclitus's worldfire portrays the endless cycle of formation and destruction in the tidal flux of the universe, the Buddha's fiery philosophy leaps altogether off this endless round. The Buddhist symbol of transformation, the "*fiery primordial imperative* " HRĪḤ, represents the infinite potential of augmentation that impermanence provides.

Impermanence, flux, change, lies at the root of our suffering but it is not the cause of it. It is only while we remain ignorant of its action that we suffer its consequences. In our ignorance we allow the engine of impermanence to drive us round and round the wheel of conditioned co-production. Knowledge of the true nature of existence, that is insight into impermanence, allows us tc direct its powerful drive to ascend the upward spiral of augmented consciousness. In our meditation we augment our consciousness, we heighten our awareness. With our heightened awareness we penetrate layer by layer of our ignorance, ignorance of our essential impermanence, until eventually we discard even the subtlest sense of self, no fixed ego stubbornly interposing itself between our own real nature and the real world, we achieve at last an unmediated vision of existence. At this level all words fail. In transcending the apparent dichotomy of subject and object we

transcend the need of language to communicate between the two. In language only paradox remains to feebly indicate the ineffable experience of Truth. Our own nature is no nature. Our unique essential quality - *Tathatā* or 'Suchness' - is no quality, *Śūnyatā* or Emptiness. Our *inscape* is 'no-scape'.

The insistent paradoxes of the New Wisdom School walk a conceptual tightrope, strung between the mountains of eternalistic security, slung across the chasm of nihilistic oblivion. Above, quite unsupported in the clear blue sky, is Amitābha and his consort Pāṇḍaravāsinī, conjoined in the ecstatic union of Love and Wisdom. Amitābha burns with Perfect Love. Pāṇḍaravāsinī wears a pure and brilliant white robe, which, though it blazes incandescent with Perfect Wisdom, is not consumed - a final consummate paradox. One of the later and very much shorter texts in the Perfection of Wisdom corpus simply states "*OṂ HRĪḤ is a door to Perfect Wisdom* ".

HRĪḤ is the *inscape* of man, the irreducibly human. It is irreducible because it is a process, not a thing, a process of amelioration - a path to perfect morality, perfect meditation and perfect wisdom. Our practise of morality may be a poor reflection of Āvalokiteśvara's transcendent ethic, but if we listen to *hiri*, the voice of our conscience, we will not go far wrong. Our practise of meditation may not always be the blaze of Love and Light that is Amitābha, but we may achieve the warmth and recognition that comes when we contact the dancing flame of inspiration that is HRĪḤ. Then with a pure heart and a quiet mind, we may, with Hopkins, see that,

"As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves - goes itself; myself *it speaks and spells;*
Crying What I do is me: for that I came."

- crying, perhaps, HRĪḤ.

PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ: a strong reassertion of the 'original spirit' of Buddhism?

by Dharmachari Prajñānanda

Many of us hold in our mind's eye a fairly straightforward picture of the development of Buddhist teachings and practice through history. Buddhism in India is seen as having steadily declined after the time of Śākyamuni into an arid and abstract scholasticism - this image of the 'Hinayāna' is symbolized for many by the *Abhidharma* - until countered by a sort of 'Reformation'-type critique and renewal. This is often how the rise of the Mahāyāna, with which the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures are usually associated as the earliest literary manifestation, is seen. How far is this an accurate picture? To begin with, what do we know of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts themselves? And how much can we know of the 'original spirit' of Buddhism? What is meant by such a term?

By the time of the rise of the Mahāyāna five hundred years after the death or parinirvāṇa of the Buddha the body of his followers had sub-divided into many schools. Tradition speaks of eighteen; many more names are recorded, though it is possible that some schools were known by more than one name. Modern scholars posit several reasons for this wide divergence in doctrinal allegiance. Stressing the need for unity through adherence to the Dharma, the Buddha appointed no successor; this left the way open for subsequent teachers to asser' their own interpretations of what he had taught. The sheer size of the canon (*buddha-vacana*, the supposed 'word of the Buddha') meant that various groups of monks tended to specialize in the oral preservation and didactic exegesis of different parts of it. This would be all the more likely because of the vast area over which Buddhism spread; different teachings would no doubt circulate in different regions. Unifying factors acting against these would have been the loyalty of monks to more or less the same *vinaya* or code of discipline; the habit of wandering (except during the rainy season); and perhaps the habit of pilgrimage amongst both monks and lay-people, these latter two leading to interchange and synthesis of ideas (though lay-people probably had little if any direct influence on doctrinal development).

Each of these schools had its own body of scriptures with its own emphases and point of view. Attempts have been made to identify an authentic 'original' corpus of Buddhist doctrine, but the idea that this is possible (in a hard sense) is now generally rejected. André Bareau, for example, after a careful ekamination of the extant texts, has concluded that the 'true facts' behind the traditions cannot really be ascertained and that such a task is bound to be fruitless. This does not mean that all research is useless. Bareau believes that scientific evidence - philological and archaeological - can support useful speculation about the outline of the teachings; he traces some material back as far as approximately one hundred years after the *parinirvāṇa*. Virtually nothing, however, is provable. Conze [1] and Thomas [2] suggest that earlier 'layers' can be to some extent isolated by comparing recensions of the different schools;

what they have in common can be reasonably presumed to be earlier, ie traceable to a time before their division. (However, another scholar [3] has recently argued precisely the opposite: that harmonization of scriptural material occurs gradually over time.) But, of course, the canons of many schools are incomplete or lost altogether.

Nonetheless, Conze attempts to sketch what he calls 'archaic Buddhism' which *"represents the common doctrine of all Buddhist monks as it may well have existed about 300-250 BC."* [4] - ie. around the time of Aśoka and before the split between Sarvāstivādins and Vibhajyavādins. He admits that this often consists of bare statements from the Sūtras which are only intelligible using later commentaries, which of course are interpretations from the viewpoint of particular schools. As T R V Murti says, *"The chronological division of texts into primitive and later accretion is highly conjectural . . . in the absence of incontestable historical evidence, it is difficult to decide which text is prior to which other".*[5]

Furthermore, the earliest date at which any teachings are known to have been written down - and thus to some extent 'fixed' - is the first century BCE.[6]. Oral preservation, even for hundreds of years, does not necessarily count against authenticity. Fairly regular assemblies for *saṅgīti*, 'reciting together', and numerical and summarizing structural features are two factors which would mitigate against distortion and interpolation. They would also be conducive to the production of the *mātṛkā* (Pāli: *mātikā*), the lists of topics which seem to have developed into the philosophical explorations of the *Abhidharma/Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. Despite the claims of some Theravadins to greater antiquity, the *Abhidharma* canon as it is now known appears to have grown up over the period from the reign of Aśoka in the third century BCE to that of Kaniṣka in the first century CE., (although it continued to develop after this) and represents a systematization of the doctrines found in the *Sūtra-* and *Vinaya-piṭakas*. For its proponents, the *Abhidharma* is a 'higher' or 'special' Dharma, 'instruction in the ultimate nature of things'; they claim that while the Sūtras use conventional, everyday language, reflecting conventional truth (Skt: *saṃvṛti-satya*), the *Abhidharma* is formulated in a more precise philosophical language which reflects ultimate truth (Sanskrit: *paramārtha-satya*), ie. ultimately real phenomena. [7]

From the earliest Sūtras the Buddha describes himself as an analytical teacher, a *vibhajjavādin* [8] or 'critical analyst' of experience. *"As far back as we can trace the teaching of the Buddha we find a penetrating analysis by which unities are dissolved into their constituent parts and true diversity is revealed."*.[9] This tendency of thought is shown even in Sūtra literature by the use of categories such as the five *skandhas*, twelve *āyatanas*, and eighteen *dhātus*: various ways of classifying experience which the *Abhidharma* carries further by resolving the 'world' into *'dharmas'*, ultimate irreducible elements. 'Reality' is thus seen as made up of *dharmas* and the constructs which they combine to form, the latter being reducible to the former.

Method being primary and doctrine secondary in Buddhism, the purpose of the

Abhidharma analysis is practical: to assist liberation through insight into the true nature of things, to see things as they really are. *"The dharma-theory is essentially a technique of meditation"* [10]. To this end it analyzes (a) persons and things - they are not the unitary phenomena they appear to be; and (b) dependencies and inter-relations. These *"correspond to the two basic teachings of Buddhist doctrine"* [11] and such analysis cultivates an understanding of: (a) egolessness or emptiness (Pali: *anattatā* or *suññatā*); and (b) conditionality (Pali: *ida-paccayatā*).

Wisdom (Pali: *paññā*, Sanskrit: *prajñā*) for the *Abhidharma* is the spiritual faculty or virtue by which these aspects of the world are revealed, by which it is seen *"as composed of an unceasing flow of simple ultimates, which can be defined as multiple, momentary, impersonal, and mutually conditioned events"*[12]. It is wisdom which *"penetrates into dharmas as they are in themselves, dispersing the darkness of delusion which covers up the own-being of dharmas"*[13]. It is perhaps worth restating that dharmas are not meant to be seen as quasi-atoms, as constituents of the physical universe; the aim of this sort of breakdown is not a scientific catalogue but an investigation of the world as we experience it. This is why most items on the dharma list are mental. 'Matter' or *rūpa* is just one class of cognizables, one which however has a basis in 'objective reality'; it is *"the objective content of the perceptual situation"*.[14] So for the *Abhidharmikas*, mind is not everything. This view occurs later, with the Cittamātra school.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature is also concerned with spiritual wisdom; in fact, it claims to promote the 'Perfection of Wisdom'. These texts range widely in size and date of composition. Edward Conze lists some forty works on this theme in Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan and Khotanese stretching from the first century BCE. to about the thirteenth century CE. Within this timespan he distinguishes four periods of development, the first three of approximately two hundred years each, each of which sees a basic text elaborated and expanded and then summarized in shorter prose and verse forms, while the fourth phase sees more Tantric influences and the production of commentaries.[15] In other words, for over a millenium, the *Prajñāpāramitā* was a living, developing teaching; even the earliest scriptures, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and *Ratnaguṇa-saṁcaya-gāthā*, which Conze dates over the two centuries 100 BCE. to 100 CE., are built up of various materials which had probably been in oral circulation for some time. It is the earlier material which here concerns us. Two of its distinctive characteristics are (a) its teachings on *śūnyatā*, and (b) a new emphasis on the bodhisattva as an ideal religious type.

The very title of the *Prajñāpāramitā* itself implies perhaps a criticism of the *Abhidharma* view of *prajñā* as being limited. In fact, Buddhist literature contains a range of definitions of this term:
(1) *Prajñā* as a mental state of certainty resulting from study or investigation. In this sense texts speak of a *saṃvṛti-prajñā* or conventional wisdom, as in disciplines such as medicine or grammar. It is simply a state *"whose function is to exclude doubt"*.[16]
(2) As *dharmapravicayaḥ*, the 'discernment of dharmas'.

(3) As comprehending *sūnyatā*, 'emptiness'.
(4) As the object of such awareness, ie. as emptiness itself.
(5) As the most important of the six *pāramitās* or 'perfections', the cultivation of which is the practice of the would-be bodhisattva.
(6) In another sense, three levels of *prajñā* are spoken of: that deriving from learning (or 'hearing', *śruta*), that from intellectual reflection, and that from meditative contemplation. [17]

For the *Abhidharma* (2) above would be the content of the highest *prajñā*, the reduction of phenomena or the person to their constituents (*pudgala-nairātmyā*). For the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the Mahāyāna it would be (3). This is seen as going further than the *Abhidharma*, taking the analytic ideal to its extreme point, a process cuminating in the perceiving of all concepts as essentially empty of inherent existence (*dharma-nairātmyā* or *°-śūnyatā*). Beginning with the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the notion of *dharma-śūnyatā*, that all the elements to which conditioned existence is reducible are in their own-being devoid of inherent existence, features prominently.

