

The Vedic and Buddhist concept of "Dharma"

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Meaning of Dharma : Dharma is one of those Sanskrit words that defy all attempts at an exact rendering in English or any other tongue. That word has passed through several vicissitudes. In the hymns of the Rig Veda the word appears to be used either as an adjective or a noun (in the form dharman, generally nature) and occurs at least fifty-six times therein. It is very difficult to say what the exact meaning of the word dharma was in the most ancient period of the Vedic language. The word is clearly derived from root dharm (to uphold, to support, to nourish). In a few passages, the word appears to be used in the sense of "upholder or supporter or sustainer" as in Rg, X 21 3, the word dharma is clearly masculine. In all other cases, the word is either obviously in the picture or in a form which may be either masculine or neuter. In most cases the meaning of dharma has "religious ordinances or rites" as in Rg.1.22.18, V.26.16, VIII, 43.24, IX.64.1 & C.

The reference 'tani dharmani prathamanyasan' occurs in Rg. 1. 164, 43 and 50, X 90 16. Similarly we have the words "Prathama dharma (the Primeval or first ordinances) in Rg.III.17.1. and X.56.3 and the words "sanata dharmani (ancient ordinances) occurs in Rg. III.3.1. In some passages this sense of "religious rites" would not suit the context, e.g. in IV. 53. 3.V. 63.7.VI.70.1,VII, 89.5. In these passages the meaning seems to be 'fixed principles or rules of conduct'. In the Vatasaneyasamhita the above senses of the word dharman are found and in 11.3 and V.27 we have the words 'dhruvena dharmana'. In the same samhita the form 'dharmah' (from dharm) becomes frequent, e.g.X.29. XX. 9. The Atharvaveda

contains many of those verses of the Rg veda in which the word dharma occurs, e.g. VI.51.3 (acityachet tavadharmayuyopima), vii, 5.1 (Yatnenayathamayatanta) VII, 27.5 (trine pada vicakrame). In XI. 9. 17 the word dharmah seems to be used in the sense of 'merit acquired by the performance of religious rites'. In the Aitareya-brahmana, the word dharma seems to be used in an abstract sense, viz. 'The whole body of religious duties'. In the Chandagya-upanisad there is an important passage bearing on the meaning of the word dharma. According to it, there are three branches of dharma ; one is constituted by sacrifice, study and charity (i.e. the stage of house holder); the second is constituted by austerities (i.e. the stage of being a hermit) ; the third is the brahmacharin dwelling in house of his teacher and making himself stay with the family of his teacher till it last. All these pertain to the words of meritorious men who abides firmly in brahman and attains immortality. It will be seen that in this passage the word 'dharma' stands for the peculiar duties of the asramas. The foregoing brief discussion establishes how the word dharma has passed through several transitions of meaning and how ultimately its most significant meaning has come to be 'the privileges, duties and obligations of a man, his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan Community, as a member of one of the castes as a person in a particular stage of life . It is in this sense that the word seems to be used in the well-known exhortation of the pupil contained in the Taittiriya-upanisad (I.II)-'Speak the Truth, Practise (Your Own) dharma & C. It is in the same sense that the Bhagavadgita uses the word dharma in the oft-quoted verse-'svadharma nidhanam shreyah'. The word is employed in this sense in the dharma sastra literature. The Manu Smriti (1-2) tell us that the sages requested Manu to impart instruction in the dharmas of all the varnas. The Yathyaavalk-Smriti (1.1.) employs it in the same sense.

In the Tantra Vartika also, we are told that all the Dharma Sutras are concerned with imparting instruction in the dharmas of varnas and asramas. Medhatithi commenting on Manu says that the expounders of smritis dwelt upon dharma as five-fold e.g. Varnadharmas, Asrama-dharma, Varnasrama-Dharma, Naittikadharmas (such as Prayascitta) and Guna dharma (the duty of a crowned King, whether Ksatriya or not, to protect). It is in this sense that the word dharma will be taken in this work. Numerous topics are comprehended under the title dharnassastra, but in this work prominence will be given to works on *acara* and *Vyavahara* (law and administration of justice).

It would be interesting to recall a few other definitions of dharma. Jaimine defines dharma as 'a desirable goal or result that is indicated by injunctive (Vedic) passages'. The word dharma would mean such rites as are conducive to happiness and are enjoined by vedic passages. The Vaisesikasutra defines dharma as 'that from which results happiness and final beauty'. There are several other more or less one-sided definitions of dharma such as 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah'

(Anusasanaparka-us 1.) 'AnrsamsyamParo dharmah' (Vanaparva, 373.76), 'Acarah Paramo dharmah' (Manu 1.108). Harita defined dharma as 'Srutipramanaka' (based on revelation). In the Buddhist sacred books, the word dharma has several meanings. It often means the whole teaching of the Buddha (S.E.Vol.X.P XXXIII).

Another meaning of dharma peculiar to the Buddhist system is an element of existence, i.e., of matter, mind and forces. The present work will deal with the sources of dharma, their contents, their chronology and other kindred matters. As the material is vast and the number of works is extremely large, only a few selected works and some important matter will be taken up for detailed treatment.

Sources of Dharma: The Gautamadharmasatra says, "the Veda is the source of dharma and the tradition and practice of those that know it (the Veda)". So Apastamba says, "the authority (for the dharmas) is the consensus of those that know dharma and the Vedas." Vide also the Vasisthadharma-sutra (1.4.6.). The Manusmrti lays down five different sources of dharma 'the whole Veda is (the foremost) source of dharma and (next) the tradition and the practice of those that know it (the Veda); and further the usages of virtuous men and self-satisfaction'. Yajnavalkya declares the sources in a similar strain 'the veda, traditional lore, the usages of good men, what is agreeable to one's self and desire born of due deliberation is traditionally recognised as the source of dharma'. These passages make it clear that the principal sources of dharma were conceived to be the Vedas, the Smrtis, and customs. The Vedas do not contain positive precepts (vidhis) on matters of dharma in a connected form, but they contain incidental references to various topics that fall under the domain of dharmasastra as conceived in later times. Such information to be gathered from the Vedic literature is not quite as meagre as is commonly supposed. The foregoing brief discussion will make it clear that the later rules contained in the dharma sutras and other works on dharma sastra had their roots deep down in the most ancient Vedic tradition and that the authors of the dharmasutras were quite justified in looking up to the Vedas as a source of dharma. But the Vedas do not profess to be formal treatises on dharma; they contain only disconnected statements on the various aspects of dharma; we have to turn to the Smritis for a formal and connected treatment of the topics of the dharma sastra. When Dharmasaatra works were first composed, the important question is to find out when formal treatises on dharma began to be composed. It is not possible to give a definite answer to this question.

The Nirukta (III.4-5) shows that long before Yaska heated controversies has raged on various questions of inheritance, such as the exclusion of daughters by