There are several references to *śūnyatā* (Pāli: *suññatā*) in the early Sūtras, but the notion is usually associated with *anattā*, absence of personal self, and is not specifically developed to any great extent. The *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, however, are about little else. Their elaboration of *śūnyatā* is connected with their promotion of the ideal of the bodhisattva and the denigration of the arahant ideal, which is seen as producing a limited (though valid as far as it goes) form of Enlightened person, one still attached to their achievement and clinging to their apartness from the world.

To emphasize the non-ultimate nature of all concepts is also a useful device for defusing objections to teachings which appear to be innovatory. 'To see things as they really are' is to see that they lack essence; such a realization should prevent any clinging to a particular set of doctrinal statements as the 'truth', a perspective which means that, for the Mahāyāna, all beliefs are provisional, *"operational concepts"*. [18] This leaves the way open for doctrinal development and reinterpretation in the light of changing circumstances and situations. Such 'new' teachings can validly be claimed to be the 'word of the Buddha' in the sense of issuing from an Enlightened viewpoint. *"This is in effect the basic Mahāyānic argument in support of the spiritual, as distinct from the textual, authenticity of the scriptures"* [19] found in many Mahāyāna sūtras: eg. *"Whatever the Lord's disciples teach, all that is to be known as the Tathāgata's work . . . It is just an outpouring of the Tathāgata's demonstration of Dharma"*. [20] In other words, *"Whatever is well-said, that is the word of the Buddha"*. [21] [Although the original form of this saying admits of an alternative interpretation: that whatever words the Buddha spoke are well-said.]

Where did the sophisticated and subtle *śūnyatā* of the *Prajñāpāramitā* come from? In one passage in the Pāli *suttas* the Buddha speaks of *"discourses spoken by the Tathāgata, deep, deep in meaning, transcendental, dealing with Emptiness (suññatā)"* being lost and not listened to. [22] To one writer this

suggests a whole school of teachings on *śūnyatā* perhaps being 'lost' - ie. lost to the mainstream of Buddhist thought and practice - or preserved by oral tradition until 'resurfacing' in the form of the early *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. [23] Tradition speaks of these teachings being entrusted to the *nāgas*, mythical subaquatic beings, until recovered by Nāgārjuna: a story which is of course susceptible to symbolical and psychological interpretation.

While these stories will appeal to Mahāyānists as deepening the 'authenticity' of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the whole issue of the origin of these texts - and indeed of the Mahāyāna - is still extremely obscure. Some evidence, including references in the text itself, points to South India, to an area where the Mahāsaṅghikas were strong, to the Andhra region, monks of which were credited with Mahāyāna-like doctrines by the *Kathāvatthu* (a Theravādin record of doctrinal controversies). But such evidence is inconclusive; it has been well-argued that the *Prajñāpāramitā* originated in the North-West as a result of influence from other cultures, especially Greek, entering India in that area around that time. [24] Interestingly, a scripture (the *Lokanuvartana Sūtra*) of the Purvaśailas, a sub-school of the Mahāsaṅghikas, exhibits the *dharma-śūnyatā* viewpoint, showing that it was not restricted to the Mahāyāna schools. Possibly the philosophical and devotional dimensions of the Mahāyāna received their impetus from more than one cultural area.

To summarize: the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts represent not so much a reaction consequent upon, and subsequent to, the *Abhidharma*, as the more or less concurrent development of an alternative vision of what the Buddha's message was all about. Rather than seeing the *Prajñāpāramitā* as a sudden and revolutionary irruption on the Buddhist scene, we can start to expand our somewhat compacted view of the period and see in it many shifting and complex currents developing under mutual influence. A simple characterization of 'Hinayāna' and 'Mahāyāna' is not possible. Changes happened gradually, the Mahāyāna starting more as a reformulation of traditional Buddhism and only defining itself in contrast as a separate and superior *yāna*, the 'bodhisattva-yāna', over several centuries. [In fact of course the Reformation too was a gradual affair; but it tends to be seen as encapsulated in a few dramatic events. Also as in the Reformation, the majority stayed with the old party! We learn from Hsüan Tsang that the majority of monks in the 7th century in India were of the Hinayāna, which - it is also worth remembering - continued to develop doctrinally as well.] Some Hinayāna schools - the Sautrāntikas, for example - rejected the authenticity and usefulness of the *Abhidharma*; while some non-Mahāyāna schools held to a *dharma-śūnyatā* view.

It has been suggested that in the *Prajñāpāramitā* a combination of factors - the emphases on 'emptiness', the prominence of the bodhisattva as a spiritual principle above the historical personality of Siddhartha Gautama, and the view the sūtras take of their own importance and of *'prajñā-pāramitā'* as itself an object of worship - all point to an growing opposition to *stūpa* worship as representing an over-veneration of Gautama; and also point to the development of the *dharmakāya* notion (through the veneration of the bodhisattva and sūtras themselves). [25] While we cannot with certainty claim to know what 'original'

Buddhism was, what we do know of the earliest teachings suggests that the *Prajñāpāramitā* is certainly a valid embodiment of its spirit, with its combined emphasis on a profound analysis of our received 'reality' and a concurrent, equally deep compassion.

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Notes:

1 Conze, *BTI*, p.31
2 Thomas, p.153f.
3 Schopen
4 Conze, *BTI*, p.32
5 Murti, p.23
6 Sangharakshita, *EL*, p.13
7 Nyanatiloka, p.10
8 eg. *Majjhima Nikaya*, II 197
9 Williams, p.3
10 Conze, *BTI*, p.98
11 Nyanatiloka, p.12
12 BTI, p.97
13 *Visuddhi-magga*, xiv, 7
14 H V Guenther
15 Conze, *PPL*
16 *Abhisamuccaya*, quoted by Williams, p.48
17 Williams, p.48ff.
18 H V Guenther
19 Sangharakshita, *EL*, p.139
20 Conze, *PoW in 8000 Lines*, p.83
21 *Adhyasayasaṃcodana Sūtra*, quoted by Sangharakshita, *EL*, p.2
22 *Samyutta-Nikaya* II 266-267
23 Sangharakshita, *EL*, p.135-136
24 by Lamotte and Basham, references in Williams, p.47
25 Williams, Chs. 1 & 8

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VOICING THE UNVOICABLE:
the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools

by Dharmachari Sthiramati

As I mentioned last week, my intention for tonight is to look at two of the major developments in the Mahāyāna in terms of schools. [1] Over the last two weeks we have examined the institutional and literary origins of the Mahāyāna - looking at book-cults and *stūpa*-cults, looking at the new Sūtras, their characteristic doctrines and concerns. But to leave things there would, I believe, give only a partial idea of the character of the development of the Mahāyāna itself. Just as was clear in the pre-Mahāyāna period, the Mahāyāna itself encompassed the growth of a number of different schools, each developing the characteristic Mahāyāna doctrines in its own way. Therefore it is my intention tonight to look at two schools which became very important indeed in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism - the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra.

I've chosen these two because they represent a coherent strand of development, running through from the Abhidharma, and the Perfection of Wisdom texts - dealing with the same concepts and religious issues - but also I have chosen them simply because they are very important, in so far as they can be seen as two large scale phases in the development of Indian Buddhism. Both of these systems have had many exponents in Mahāyāna and Far Eastern Buddhism, and through a complex process of interaction, have tended to dominate the later development of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. In fact they have been described as *"the two great orientations of the Mahāyāna"* [2], the two poles around which many later developments revolved - always aligning themselves more or less closely with the classical position of these two schools.

I mentioned in my pre-amble to this whole series, that I hoped the information passed on here might help people in their reading of the primary sources - which means not only the sūtras, but also the many commentarial works written by Mahāyāna scholiasts, such as Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, along with many others. Each of those very famous names is associated with the views of one or another of the major Mahāyāna schools, and we will be able to make very little sense of their work, and therefore of a major part of the Mahāyāna literature, if we do not understand their underlying pre-occupations and concerns.

Having said this I should also point out that tonight's discussion will still be a fairly limited one, despite the major significance of the two schools to be examined. I believe that I've already implied that there was a close relationship between individual sūtras, or groups of sūtras, and the development of the various Mahāyāna schools. I hope this is a theme which will become more apparent today, and also next week when I discuss devotion. However, the main point is that, while I concentrate on two schools and their respective groups of

sūtras, there are many others, still important for the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which I shall effectively ignore.

I would, for instance, have liked to be able to discuss, on the one hand, the Tathāgatagarbha sūtras such as the *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* itself, the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda Sūtra*, and the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, along with another root treatise, the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, and the relationship of these texts with the Ch'an and Zen schools of China and Japan. I would also have liked to be able to say something about the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the magical *"quicksilver world"* as one commentator has called it, which it depicts [3], not to mention the elaboration of the Bodhisattva path which it contains, and the relationship it bore to the Hua Yen school of China. I have already mentioned (last week) the *White Lotus Sūtra*, but did not go on to say anything about the T'ien T'ai school in China which adopted the sūtra as its main text. But all this would simply be too broad and demanding a field for a single evening's discussion.

If there is anything that I should say to you, other than approaching the Madhyamaka and Yogārāra directly, it is about the manner in which schools were related to sūtras. How then are they connected? Which, for instance, comes first? Well, firstly, I should make the point that sūtras are not, and never have been, regarded as the product of the literary activity of schools. In fact it seems to have been the other way round, with the various schools developing out of the need to expound the meaning of particular sūtras or groups of sūtras. Sūtras are always regarded as the word of an enlightened being, in fact the word of the Buddha himself, whereas the literary products of the schools were termed *śāstra*, 'treatises', as distinct from sūtra, because they are works of exposition. Furthermore, there is in fact some difference in the relationship of schools to sūtras between East Asian and Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. The East Asian schools tended to grow around the study of individual sūtras. Each such school saw its own sūtra as the culmination of the Buddha's teaching; it was his highest teaching, with all other sūtras ranked in succession below that one. Such was the case with the White Lotus Sūtra in the T'en T'ai school, and the Avataṃsaka Sūtra in the Hua Yen school.

In India the schools seemed to grow out of an attempt to systematise the teachings of a number of sūtras together. Thus there grew up the Madhyamaka school which clarified and drew out the implications of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* - while the Yogācāra school systematised the teachings of a group of what might be called 'idealist' sūtras. (As an aside to this, I should mention that tonight's discussion is going to be a more technical or philosophical one - in contrast to the rather more historical flavour of previous weeks!)

Now the difference between these two approaches in India and China would seem to be partly a cultural one, because although both the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra went to China, their presence there in their distinctive Indian forms was relatively short-lived. [4] Characteristically Chinese Buddhism only appeared with the growth of the Hua Yen and T'ien T'ai schools.

In Tibet most attention is given to the philosophical schools and their explanatory treatises, especially in so far as they are conceived of as hermeneutic tools for interpreting the sūtras. There the sūtras are largely regarded as too difficult to understand - perhaps because they are too poetic, or too vague, or unsystematic or superficially contradictory to be understood without the help of systems or frameworks provided by the schools. Thus in Tibet the recitation of sūtras is relatively less common than it would have been in China or India.

That said by way of a preliminary, I would now like to move on to discuss the Madhyamaka school. Traditionally the founder of this school was the illustrious Nāgārjuna who came from South India or Andhra, and lived in the C2nd CE. A considerable body of work attributed to him survives, the principle text being his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MMK), 'Root Verses on the Middle Way'. [5] The other name associated with the founding of this school is Āryadeva, for whom a smaller body of work survives. Āryadeva's major work is the *Catuḥśatakastava*, 'the 400 verses'

In India, and later in Tibet, the Madhyamaka itself divided up into sub-schools - the main division being between the Prasaṅgika and Svātantrika Madhyamaka. Traditionally the former, of which the present dGelugs school of Tibet (with the Dalai Lama as figure-head) is an adherent, was founded by Buddhapālita (c470-540). The Svātantrika Madhyamaka was founded by Bhāvaviveka (c500-570), as part of an attack upon Buddhapālita - an attack which was in turn defended by Candrakīrti (c600-650). Śāntideva, the author of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the author of the verses used in the seven-fold pūjā, was an C8th adherent of the Prasaṅgika Madhyamaka.

I have already given some account of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* [6], and in doing so mentioned that they do not offer a systematic, argued philosophy, so much as simply assert their *dharmaśūnyatā* doctrine - often with the use of paradox. The Madhyamaka school represents (for it is still actively functioning within Tibetan Buddhism) an attempt to systematise the teaching of these sūtras, the most important to the Madhyamaka being that of *dharmaśūnyatā* - that is the emptiness of all *dharmas*. When I described this particular doctrine before, I made it clear that to some extent this represented an attack upon the position of the Abhidharma, which held that there really existed certain irreducible building blocks of experience, called *dharmas*. [7] So, traditionally Nāgārjuna is credited with taking up this attack upon the Abhidharma, as found in the Perfection of Wisdom, and drawing out its fullest implications. Āryadeva, for his part, was regarded as having extended this attack to the non-Buddhist schools.

The central axiom of the Madhyamaka is that all things lack inherent existence. It is in this sense that all things are *śūnya* or 'empty' - they are empty of inherent existence. What then is the significance of this? Indian philosophy, and Indian religion, (for the two are in many ways inseparable) are frequently concerned with the identification of what is ultimately real. It is axiomatic in Indian philosophy that, for something to be ultimately real, it must

be independent of all conditions, must not be the product of factors external to itself - to coin a phrase which I believe was developed within Tibetan Buddhism, it must 'exist from its own side'. [8]

Now the Abhidharma developed the view that *dharmas*, the ultimate irreducible existents into which they analysed the perceived universe, had this sort of existence. Moreover they developed a concept termed *svabhāva* by which they indicated that each and every kind of *dharma* was differentiated from other kinds of *dharmas* by its own unique defining characteristics. *Svabhāva* means 'own being', and indicated that each category of *dharma* bears its own essence. This is a difficult expression to explain, and to help me out I should like to borrow a passage from a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, which expresses this last point very well:

> *"Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:*
> *Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;*
> *Selves - goes itself;* myself *it speaks and spells,*
> *Crying* Whát I do is me: for that I came." [9]

- in other words, each *dharma* is essentially what it does. Thus the defining characteristic of a *rūpa dharma* is 'hardness', its action of resistance. Conventional objects, in the everyday world, such as teapots and walking boots, do not have *svabhāva* because they are only mental constructs erroneously projected onto 'real' *dharmas*. That is the insight of the Abhidharma. The *Perfection of Wisdom* texts however teach that even the *dharmas* analysed by the Abhidharma, were mental constructs, and therefore certainly could not have *svabhāva*. The Madhyamaka took up this terminology of *svabhāva* and broadened it in a subtle way. From meaning just 'defining characteristic', it came to be used as a synonym for 'inherent existence' itself, so that rather than just denying *svabhāva* in *dharmas*, they vigourously attacked the notion of *svabhāva* in all things in the conventional realm too - a usage which would not have been familiar to the Abhidharmikas themselves.

Chapter 15 of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* begins:

> *"The origination of self-essence from causes and conditions is illogical, since a self-essence originated from causes and conditions would thus be contingent (kṛtaka).*
> *How could there be a contingent self-essence, for a self-essence is not contingent nor is it dependent on another being."* [10]

Nāgārjuna was therefore saying for his part that nothing, including the Abhidharma *dharmas*, had *svabhāva* at all - nothing existed independently, without reliance upon external factors - nothing existed from its own side. *"If the earlier teaching is that the apparent world is a fragile house of cards, the Śūnyatāvāda went further and suggested that there were not even any cards. Reality is like a shifting palace made out of soap-bubbles! "* [11]

Without understanding the full background to such a statement as Nāgārjuna's, it may sound a rather nihilistic one to maintain, but it is important to understand that Nāgārjuna did not regard himself as being a nihilist. In fact he strove at all times to observe a Middle Way between eternalism and nihilism, and he did this by accepting the conventional existence of objects as they arise within the continuous flux of *pratītyasamutpāda*.

> *"The meaning of the expression 'dependent origination' is the same as 'emptiness', and not 'non-existence'. Falsely thinking that 'emptiness' and 'non-existence' are synonyms you criticise us."* [12]

This was a very important point, because as many of you will know, the Buddha's teaching has always been characterised from the very beginning as a Middle Way between various extremes - the important extremes here being eternalism, the idea that there is some permanent essence either in the world or in human beings, and that of nihilism, the opposite view, that there was absolutely nothing which allowed for continuity. So Nāgārjuna, continuing this same tradition, said that, while nothing has *svabhāva*, and therefore nothing has ultimate existence, there is a real world, but that is the conventional world of *saṃvṛtti satya*, of conventional truth, and it is within this conventional world that we live, and function. What Nāgārjuna attacks is the idea of the inherent existence of things, not their conventional existence. The conventional world is real, not illusory, but is also radically impermanent (ie. lacking *svabhāva*). The acknowledgement of these two (ie. universal absence of *svabhāva*, and the reality of the conventional world) constitutes a balance, or Middle Way, between eternalism and nihilism. This position is of course reflected in the very title of his major work *The Root verses on the Middle Way*, and also in the name Madhyamaka, which literally means 'middling'.

It was fully acknowledged by the Madhyamaka that we have both innate and acquired conceptions or ideas of *svabhāva*. The acquired ideas of inherent existence which we have are those which we have learnt, such as the existence of a god or a soul. Because they are acquired, learnt intellectually or by social conditioning, they can also be refuted by discussion and argument. All that is needed here, in the longer term, is to show that whatever thing or being that we endow with *svabhāva* is, in fact, merely conditioned by external factors. Showing it to be thus conditioned, or contingent, demonstrates that it cannot have *svabhāva*, and cannot possibly be ultimate.

Innate conceptions of *svabhāva*, on the other hand, are those which more deeply determine our everyday behaviour - everyday behaviour in which, whatever we claim to think, we still treat things and people as though they were permanent, ultimately existent entities. This innate conception of *svabhāva* is a reflection of the unenlightened state of our own mind. The only cure for this is not rational argument, but sustained meditation upon the emptiness of all conditioned things.

Now, it is important to understand that *śūnyatā*, 'emptiness' is itself an abstraction. It is an epistemological ultimate, by which I mean that it is what

is ultimately true, and therefore what can be ultimately known about things. But, and this is a very important but, it is not a 'thing' in itself, still less a 'thing' which is supposed to have *svabhāva*, or ultimate existence. Hence emptiness is described as itself empty, *śūnyatā* is itself *śūnyatā*. As Candrakīrti says, *na hi śabdāh daṇḍapāśikā iva - "words are not like policemen with big sticks"* [13]; which I take to mean that the use of mere words does not force one into a position one does not want to adopt. Amongst other things, this points out the danger in initialising the term *śūnyatā* (ie. using an upper case letter) when writing about it, for this gives the term the appearance of a proper noun, which is thereby implicitly naming an entity. This implies that it is indeed a thing, some kind of ultimate reality which really exists, thus giving *śūnyatā* an ontological status which, as far as the Prasaṅgika tradition is concerned, Nāgārjuna did not intend. It may be that we must see that sort of interpretation as something of an assimilation of the Yogācāra position, of which more later.

In spite of any impression to the contrary given by what I have been saying, the Madhyamaka did not set out to formulate any kind of philosophical system. Nāgārjuna himself insisted that he had no thesis or dogma of his own.[14] Their project is simply to set out to critically analyse the claims made by all others with regard to ultimate existence - even those claims made by other Buddhists! They do not offer any metaphysical propositions themselves, other than the total, universal absence of inherent existence - *śūnyatā*. In particular it is important to understand that the denial of an opponent's position does not implicitly constitute the adoption of the opposite position. The problem here is that all too often we assume that if someone denies what we say, they really want to say the opposite. But there is another possibility, and that is that they have simply seen that our point is wrong, and are pointing it out to us. They do not have to have a view of their own. This distinction was clearly developed by Bhāvaviveka, who adopted a special terminology to make it totally unambiguous. On the one hand there is *prasajyapratiṣedha*, or 'implicative relative negation', in which one implicitly sets up a counter claim relative to that of one's opponent. On the other hand, there is paryudāsapratiṣedha, or 'non-implicative absolute negation', in which one simply negates the opponents view, without coming from an implicit view oneself. [15] The latter is the type of negation used by the Madhyamaka.

The Prasaṅgika form of Madhyamaka uses reasoning and logical argument to show that the claims made by an opponent are in some way incoherent or unacceptable to them - in particular by demonstrating that the opponent's position, when carried to its fullest extreme, entails undesired consequences, and even absurd contradictions. Thus the general thrust of the Prasaṅgika approach (and fully consistent with the claim that they propound no thesis or metaphysic of their own) is one of a critical undermining of the views of the opponent, by the use of a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* type of argument. Here also lies the difference between the Prasaṅgikas and the Svātantrikas, because the latter felt it was essential to substantiate such arguments by setting them in the context of a full logical schemata, employing independent (*svātantra*) inference, as recognised by other Indian traditions, especially Buddhist ones.

Candrakīrti's reply to this point was that Bhāvaviveka, the founder of the Svātantrika school, was simply addicted to logic!

The claims which the Madhyamaka are attacking are those which assert that there exists something which has *svabhāva*. Now, by definition *svabhāva* is something which should resist analysis, ie. is irreducible and independently existent, but Nāgārjuna shows that when searched for, all things are simply lost, simply dissolve away, as they are reduced to their component parts (whether spatial or temporal) - and these component parts themselves can be shown to be dependent upon each other. Thus you could say that Nāgārjuna was simply reasserting the original doctrine of *pratityasamutpāda*. This is confirmed in chapter 24 of the MMK, where he says:

> *"It is the pratityasamutpāda that we call emptiness. "Emptiness" is a metaphorical designation and it is that which is the Middle Way.*
> *Because there is no dharma which is not dependently originated, therefore there is no dharma which is not empty."* [16]

This analysis demonstrating the absence of inherent existence is applied not only to the self, as we would expect, as also to the *dharmas* of the Abhidharma, but even to causation or *pratityasamutpāda*, the Buddha, and to Nirvāṇa. None of them have *svabhāva* or inherent existence - none of them are eternal things.

Has Nāgārjuna thereby destroyed the Dharma, as indeed he was accused of doing? He would say, *"No!"*, because of his embracing of the doctrine of the Two Truths. Ultimately, on the level of *paramārtha satya*, the everyday world does not exist - it does not have an ultimate, inherent existence, ie. *svabhāva*. But conventionally it does exist, and it is on the conventional level of existence that the teachings of Buddhism are effective and relevant. Indeed we can see that if enlightenment is to be possible, then the ordinary world must be lacking in *svabhāva*, otherwise it would be fixed and unchanging - for what is ultimate, what has *svabhāva*, must by definition remain unchanged. We, therefore, if we had *svabhāva*, could never change. Indeed Nāgārjuna turns the tables upon this question, and points out that you destroy the Dharma when you assert that anything does have *svabhāva*, does have some permanent ultimate existence, because then enlightenment becomes impossible. As soon as anything is said to have a permanent, unchanging essence radical change becomes impossible. Thus he continues, in chapter 24:

> *'For those who embrace the doctrine of self-essence how would it be possible to obtain that result whose self essence had not already been obtained?* 28
> *The Results not existing, there exist neither those established in the Results nor the candidates for such a status. Without the existence of these eight sorts of people the Saṃgha also does not exist.* 29
>
> *Whoever is not enlightened from the point of view of self-essence, but strives for enlightenment on the path of bodhisattva is unable, from your point of view to obtain enlightenment.* 32

> *Nor will there ever be either righteousness or unrighteousness. What is to be done in a non-empty world, for a self-essence is not produced?* 33
>
> *You destroy all worldly practice inasmuch as you destroy emptiness, which is the pratityasamutpāda."* 36 [17]

If, incidentally, any of you are wondering what relevance all this has to us, then one answer I would like to give - although there are others - is to mention that Sangharakshita has pointed out that the doctrinal perspective of the WBO and FWBO is a Madhyamaka perspective - the perspective of *śūnyatā*, the universal absence of inherent existence. [18]

So much, then, for the Madhyamaka. We may or may not be sure whether we agree with the position put forward by Nāgārjuna and his successors. However we can be sure that there were other Buddhists who definitely did not, and amongst these we can number the Yogācāra or Cittamātra school.

The Yogācāra school is associated with the teachings of a number of idealist sūtras, the earliest of which are the *Pratyutpanna* and *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtras*, but which also include the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, with which some of you may be familiar, as out of those I have mentioned, it is the only one readily available in an English translation. [19]

The founder of the Yogācāra is traditionally the great scholar Asaṅga, who received a number of the root treatises of the school directly from Maitreya, the future Buddha, in the Tuṣita heaven, wherein Maitreya is said to currently reside. These texts include the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the *Mahāyānasūtralaṃkāra*, the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, and the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*. He is also ascribed with full authorship of further works, including the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and the *Yogācārabhūmi*. The other great commentator associated with the origins of the Yogācāra was Vasubandhu, the author of a larger number of works, the most notable being the *Trisvabhāva Nirdeśa*, the *Viṃśatikā*, and the *Triṃśikā*. Traditionally he was also the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, although if this was the case, then it dates from a period prior to his conversion to a Mahāyāna viewpoint. [20]

The Yogācāra had a specifically historical perspective upon the significance of their doctrines, in that they saw them as being a final resolution of the Buddha's teaching. In particular they saw them as an antidote to the grasping at extreme views into which they considered the earlier schools to have fallen. Śākyamuni Buddha's first teaching, to the five ascetics at the Deer Park at Varanāsi, was traditionally described as the 'First Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma'. This, say the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka, was misunderstood in such a way as allowed the development of the erroneous grasping at 'existents', or *dharmas*, of the Abhidharma schools. This grasping at *dharmas* was counteracted, as we have just heard, by the teachings of *śūnyatā* and *prajñā*, as expressed in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, and formulated by Nāgārjuna and his successors in the Madhyamaka tradition. Thus we read in the *Aṣṭasahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, after a discourse by the Buddha on the Perfection of Wisdom:

"Thereupon a great many thousands of Gods in the intermediate realm called out aloud with cries of joy, waved their garments, and said: We now, indeed, see the second turning of the wheel of dharma taking place in Jambudvipa!"[21]

However, in the eyes of the Yogācāra, this too promoted an extreme view, because it over-emphasised the non-existence of *dharmas*, and passed over into a nihilistic position. The Yogācāra therefore saw their own teachings as being the 'Third Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma', and as representing the true, final and ultimate, or *paramārtha*, teaching of the Buddha. The *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra* contains a passage in which this chronology and hierarchy of teaching is made completely explicit. It concludes thus:

"Enfin, le Seigneur se reprit à dire que toutes les choses sont sans nature propre, non nées, non-détruites, calmes depuis l'origine et essentiellement nirvānées. C'était pour les sectateurs de tous les Véhicules, que le Seigneur mut cette troisième roue de la Loi parfaitement explicite, absolument merveilleuse et prodigieuse. Cette motion de la roue de la Loi par le Seigneur est insurpassée; elle ne donne pas lieu à la critique, contient un sens explicite et ne forme pas un sujet de controverse." [22]

To substantiate this claim they adopted the established hermeneutic of distinguishing between texts which were *neyārtha* and texts which were *nītārtha*.[23] The *Nikāyas* and the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* were *neyārtha*, which means they needed 'drawing out', or interpretation. They were not speaking the literal truth, which is why those who took them literally were prone to fall into the extreme of nihilism. Their own idealist Sūtras, however, were classified as *nītārtha*, as being literal, and therefore needing no interpretation. The purpose of this new turning of the Dharma Wheel was to re-affirm the Middle Way - the Middle Way between existence and non-existence, eternalism and nihilism. In the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, 'Verses on the Discrimination between Middle and Extremes', Asaṅga records the words of Maitreya thus:

"Neither void nor non-void:
So is everything described,
That indeed is the middle path,
For there is existence as well as non-existence,
And existence again." [24]

'Mind-only', or *cittamātra*, is the principle doctrine of this school. As the name Yogācāra, meaning 'the practice of yogā', suggests its origin may well have been in connection with experience in yogā or meditation, as indeed does the provenance of the works received by Asaṅga from Maitreya. Thus the 'mind-only' doctrine was very likely the product of reflection upon meditation experience, and in turn, this may help us to understand that what is being said is, not that everything is made of mind, as though the mind were some kind of universal matter or material, but that all that can be known, fundamentally, is dependent upon the mind. The proposition is that we only know or experience things with our mind (through the agency of our senses) and that therefore the things that

we know with our mind cannot be radically or fundamentally different from that mind - how else then could we know these things? For this reason, the Tibetan traditions following Tsong-kha-pa acknowledge the distinction by saying that mind and external objects are *ekadravya*, 'of one substance'. If they were fundamentally different from each other, they would be permanently inaccessible to each other. Those of you familiar with philosophy will perhaps have noticed that we have come back to the issue of epistemology again, and that what is being said is that the perceived world is totally dependent upon consciousness.

This connection with meditation is reflected in the earliest evidence of the Yogācāra viewpoint, which is provided in the *Pratyutpanna* and *Saṃdhinirmocana Sutras*. In the former a disciple asks the Buddha about the nature of Buddhas seen in the course of meditation. The Buddha replies:

"In the same manner, when the bodhisattva develops this samādhi properly, that bodhisattva sees the Tathāgatas with little difficulty. Having seen them he asks questions, and is delighted by the elucidation of those questions. After thinking: "Did these Tathāgatas come from somewhere? Did I go anywhere?" he understands that the Tathāgatas did not come from anywhere. Having comprehended that his own body also did not go anywhere, he thinks: "Whatever belongs to this triple world is nothing but thought. Why is that? Namely, however I discriminate things, so they appear." [25]

In the latter Sūtra, the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, the Buddha is asked whether images perceived in meditation are different from the mind or not. He replies that they are not, but are *vijñaptimātra* - 'merely ideation' - as are externally perceived objects too. [26] 'Ideation' here means 'the product of ideas' or 'activity of the mind'. So the Buddha says that ideas perceived during meditation, as well as externally perceived objects, are the product of the activity of the mind.

As I have already said, the Yogācāra disagreed with the Madhyamaka position. More specifically they thought the Madhyamaka to be nihilistic, and to have strayed from a Middle Way between eternalism and nihilism, in so far as they claim that nothing has ultimate existence. Therefore the Yogācāra set out to give expression to a more positive or concrete assertion of ultimate truth, reacting against the apparent nihilism of the Madhyamaka *śūnyatā* teachings (when they are inadequately understood). They hold that there is indeed something which really exists, which really does have *svabhāva*, and that that is the mind. Of course, it is still empty, still *śūnyatā*. It is empty in that it is free from duality, free from any conception of subject and object. So, what's happened here then? *Śūnyatā*, according to the Yogācāra, is freedom from duality - but only a moment ago, I explained that according to the Madhyamaka, *śūnyatā* was freedom from *svabhāva*, or inherent existence. What has happened is that the Yogācāra have revised the meaning of *śūnyatā* - from meaning 'absence of inherent existence', to meaning the 'absence of duality between perceiving subject and perceived object', a change which doubtless would not have gone undisputed! This change of meaning in the term *śūnyatā* is clearly

disclosed by Sthiramati (C6th C.E.) in his commentary upon verse 2 of the *Madhyāntavibhāga*. The verse is as follows:

> *"Constructive Ideation is real.*
> *In it duality does not [absolutely] exist.*
> *Non-substantiality however exists in it.*
> *In this [Non-Sunstantiality] too, that [Constructive Ideation] is found."*

"*Constructive Ideation* " here translates *abhūtaparikalpa* and is the activity of the unenlightened mind. "*Non-Substantiality* " translates *śūnyatā*. Sthiramati explains:

> *"For the Non-Substantiality here means the being free from [the real existence of] subject and object and that is the Constructive Ideation."* [27]

Now this may sound all rather confusing and also rather inefficient. *"Was it simply a mistake, or was it a clever subterfuge?"*, we may ask. I prefer to see this difference as arising directly from the sūtra material upon which these two schools based their understanding and exposition of the Dharma. I should also point out that the meaning of *śūnyatā* is something that changed around quite a bit! For instance, in the Tathāgatagarbha and Zen traditions the 'One Mind' was described as *śūnyatā* because it was regarded as being empty of phenomenal impurities. While in the Hua Yen school they accepted both that latter meaning, and the Madhyamaka definition, at the same time!

Returing to the Yogācāra, we learn that they also revised the meaning of *svabhāva* too, and enumerated a system in which there are 3 kinds of *svabhāva*, a system which came to be known as the doctrine of the Three Natures (*trisvabhāva*) - this referring to the fact that *svabhāva* not only means literally 'own being', but also 'own nature' or 'existence'. Everything that can be known can be classified under these three natures.

So what are these three natures? The first of them is the *parikalpita-svabhāva*, or 'the imagined nature', and this is the kind of existence which our everyday world has. It is unreal, and only has conventional existence.

> *"Because of false discriminations,*
> *Various things are falsely discriminated.*
> *What is grasped by such false discrimination*
> *Has no self nature whatsoever."* [28]

It is the realm of subject and object, characterised by our experience of ourselves as separate, discrete beings in opposition to an objective external world, and it is the product of the falsifying activity of language which imputes duality onto what are really only mental constructions.

> *"Ce sont des noms et des conventions attribuant aux choses une nature propre et des spécifications permettant de les mentioner dans le langage courant."* [29]

The second of the Three Natures is the *paratantrasvabhāva*, or 'the dependent nature'. *"What appears is the dependent (nature);...(...being so called) because it exists subordinated to causes"*. [30] This is what really does exist, it has *svabhāva*, but through the falsification of language appears in the guise of the imagined nature. It is essentially mental, and is dependent because it is the continual flow of mutually conditioned and conditioning mental events, which make up consciousness. *"Qu'est le charactère dépendant? C'est la production des choses en raison des causes..."* [31] For those of you familiar with Buddhist teachings, this means that it is the *pratityasamutpāda*, is identical with the twelve *nidānas* of the cycle of conditioned existence.

The third nature is called the *parinișpannasvabhāva*, or 'perfected' or 'absolute nature'. Unlike the last it is not something really existent, is not an ontological ultimate, but is the highest truth, it is the Cittamātra's epistemological ultimate. *"Qu'est le caractère absolu? C'est la vraie Nature de choses.. "* [32] It is the truth that, ultimately all things, ie. the dependent nature (which encompasses all things), are completely lacking in duality, even though they appear as dualism. *"The eternal non-existence as it appears of what appears must be known as the absolute nature, because of its inalterability."* [33]

Vasubhandu offers an analogy in an attempt to make the difference between them clear.

> *"In the same as way as what is produced by magic, due to the mantras' power, appears as an elephant: there is only a form there, but a (real) elephant does not exist at all.*
> *The elephant is the imaginary nature, its form is the dependent (nature), and that elephant's inexistence, which is there, is considered as the absolute (nature).*
> *In the same way the unreal mental creation, due to the root-mind appears with duality: duality does not exist in any way, there exists something that is only a form."* [34]

It is like a magician when he takes a piece of wood, and through his magical spells, makes it appear to be an elephant. The illusory elephant is the imagined nature, while the piece of wood is the dependent nature. The perfected nature is the absence of any elephant in the piece of wood.

Now this is a slightly simplified account of the doctrine of the Three Natures, and is one part of quite a complex analysis in which the Yogācāra engaged. Many of you may well be familiar with what is called the 'Threefold Transformation of Consciousness', which is a description of how the dependent nature comes to be seen as the imagined nature, ie. how the *ālayavijñāna* is transformed into the six sense consciousnesses. In doing this they freely utilised the Abhidharma analysis of the perceived world, which they inherited from the pre-Mahāyāna schools - giving it a far more positive treatment than the Madhyamaka. This is another area of great interest and importance in Yogācāra doctrine, but, as it is dealt with in great detail by Sangharakshita in

his taped lecture, *The Depth Psychology of the Yogācāra*, there is no need for me to do so tonight. Obviously, unlike the Madhyamaka, the Yogācāra were concerned to develop a philosophical system, in part to give a coherent framework to the meditative experiences which were embodied in the 'mind-only' sūtras. In particular, the positive ontological status given by them to the dependent nature is necessitated on the one hand by the need to counterct the spiritually disastrous extreme of nihilism, and on the other hand by the logical necessity for there to be a really existent substratum upon which the erroneous perception of the imagined nature takes place. They were thereby fiercely criticised by the Madhyamaka, much in the way that I described above. You can read some of the Madhyamaka critique applied to the Yogācāra in Chapter 9 of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

In mentioning this last point I am also concerned to remind you that these schools were not, in origin at least, merely scholastic diversions from the major task of treading the path to enlightenment. In each case their concern was to rationalise and systematise the teachings of a group of sūtras, which were regarded as being the words of the Buddha. In each case they were trying to establish the exact nature of the 'Right View' which forms the first stage of the Noble Eightfold Path. Enlightenment is frequently described as achieving a state in which one 'sees things as they really are'. Well, I would suggest that much of the doctrinal debate which developed in the Mahāyāna was an attempt to establish what precisely 'the way things really are' really was! There is a famous aphorism in the *Dīgha Nikāya* [35], which says that from the night of his enlightenment to the night of his *Parinirvāṇa* or death, everything spoken by the Buddha is true. This was adapted by Candrakīrti, in his *Prasannapadā*, where he says that between those same two nights, the Buddha said absolutely nothing. *"Howsoever far mere words reach in the world realm, all are without being, none is real..."* [36] The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* explains that the word of the Buddha is wordless, because his insight is beyond words and concepts, *"for the realm of self-realisation is free from words and discriminations, having nothing to do with dualistic terminology."* [37]

So by way of conclusion, I would like to ask what relevance this has for us? These systems can be seen as, and dismissed as, medieval, pseudo-scientific, mumbo-jumbo. But I must emphasise that they were developed in relation to the current world-view of the time. They represented the most authentic account which people felt they could give of 'the way things really are', both in the light of their understanding of the nature of the world, and in the light of their understanding of the nature of Buddhist insight. And it is precisely there that I think these systems reveal their relevance to us. Because, whether we are conscious of it or not, we, all of us, have a view or views about the nature of the world - what it is, and how it works. For most of us, again whether we are conscious of it or not, this view is largely a form of naive 'scientism', and it is on the basis of this that we relate to the world, and to our religious goals and ideals.

So surely then, what we need to be doing is identifying our own world-view, and then testing its ultimate coherence and validity, in the light of our true

experience, and of our spiritual practice and ideals. In the case of Buddhists, it means reconciling our own, our very own, preconceptions about the nature of the world in which we live with the understanding of this world developed through insight, by the Buddhist masters of old. Perhaps we must read the texts of the Mahāyāna scholiasts, and take to heart, quite literally, take to heart what they have to say to us.

So that concludes this evening's brief survey of the teachings of two of the most important Indo-Tibetan schools of Mahayana Buddhism. Tonight's lecture has been the penultimate one in the series. Next week, the final lecture will be quite a contrast to the largely philosophical character of tonight's discussion, because I shall be taking a look at devotion in Buddhism in general, how it developed in the Mahayana, and the doctrine of the Buddha's Pure Land.

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[The following is a summarising extract from the final talk in the series in which I drew out the correlation between the Three Natures and the Yogācāra doctrine of the Three Bodies of the Buddha.]

1. *Dharmakāya* (literally 'dharma-body' or 'body of dharma') or *Svabhāvikakāya* (literally 'essence-body' or 'body of own being')
This is the pure, non-dual flow of consciousness experienced by the enlightened person, and is or has dependent nature (*paratantrasvabhāva*). It has *svabhāva*, or own being. This means that it is ultimately real and true. It is the same as the mind, except that it is completely and utterly pure of any conception of duality. From our mundane viewpoint it is the collection of good mental qualities which make up or characterise a Buddha, that is the mind of a Buddha.

2. *Saṃbhogakāya* (Body of Complete Enjoyment - 'bhoga' means enjoyment)
This is only relatively true or real, in that it has *parikalpitasvabhāva*, or 'imagined nature' only. All the same it is excellent and perfect, having the 112 marks of the *mahāpuruṣa*, and is a physical body, although not necessarily grossly physical. This is the Buddha that appears in Pure Lands, to help beings attain liberation, and therefore it is also the Buddha that teaches the Mahāyāna Sūtras. It is the most important Body of the Buddha in religious terms, because it is the Buddha of devotion - the archetypal Buddha of visionary experience. It is also the form in which people, or rather bodhisattvas treading the path of the Six Perfections, attain full Buddhahood!

3. *Nirmāṇakāya* (Transformed or Created Body)
This is the body of the historical Buddha, who was simply the magical creation of an archetypal, *Sagmbhogakāya* Buddha. The function of this illusory form is that he teaches those who don't follow the Mahāyāna, or who cannot meditate sufficiently well to be able to enter a Pure Land and be taught there!

Important points to note are that, while there is a correspondence between the *Trikāya* and the *Trisvabhāva* doctrines, that correspondence is not a symmetrical one. There is no equivalent in the *Trikāya* to the *pariniṣpannasvabhāva*, or perfected nature. I should also point out that various systems of Buddha bodies were developed by the different schools, all admittedly based upon the Yogācāra *Trikāya*, but often expanding the number of bodies. Thus you will also come across systems which enumerate 4 or even 5 bodies of the Buddha - the latter sometimes being Tantric in origin, and related to the *maṇḍala*, wherein you have one Buddha for each of the four directions, and one at the centre. The dGelugs school lists a 4-body system, and this is very likely what you would come across if you read any literature upon the subject produced by the Mañjuśrī Institute or Wisdom Publications, or any of the dGelugs affiliated Tibetan organisations in the West.

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Notes:

1. This article is an extensively revised version of a lecture given as the fifth in a series on the growth and development of the Mahāyāna, at the Croydon Buddhist Centre on the 8th October, 1987. My warm thanks are due to Padmarājā for encouraging me to give the series, and to the Croydon Buddhist Centre for providing exemplary facilities over the weeks concerned. Several of the talks, including this one, also reflect the debt I owe to the research of Dr Paul Williams, my tutor at Bristol University during the period concerned.
2. Cousins, *Handbook of Living Religions*, Harmondsworth 1985, p.320
3. Beyer, *Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahāyāna*, in Lancaster, *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*, Berkeley 1977, p.328ff.
4. See for example the account given of the transformation of the Madhyamaka, known there as the 'Three Treatise School' after the first three texts translated by Kumārajīva (344-413 CE) in R Robinson, *Early Madhyamaka in India and China*, Madison, Milwaukee and London 1967
5. Nāgārjuna's surviving works are usually divided into three categories: i) with the MMK, there are also the *Yuktisaṣṭika* ('60 verses on reasoning'); *Śūnyatāsaptati* ('70 verses on Emptiness'); *Vigrahavyāvartinī* ('refutation of criticisms'); *Vyavahārasiddhi* ('proof of the conventional realm'); ii) hymns, eg. the *Catuḥstava*; iii) shorter treatises and epistles, eg. *Suhṛllekha* and *Ratnāvalī*. The Chinese also include in his ouevre the doubtful *Ta chih tu lun* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*) - available in Lamotte's French translation
6. When originally delivered this was a reference to a previous lecture, entitled *A New Literature: the word of the Buddha?*, in which I dealt, amongst other things, with the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras. From here onwards, for appropriate background information to the points I make about these texts, I can refer readers to Prajñānanda's article on the same subject in this journal.
7. From hereon when the term *dharma* is used to denote the technical Abhidharma term, it will be italicised in lower case letters. This is to distinguish that usage from the same term denoting Dharma, as the teaching

of the Buddha and second of the Three Jewels, which will be given with upper case initial.

8. Page 36 of Jeffrey Hopkins's *Meditation on Emptiness* lists 17 synonyms for inherent existence used within the Prasaṅgika tradition
9. *As Kingfishers Catch Fire Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* 2nd Ed.Oxford 1937
10. vv.1-2, trans. P M Williams
11. Cousins, in *Handbook of Living Religions*, p.319
12. MMK 24:7 trans. Williams
13. Commentary on MMK, 1:1 trans. Williams
14. *nāsti ca mama pratijñā* "I have no thesis" *Vigrahavyavartinī*
15. see DS Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, Wiesbaden 1981
16. vv. 18-19, trans. Williams
17. ibid.
18. Seminar on *Rechungpa's Journey to Wu* - reference courtesy of Ānandajyoti.
19. *Pratyutpanna Sūtra*, trans. P M Harrison, doctoral thesis, Canberra 1979; *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, French trans. E Lamotte, Louvain 1935; *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, trans. D T Suzuki, London 1932
20. see Frauwallner, *On the Date of the Buddhist Master of the Law Vasubandhu*, Rome 1951, for a discussion of the possibility that there were two Vasubandhus, confused as one by later tradition.
21. trans. Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines*, p.150
22. Lamotte's translation, p.207
23. Both these terms are derived in part from the verbal root *nī*, 'to lead'. The former uses the gerundive form of the verb, *neya*, and thus means 'whose meaning is to be led (to), gained', hence 'whose meaning is (yet) to be understood', ie. is not yet understood, but has to be inferred or interpreted. The second term uses the past passive participle, *nīta*, and thus means, 'whose meaning is gained, understood', ie. is quite clear.
24. v.3 trans. Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience*
25. Trans. Harrison, p.37
26. "*Les images perçues en concentration-inspectrices sont-elles différentes ou non-différentes de la pensée [qui perçoit]?*
- Elles ne sont pas différentes de la pensées. Pourquoi n'en diffèrent-elles pas? Parce que ces images ne sont rien qu'idées. J'ai dit que l'objet de la connaissance se définit «Idée-sans-plus»." trans. Lamotte, p.211
27. Trans. D Friedman, *The Madhyāntavibhāgatīka of Sthiramati*, Leiden p.11
28. v.20 *Triṃśikā*, trans. Wing-tsit Chan, in *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, ed. Radhakrishnan and Moore, p.336
29. *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, trans, Lamotte p.188
30. *Trisvabhāva Nirdeśa*, v.2 trans. Tola and Dragonetti, in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 11 (1983) p.252
31. *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, trans. Lamotte, p.188
32. *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, trans Lamotte, p.189
33. *Trisvabhāva Nirdeśa*, v.3 trans. Tola and Dragonetti, p.252
34. *Trisvabhāva Nirdeśa*, vv.27-29, trans. Tola and Dragonetti, p.256
35. *Dīgha Nikāya* III.135
36. Trans. M Sprung, in *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way*, London 1979 p.179
37. 142-4; trans. Suzuki, p.124

THE DESERTED ARIADNE

- translated from the Latin of Catullus
(Carmen 64: 11.52-142, 149-191, 42-51)

by Dharmachari Vīrānanda

Cretan Ariadne, there you stand
Gazing at Theseus from Dia's wave-plashed strand
His fleet seen hurrying far from land,
And in your ungovernable heart you conceive
All the frenzy of love - you cannot believe
Even now what you have perceived and still perceive.
No wonder - for waking from sleep's delusion
She saw herself there on the sand all alone
Deserted pitiably. The oars of young Theseus strike on
Through the water, away he hastes regardless
Leaving to the blustery gale his useless promises.
Down below the fringe of seaweed the princess
Stares out with sad eyes, imaged maenad of stone
Stares out, and across the vast sea her passion
Wavers forth. Gone from gold hair the head-dress fine-spun,
From milkwhite breasts the smooth-scarved binding
Undone, and the light robe's veil of covering;
And slipped from her body, around her feet, everything
Indiscriminately sport for the seas -
But not for the head-dress or robe, not for these
Hapless she cares - it's on you Theseus she cleaves
Totally, with heart and soul onto you.
Unfortunate girl! With constant sorrow
Venus has maddened you. Into your heart she threw
Upon a time the seeds of thorny suffering -
That very hour when bold Theseus, coming
From the curved shores of Piraeus, arriving
Embarked at the palace stronghold of Crete's cruel king.

For they tell how of old, forced by a ravening
Plague to pay the cost for murdering
Androgeos, chosen youths and with them the bounty
Of unwedded maids were, by Cecrop's country,
Given customarily as a feast to the Minotaur.
And Theseus, seeing his own little city vexed sore
By an evil calamity, for his dear Athens decided
That rather than watch these 'living dead' transported
To Crete, he first would offer up
His very own body. Then he sped -
His light bark pushed on by fair winds - and in due course
He came to the proud halls of haughty King Minos.

Observing him there, a girl eager-eyed and desirous,
A princess, ward of a bed most chaste
Which breathed forth delighful scents; still embraced
By a mother's tender love; like the myrtles raised
By the streams of Eurotas, or the many-hued blossoming
Which the breath of Spring draws out - not turning
Her passionate eyes from him, until deep within,
Through her whole body the flames of desire were kindled.
To her very marrow all was on fire!
O cruel-hearted God who stirs mankind to this dire
And pitiable madness; sacred child, who close
Around men's joys must be mixing sorrows;
And you who rule Golgos and green Idalium -
On what billows you tumbled the inflamed heart of this maiden!
Often she sighed for the stranger with hair so golden
Or she fainted at heart, borne down by great dread. And often
She grew paler than gleam of gold - when he, Theseus,
Eager to try his strength with the Minotaur's fury
Set forth to win death, or the reward of glory.

To the gods her promises of childish gifts
And vows undertaken through sealed lips
Were yet not unpleasing or vain. For just as the whips
Of a wild tornado set the boughs shaking
On the summit of Mount Taurus, and an oak or a cone-bearing
Pine with its oozing bark is uprooted and sent sprawling
By the blasts - it falls far off with its crown
To the earth, torn up by the roots, smashing down
All in its way - so was the cruel Beast overthrown
By Theseus, its body subdued as it gored
In vain the thin air with its horns. Uninjured,
With great fame he returned, guiding his footsteps
With the cord [given him by Ariadne to ensure his protection] -
Unless, coming out from the baffling deception
Of the building's labyrinthine maze,
It should prove in the end his utter distraction.

But why should I mention any more, and stray further
From the start of my song, to tell how the daughter
Forsaking her father's countenance, the love of her sister
And lastly her mother, even more piteous,
Who fondly rejoiced in her child - how the choice
She made prefers to them all the sweet love of Theseus;
Or how, conveyed in his boat, she arrives
At Dia's foaming shores; or how, when her eyes
Were sleep-sealed, off her unheedful husband flies.
Oft with emotions of burning wild frenzy
From her innermost being they say how cry
After piercing cry poured forth. Now sorrowfully

She would clamber up steep rocks, and there she would strain
Her eyes at the desolate sea-surging main;
And now against the waters of rippling brine
Rush forward, her calves bared, lifting up her soft dress.
And making her last complaint, with much sadness
Heaving up chill sobs, tears wetting her face, she said this:

"So, having carried me off from the sanctuary
Of my native land, faithless, on this lonely
Shore, have you, O treacherous Theseus, left me?
In so departing, aren't you disregarding
The will of the gods and ah! forgetting
The accursed perjury you carry homewards? Could nothing
Soften your cruel-minded purpose? Was no mercy
Present within you to pluck some pity from out
Your ungentle heart, to have compassion for me?
Your smooth-talking voice! - not such were the promises
You gave me, no such things as these miseries you bid me
Have hope for, but our longed-for wedding,
But the beauties of marriage - all of which now
Is scattered unaccomplished on airy winds.
Certain it is that when you were mid
The throes of death's whirlpool it was I that saved you,
Determined that rather than fail you in the hour
Of your utmost peril, my deceiver, I would lose
My own brother. For this I shall be given as fodder
To the birds and wild beasts, and in pieces be torn
And over my corpse no earth will be thrown
For a burial mound. What she-lion begat you alone
Under a rock? From out the foaming surges of what sea
Were you conceived and spat up? By what Syrtis
Were you spawned, what greedy Scylla or vast Charybdis
Produced you? - who for sweet life are returning
A reward such as this. If you had lost heart in us marrying
Dreading your stern father's cruel command
Yet to your family abode you could have brought me
And there as your slave I'd have laboured willingly
To serve you - with water clear from the spring
Rubbing down gently your beautiful feet,
And on your bed spreading a bright tapestry.

"But why, by misfortune maddened, should I cry
In vain to unconscious winds, totally
Devoid of feeling, which neither can hear nor reply
To the words I utter? Now indeed he
Veers almost mid-way across the salt sea
And no mortal will appear in this waste of seaweed before me -
And Fortune beyond all measure severe
Has taken to mocking me in my last hour,

And spitefully grudges my complaint to every ear.
Almighty Jove, I wish that never
Had Athenian ships touched Gnosia's shore
For that first time, nor ever that treacherous sailor
Bringing the untamed Bull its horrible
Tribute, had ever tied up his cable
Here in Crete; nor that this villain, able
To conceal his cruel intentions with charming
Exterior, had ever stayed at our dwelling
As a guest. But where can I make my way back?
On what hope rely? - when all hope is now destroyed.
Should I seek the mountains of Crete? But wide
Yawns the gulf of a cruel sea's level divide.
Or should I expect the help of my father -
Whom I willingly left to follow after
A man strewn with the blood of a murdered brother?
Or with a husband's faithful loving
Console myself - when he flees, bending
His pliant oars through the deep? From now on nothing
But shore, a desert island for dwelling
With all way beyond the sea's encircling
Waves debarred. No means of escape. Hopelessness.
All is silence, all is wilderness
All points to death. But nevertheless
Before death dims the light in my eyes and renders senseless
This weary flesh, to the gods I will call
Demanding they justly avenge my betrayal -
To Heavenly justice, in my last hour I appeal....."

* * * * * * * *

And up in the kingly dwelling place
Throughout its chambers' opulent space
The shining gold and silver interlaced.
On thrones carved ivory whitely gleamed
Cups on tables threw forth beams,
Splendid in royal treasure, their palace seemed
To rejoice through its entirety.
A goddess' nuptial bed-to-be
Was awaiting there, placed medially -
An elegant couch of Indian ivory
Overspread with a crimson cloth, whose rosy
Dye had been soaked from the purple-shells of the sea.
Upon this coverlet were wonderfully shown
Heroic deeds that had been done
By diverse figures of men long dead and gone;
And as depicted, Ariadne stood
Gazing at Theseus across the flood,
As away from the island's shore he quickly moved.

Translator's Introduction & Notes

My main reason for making this translation of certain sections of Catullus' longest extant poem (Carmen 64) is that I am very interested in the story of Theseus and Ariadne. The myth, in which they are two of the major protagonists, has fascinated me for a long time - making a translation of Catullus' *locus classicus* was a way of coming closer to the myth, involving myself more deeply in it. My translation aims at being close to the literal sense of the Latin; but uppermost in my mind was the fact that I wanted to produce something which reads well as English poetry.

I am a poet, rather than a Latin scholar, and this has of course influenced the way in which I have approached the task of translation. I have indeed endeavoured to keep close to the literal sense of Catullus' Latin; but where the duties of the scholar have conflicted with the demands of the poet I have invariably opted in favour of the latter. I could not have done otherwise. Therefore I have not baulked at omitting a passage which I have felt unable to translate satisfactorily; or transposing the line order of the original Latin in order to achieve a greater poetic effect in the English; or, to the same effect, interpolating a certain phrase or clause into my translation, which is not present in the original Latin.

Against those who might claim that I have taken undue liberties with my original, I can only say that I have followed a lead given by certain contemporary translators, whose works I have read and admired. Notably, to my mind, there is James Greene, whose translations from the Russian of Osip Mandlestam can serve, I feel, as a model of achieved success for this kind of approach. Mr Greene's work has won due praise both for its quality of translation, and for its merits as English poetry. I have aspired to follow this example - but, in doing so I am making no claims to have similarly succeeded.

Catullus is, without question, one of the greatest ever lyric poets. His work, comprising the 115 Carmina, exerted a considerable influence over both his near contemporaries and succeeding generations of Latin poets. Horace, Virgil and Martial were all signally indebted to him. During the 15th and 16th centuries C.E. his poems, which had been forgotten during the Middle Ages, began to exert their influence upon English literature. Starting off with Skelton (in his *Little Boke of Philip Sparrow*) imitations and translations of his work have continued, like an unbroken tradition, to appear in English verse translation, right down to our own time. Also, appreciative poems have been written on Catullus - by Tennyson and Swinburne for example. Not much is known about Catullus' life history, apart from what is recorded in his poems - even his dates are approximate; c.87 B.C.-c.54 B.C.. For those wanting to find out more about him, a sympathetic introductory account of his life and work can be found in Gilbert Highet's *Poets in a Landscape*.

In my notes below I make frequent reference to the following authors' works:
G.A. Williamson, *Poems of Catullus*, Bristol 1986
M. MacMillan, *Catullus*, Chicago 198-?
F.W.Cornish (trans.), *The Poems of Catullus*, London 1969
James Michie (trans.), *The Poems of Catullus*, London 1969
Line references in parenthesis are all to the Latin text as found in the Loeb Classical Library edition (with Cornish's prose translation facing).

Notes:

2 'Dia's wave-plashed strand'. Dia is the old name for Naxos, and is used by Homer in the *Odyssey*. 'Wave-plashed' translates *fluentisono* (1.52 - cf. 'wave-sounding' (Cornish) & 'surf-booming' (Michie).

3 'fleet'. I have followed Cornish and Williamson in my translation of *classe* (1.53). Viz. Williamson p. 159, for a lengthy note which concludes: *"....do Catullus' references to a single vessel prove that is was unaccompanied? After all, the basic meaning of* classis *is a collection or group."*

12 'down below the fringe of seaweed'. MacMillan notes: *"Ariadne had gone down to the edge of the sea so as to be as near as possible to the ship which bore Theseus away"*. cf. 'there on the seaweed fringe' (Michie) and 'afar from the weedy beach' (Cornish). The Latin reads *procul ex alga* - (1.60).

13 'imaged maenad of stone'. Translates *saxea ut effigies bacchantis* - (1.61). *"The simile was no doubt suggested by sculptures representing processions of the worshippers of Bacchus."* (MacMillan) cf. 'like a maenad carved in stone' (Michie).

14 'stares out'. I have retained Catullus' repetition (or anadiplosis) of *prospicit* (11.62-63).

15 'head-dress'. Translates *mitram* (1.63) - 'bonnet' being the more literal, and somewhat bathetic, translation. Surely the tragic and royal figure of a deserted princess is not to be seen wearing , or as having worn, a bonnet! Cornish avoids it, and tranlsates *mitram* as 'headband'.

16-17 'From milkwhite breasts...veil of covering'. Catullus (11.64-65) uses both *pectus* (bosom) and *papillas* (breast). Following Michie, I decided to dispense with that distinction. He translates, *"Thrown off the light blouse and the delicate scarf/ That bound her milk-white breasts..."*

27 'Piraeus'. i.e. the port of Athens.

28 'Crete's cruel king'. i.e. Minos. He was *iniusti regis* (1.75) because he punished the young Athenians for a crime which they themselves had not committed - the tribal tradition of *lex talionis*, in other words. According to Williamson: *"When Androgeos....was murdered in Attica, his father Minos demanded an annual tribute of young men and maidens to be devoured by the Minotaur, the*

monstrous offspring of Queen Pasiphaë and the bull. The Athenians were forced by a pestilence to accede to this demand, until Theseus, aided by the queen's daughter Ariadne, slew the monster, escaped from the labyrinth in which it had lived, and sailed away with the princess to Naxos."

29-30 'ravening plague'. cf. Michie's 'cruel plague'. MacMillan notes: *"By divine vengeance for the death of Androgeos, Attica was visited by famine and pestilence. To avert the anger of the gods the Athenians were compelled to send, as an expiation for their treachery, the fourteen victims to the Minotaur."*

32 'Cecrop's country'. Cecrops was the legendary king of Attica - thus *Cecropiam* (1.79) can read as 'of Athens', or 'Athenian'.

34 'little city'. Athens at this time was very small in comparison to what it was later to become under the sovereignty of Theseus and, later, Themistocles.

36 'living dead'. Translates *funera .... nec funera* (1.83). MacMillan comments: *"The victims are called* funera *because in the fatal ship they were doomed to death, to all intents and purposes dead, like Lorenzo in Keats' Isabella when 'the two brothers and their murdered man ((i.e. the man they were going to murder)) rode past fair Florence'."*

39 'pushed on by'. Translated *nitens* (1.84), which could equally well have an active construction, i.e. 'pushing on' or 'hurrying'. I have followed Williamson's preference for 'leaning on' or 'borne by', and adopted the passive structure. But either structure will serve - cf. 'speeding his course with light bark' (Cornish).

44 'a mother's tender love'. Her mother is Pasiphaë.

45 'the streams of Eurotas'. The Eurotas was a river near Sparta, named after a Spartan king; who having suffered a defeat from the Athenians drowned himself, out of shame, in its waters.

50-51 'cruel-hearted God.....sacred child'. i.e. Cupid.

53 'you who rule Golgos and green Idalium'. An apostrophe for Venus, the mother of Cupid.

57 'paler than gleam of gold'. Apparently for both the Greeks and Romans fear was betrayed by a yellowing of the complexion.

58 'the Minotaur's fury'. Catullus uses *monstrum* (1.101) to indicate the Minotaur, who is a hybrid of bull and man.

61 'vows undertaken through sealed lips'. Translated *tacito succendit vota labello* (1.104), which literally means 'as she burnt her votive offerings on her silent lip'. MacMillan comments: *"Ariadne burnt votive offerings on her silent lip, inasmuch as she tried to win the favour of the gods by silent prayers and promises instead of burnt offerings."* cf. Michie's 'the prayers she breathed between clenched lips'.

64 'Mount Taurus' Translates *Tauro* (1.105), which is the name given a range of mountains in south-east Asia Minor.

72 'given him .... his protection'. I have interpolated this phrase.

73-75 'Unless .... his utter distraction'. Translates two Latin lines of exemplary poetic condensation and power -

ne labyrintheis e flexibus egredientem
tecti frustraretur inobservabilis error (11.114-115)

78 'her sister'. Ariadne had four brothers and one sister, Phaedra - who was later to become the ill-fated wife of Theseus. Viz. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* vol. 1 pp.303ff (London 1978).

108 I have omitted the section (11.143-148) preceding this line, which begins, *iam iam nulla viro....* (1.143), as I have not been able to make a satisfactory translation of it.

112 'my own brother'. i.e. the Minotaur. Williamson notes that Catullus is accepting a Greek view - *"...that children of the same mother are virtually brothers and sisters."*

114-115 'over my corpse no earth will be thrown for a burial mound'. MacMillan comments: *"This was the height of misfortune, because the ghosts of the unburied were not allowed to cross the Styx and enter the realm of Pluto."* For some interesting observations concerning the pagans' attitudes towards their dead, as contrasted with the Christians', see Sartell Prentice, *The Heritage of the Cathedral* pp.13ff (New York 1966).

117-118 'Syrtis .... Scylla .... vast Charybdis'. MacMillan notes: *"Scylla and Charybdis were respectively a rock and a whirlpool personified in the Odyssey as monsters infesting either side of the strait between Italy and Sicily. The Syrtes were two dangerous sand-banks on the northern coast of Africa. The singular form used here .... may be a proper name used as a common term in the sense of 'sand-bank', or a personification of the dangerous coast like Homer's Scylla and Charybdis."* Catullus' epithet for Charybdis, *vasta* (1.156), has other connotations, e.g. 'horrible' (Michie) and 'waste' (Cornish).

137 'Gnosia's shore'. i.e. the Cretan shore. Gnosus was an ancient Cretan city, here used by Catullus as a synecdoche.

140 'tied up his cable'. Translated *religasset.... funem* (1.174). cf. 'fastened his cable' (Cornish), but, 'cast his cable' (Michie). Cornish notes that whether *religasset* means 'tie' or 'untie' depends on whether the text read

Creta or *Cretam*. I have followed the Loeb text, which has *Creta*. Also, viz. Williamson, p.164 for further commentary.

162 'To Heavenly justice'. Translates *caelestumque fidem* (1.191). cf. 'the faith of the heavenly ones' (Cornish). MacMillan notes: "Fides *here expresses the duty that the gods owed to men, namely, protection against oppression and punishment of wrong. In this consisted the* pietas *that the gods were expected to manifest for the pious worship of men: cf.* Aen. *iv 382 where Dido follows Ariadne in praying that the gods.....will avenge her on her faithless lover.*"

163 This and the lines following are a translation of an earlier section of the poem, that commences at *Ipsius at sedes....* (1.42), describing the palace of Peleus in which is found the picture of 'the deserted Ariadne' upon the bridal couch prepared for Peleus and his newly-wed, Thetis.

173-174 'a crimson cloth, whose rosy dye had been soaked in the purple-shells of the sea'. Translates *tincta tegit roseo conchylii purpura fuco* (1.49). cf. Michie, 'murex-purpled cloth', and Cornish's 'covered with purple tinged with the rosy stain of the shell'. I have followed Williamson, who comments: *"The traditional translation of* purpura *and* purpureus *is surely wrong. Roses are not purple, and the adjective is applied elsewhere to poppies, fire, faces, cheeks, blushes, blood and dawn, all of which can be crimson but surely not purple! But the meaning of the word is so elastic that it is even used of snow, swans and lettuces!"*

Is Buddhism's Involvement with Rural Village Life Inconsistent with its Ascetic Ideals?

by Dharmachari Jñānavīra

1.1. Introduction

The above problem is formulated by various anthropologists in different ways. Tambiah asks: how can a lay public rooted in this world adhere to a religion committed to the renunciation of the world? [1] Martin Southwold sees the problem rooted in the apparent fact that village Buddhists do not seek Nirvana, but desire a happier rebirth, and are consequently not regarded by some as proper Buddhists. [2] The problem however, is, as Southwold points out, largely one of definition. If Buddhism is defined simply in terms of its ascetic ideals, then of course a conflict must be acknowledged between these ideals and the merit-making ideology which plays such a significant role in the life of village Buddhists. However, if an alternative definition of Buddhism is constructed from the actual social ideals of Buddhists living in traditional Buddhist societies, as Southwold attempts to do - hence his "*Buddhism in Life* ", then the problem as such is resolved.

The problem of definition is of central concern to anthropology. Is it that the actual beliefs and practices of peoples studied should be related to an already pre-defined monolithic super-structure such as 'Buddhism', 'Totemism', or any other 'ism' for that matter? W.C. Smith has already argued the dangers of accepting at face value these monolithic wholes which are essentially the creation of modern western scholasticism. [3] Is it not rather the case that through observing the practices of actual Buddhists in actual societies, a phenomenological definition of Buddhism may be created which takes more account of Buddhism in life than Buddhism in scripture? For, following Southwold, I shall go on to argue that it is by no means certain that the Pali Canon in particular, but by wider implication, any text or sūtra has any better claim to represent Buddhism, let alone the actual words of the Buddha, in anything but a figurative sense.

For Buddhism, to the extent that it is a text-based religion, is open to the same procedures of the higher criticism as is Christianity, and a 'quest for the historical Buddha' cannot hope to meet with any more definitive signs of success than the parallel search for the historical Jesus. Thus, at this stage we cannot hope to uncover the actual words spoken by the Buddha, for even in what are considered to be the earliest strata of the Pāli Canon (on linguistic grounds), these still stand at a distance from the actual Buddha. They are creations of a monastic community which, without writing or dictaphones, sought to preserve the teachings of the Buddha as best they could, i.e. by employing a variety of mnemonic devices which rendered his teaching amenable to oral transmission. This is Gombrich's point when he says:

> *"Obviously there was no means of preserving the Buddha's words as he spoke them. They had to be formalised in texts, prose or verse, deliberate compositions which were to be committed to memory and later systematically transmitted to pupils."* [5]

So, clearly, the Pāli texts as we have them represent a reformulated recension of material which may be based upon actual dialogues of the Buddha, but which may in fact have more to say about the needs and ideals of the communities which have shape to them.

I hope to go on to show then, as I think Southwold does, that village Buddhism is not to be disparaged by those who take an uncritical stance towards the texts produced by the authors of the Pāli Canon, and who define 'pure' or 'original' Buddhism solely in terms of a partial reading of these texts.

1.ii. What is Buddhism?

Buddhism is a blanket term which covers all those teachings, practices, thought forms, rituals and texts which purport to either derive from, or stand in the lineage of the religious teacher, the Buddha, who is generally considered to have been an historical figure, living and teaching in N.E. India during the C6th BCE.. Historically and geographically Buddhism is divided between two major traditions, the Theravāda ('the Way of the Elders'), the one remaining sect of the Hīnayāna schools (the lesser vehicle) - defined as such by the Mahāyāna ('the Great vehicle'). Anthropological research has tended to concentrate upon the Theravāda countries, and the work of Tambiah, Gombrich, and Spiro shows that generalisations about the Buddhism of Thailand, Burma and Śrī Laṇka are quite valid, given that they share the same body of scriptures transmitted in the common medium of Pāli. However, the Mahāyāna being much more various in its texts and approaches is not amenable to the same level of generalisation, and it is not necessarily the case that what is true of the Theravāda is equally applicable to the Mahāyāna. In the Mahāyāna, less emphasis has been placed upon the celibate state which in Theravāda countries has virtually been identified with the religious life. A corresponding toleration of a variety of authentically religious life-styles is thus an aspect of the Mahāyāna, particularly in Tibet and Japan, where married clergy are accepted as part of the Saṅgha. It is clearly inappropriate to judge these developments within the Mahāyāna in terms of the ascetic ideals expressed in some Pāli texts (particularly the 'rhinoceros' verses of the Sutta Nipāta), for in the Mahāyāna, the ideal of the personal liberation (*mokṣa*) of the individual is displaced by the ideal of the liberation of all beings through the activities of the bodhisattva; activities which must necessarily take place within the world, as that is where all beings reside. I take the Mahāyāna to be aware of the paradox of the salvation of the world through the renunciation of it in such sūtras as the Diamond Sūtra (*Vajracchedikasūtra*) where the Buddha declares that it is precisely because in wisdom (*prajñā*) no beings exist, therefore he seeks to save all beings. It is precisely because the bodhisattva ('the wisdom-being') has given up the attachments to the phenomenal categories and thought forms of this world that he seeks to work in this world. It is his play (*līla*).

I hope to have shown that generalisations from particular Buddhist sūtras do not necessarily fit Buddhism as a whole in both its major forms. No one sūtra can be singled out and its message held as absolute, true or representative, as a Moslem would a verse from the Koran. Often it is not the voice of the Buddha speaking through the texts, but the voice of the monastic community which gave rise to the text. To borrow from the German Form critics, we have to consider the *Sitz im Leben* ('situation in life') of the text. What was the text saying to those who created and transmitted it in the particular form in which it has come down to us? Why was it transmitted in this form, and not some other? Only once we have considered these questions can we ask - what does the text mean to us, in our *Sitz im Leben*? Southwold argues that: *"Scriptures are composed primarily in order to legitimise the views and practices of the authors and their clients."* [6] I do not want to agree with him fully, for this makes the compilation of the Pāli Canon seem something of a conspiracy, but I would argue, again drawing upon the findings of the Higher criticism of Christian texts, that the Pāli scriptures certainly represent the interest, prejudices and biases of their cenobitical compilers. It is thus important to note that the texts used to criticise the practices of village Buddhism are essentially monkish creations.

If there were texts which worked out more fully the layman's path to salvation, they have not survived. What has survived is an almost total identification of the religious life with the celibate cenobitical lifestyle of the monks. This is not necessarily because the Buddha defined the religious life as such, but because it was the monkish communities which compiled, edited, commented upon and transmitted the sūtras. This had to be so, for as Gombrich argues:

> *"The preservation of the texts required organization, and...the Buddhist laity were never organized in a way which would have ensured the transmission of texts down the generations."* [7]

So clearly, anything which criticised the monkish *status quo* would not have survived. If there were texts which expressed a more positive view of the position of lay people with regard to the ultimate aim of the spiritual life, we are not to know. Instead we are given a dogma which conceives of the role of the lay in a purely subordinated and supportive role to the religious full-timers - the monks. Is it surprising that village Buddhists have given up the quest for nirvāṇa, in view of the fact that they are defined by the orthodox tradition as being incapable of ever achieving it?

I think that only Southwold gives full and fair consideration to the problems of establishing exactly what are Buddhism's goals and ideals, and that he is right in focussing upon orthopraxy and not orthodoxy, i.e., it is what Buddhists actually do that should be judged and not whether their beliefs correspond exactly with this or that dogmatic formulation of what is and in not a valid religious pursuit.

2.i. The practices and beliefs of village Buddhism

Anthropological observation of Theravāda Buddhist countries has focussed upon two main areas: the involvement of village Buddhism with spirit cults and cults of the dead (Tambiah and Spiro), and with the apparent displacement (by the laity) of the pursuit of nirvāṇa through ascetical observances, by the seeking of a pleasant rebirth through meritorious action (Tambiah and Southwold). That these practices are not 'true' Buddhism, is, according to Southwold, a value judgement of Siñhalese middle class Buddhists, and Western Buddhists for whom the *Sitz im Leben* of these practices is superstitious and unintelligible. I take Southwold's point to be that it is not that these practices are true Buddhism, but that they do and can have an authentic role within the religious life of village Buddhists.

Before continuing with a discussion of Southwold's analysis I will fill in some details of Buddhist village life from the work of Tambiah and Spiro. Although working in small villages in different countries, (Thailand and Burma respectively), I think that generalisations about Theravāda Buddhist practice are possible from their work as similar practices seem to be undertaken at the village level throughout S.E. Asia, although they are obviously given various cultural expressions.

2.ii. The ideology of merit [8]

Tambiah makes the following points in his article:

1. Lay people are told by the tradition that they cannot attain nirvāṇa, so they quite rationally focus upon the attainment of a prosperous rebirth through meritorious action.
2. What is and is not meritorious is defined as such by the tradition. He argues that what is most meritorious is that which most benefits the monks. Thus in his tabulation of meritorious activities (derived from testimonies from the villagers themselves) the most meritorious act is the financing and building of an entire *wat* (temple complex), followed by:
i. becoming a monk oneself;
ii. having a son who becomes a monk;
iii. contributing money to repair a *wat*;
iv. giving gifts to the monks at special ceremonies;
v. giving food daily to the monks.
Only at the bottom of the list are included the actual observance of Buddhist precepts by the villagers themselves:
vi. observance of special precepts on feligious holidays; and
vii. strict observance of the five precepts.
3. An activity is not meritorious *per se*, a villager makes merit through giving to the monks. The idea here being that unless a monk be willing to accept, then no merit is conferred.
4. Merit is not necessarily particular to individuals. Merit may be accumulated by families, groups, or villages. It may also be accumulated on behalf of another, and the transference of merit is highly institutionalised.

5. Ordination as a monk or novice is itself a highly meritorious activity, (both for the individual and his parents). The sponsoring of an ordination ceremony is merit-making *par excellence*.
6. Tambiah points out that ordination is taken for a short time by many village men as it confers status and respect upon them both whilst in robes, and afterwards when these ex-monks function as ritual officiants in village affairs. He argues that :

> *"If ordination to monkhood is in religious terms a rite of initiation, in social terms it is distinctly a rite of passage for young men before they marry and set up their own households."*

It is, I think, clear form the above that the ideology of merit is of central concern to village Buddhism and that the monastic Saṅgha is regarded not so much as the institutionalised community of those bent upon nirvāṇa, but as a merit-making machine both by the laity, and to a certain extent by the majority of those who take up robes for a period of time.

2.iii. Village Buddhism and supernaturalism

Both Tambiah [9] and Spiro [10] observe the extent to which village Buddhists are involved in various spirit cults which seek to placate/propitiate non-Buddhists deities. Obeyesekere makes similar observations for the Buddhists of Śrī Laṅka. [11] The tension between Buddhism and supernaturalism is most marked in the *nat cultus* of Burma. However, Spiro does not see that the propitiation of the *nats* necessarily conflicts with Buddhists orthodoxy. For such propitiation is not a religious observance, the *nats* are not worshipped as the Buddha is worshipped, for they are *lokika* ('worldly') not *lokottara* ('transcendent'). It is commonly agreed that one's salvation is dependent upon the accumulation of a stock of good *karma*, and that the *nats*, being of this world cannot interfere with the righteous practitioner of the dharma. However, as they can make life difficult for the common mortal whose practice leaves much to be desired, it is therefore considered sensible to placate these potentially dangerous potencies. Further, the Buddha, being *lokottara* is totally unable to reciprocate requests for divine assistance. He cannot, for example, bring rain during times of drought. The *nats* however, being potencies of a higher, though still mundane level are able to reciprocate in this way, and the *nat cultus* which seeks to propitiate these deities can thus be seen as an attempt to fulfil a popular need left unsatisfied by Buddhism as traditionally defined by the Theravāda.

Spiro thus concludes that far from undermining Buddhism in Burma, the *nat cultus* has kept it from becoming "contaminated" by these popular beliefs. He argues that:

> *"In Burma...the bacchanalian needs, prohibited by Buddhism, have been drained off into the* nat cultus, *thereby obviating the necessity either of opposing Buddhism or of corrupting it."*

3.i. Vox populi vox Buddhae? [11]

Gombrich distinguishes between what he terms cognitive and affective beliefs, i.e. between what people say, and what they do. People may say that they desire nirvāṇa, for this is the goal *par excellence* as it is defined by the tradition, but their actions are aimed at a happy rebirth or good fortune in this life.

Thus, although the ascetical ideal of renunciation is not cognitively challenged, it is not generally practised either. So we are still left with the dilemma posed at the beginning of this piece, of how to relate the cognitive and affective aspects of village Buddhism. How does the theory relate to what actually goes on? I would like to follow Southwold in suggesting that it does not, but that what actually does go on, is ideally no less Buddhist than the ascetic ideal.

Southwold argues that the history of Buddhism is comprised of two parallel and contrary tendencies, one formulated, recorded and transmitted by the monastic communities and which gives voice to the strongest elements of asceticism, world-renunciation, and disparagement of the capacities of the laity, (and incidentally women - my comment). The other tradition, he terms "*ministry Buddhism* " by which he means essentially Buddhism as a social ethic. He claims that Buddhism in this sense has always been transmitted and practised, but not as part of the orthodox tradition, in that it is not adequately formulated in the scriptural record (see above 1.ii.). Ministry Buddhism he suggests is the Buddhism practised and formulated by Buddhist kings and rulers such as Aśoka (200BCE.). He follows Sarkisyanz [12] in stating that:

> *"There are Buddhist social ethics - no matter how widespread the notion that Buddhism is anti-social and merely negative. Yet it is true that this Aśokan social emphasis was not identical with the ethos of the Buddhist order of monks striving out of the world of impermanence towards nirvāṇa, but is is nevertheless Buddhist ethos: the ethos of lay Buddhism acting within the world of impermanence, in pursuing nirvāṇa by creating the outward social conditions for such a striving towards the overcoming of attachment. It was this social ethos that the Aśokan tradition of historical Buddhism transmitted, a political lay tradition within Buddhism. This 'political Aśokan Buddhism' of historical rulers is less widely known than the philosophical canonical Buddhism of the monastic order."*

Southwold's experience of village Buddhism was of a religion rooted in a sense of responsibility for the affairs of the world, and a recognition of the actual need to help people. The villagers he studied showed little anxiety at the difficulty of determining exactly what the Buddha had said, nor were they afraid of discounting what others said that he said, when these sayings had little applicability to their experience (such as the 'rhinoceros' verses). So, rather than attempt to relate the social ethic of Buddhism as it is practised by actual village Buddhists, to the ascetical ideals professed by the monks drawing

upon certain aspects of their canonical material, Southwold takes the village Buddhist lifestyle itself as paradigmatic of the Buddhist lifestyle. He writes:

> *"Thus the primary reality is Buddhist civilisation, Buddhist society and culture, a way of life of real men. This generates Buddhist religion, as a construction which orders and legitimates in symbolic form, that civilisation. This in turn is systematised in Buddhist doctrine. And to legitimise the doctrine and the religion that lies behind it, these are attributed to the Lord Buddha, who thus emerges as a projection of, perhaps an impersonation of the prior and more basic elements of the system. No doubt the historical Buddha was the origin of the whole system; but he is unknowable. The Buddha we encounter in the scriptures, and other sources, is not that historical Buddha, the origin of the system, but a construction, a figure of fiction, though perfectly valid of its own kind, who is not the origin of, but he symbolic product of the system."*

Southwold is here reading in reverse the usual assumption that the Buddha is the first point in a developing historico/social phenomenon we call Buddhism, and I think he is right to do so, for this is one of the fundamental discoveries of the higher criticism of religion.

3.ii. Conclusion: towards the Mahāyāna?

I noted earlier that most anthropological research into Buddhist societies has tended to focus upon the Theravāda. I think that the perceived hiatus between what, for the purposes of this essay, has been described as village Buddhism, and Buddhism's ascetic ideals is unnecessarily heightened by commentators on these societies who pay too much uncritical attention to the story of the religious life as it is defined and created by the monastic communities and their texts.

I think that Buddhism tells a much better story than this, and that it is within the Mahāyāna that the lay-man comes more into his own. The Mahāyāna schools to a certain extent arose as a reaction against the narrowness of the arahant ideal, and attempted to make the ideal of nirvāṇa intelligible to all people in all stations of life through the intermediary figure of the bodhisattva, a being who not so much 'postpones' his own Enlightenment in order to help others, but who does not distinguish his own personal salvation from that of others. Here Buddhism becomes at once a social and a salvational ethic, in the classic paradox of the Diamond Sūtra:

> *"The Lord said: Here Subhuti, someone who has set out in the vehicle of a Bodhisattva should produce a thought in this manner: 'As many beings as there are in the universe of beings...all these must I lead to Nirvāṇa, into the realm of Nirvāṇa which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvāṇa, no being at all has been led to Nirvāṇa. And why? If in a bodhisattva the notion of a being should take place...He is not to be called a bodhi-being."* [13]

Notes

1. S.J. Tambiah, *The Ideology of Merit* in *Dialectic of Practical Religion*, ed. ER Leach, Cambridge 1968.
2. M. Southwold, *Buddhism in Life*, Manchester 1983.
3. William Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion.*
5. R.F. Gombrich, *How the Mahāyāna Began.*
6. Southwold 1983
7. R.F. Gombrich, *How the Mahāyāna Began.*
8. Tambiah, 1968
9. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults of N.E. Thailand*, Cambridge 1970
10. M.E. Spiro, *Burmese Suprenaturalism*, Chicago 1967.
11. The conclusion of Gombrich's *Precept and Practice*, Oxford 1971, pp327.
12. E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution*, quoted by Southwold.
13. *The Diamond Sūtra*, trans. E Conze, London 1973.

SUBMISSIONS

In order to ease the process of production it seems appropriate to include some advice on material submitted for publication in *The Order Journal.*

So far as content is concerned, Order members are encouraged to consider writing upon any subject relevant to the broader cultural, intellectual, and, of course, spiritual life of the Western Buddhist Order. Essays, talks, lectures, reviews, translations, are all appropriate. Nor is there any reason why *The Order Journal* should not include correspondence pages, if people wish to engage in a public discussion of any issues, including those raised by material published here.

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A deadline will be published in *Shabda* for the submission of articles for future issues. By preference, material should be sent in 'on disc', ie. on a 3" floppy disc, formatted for use with an Amstrad PCW. Technical terms and titles should be italicised, as should quotations, which latter should be enclosed in quotation marks, rather than single inverted commas. (Discs will, of course, be returned.)

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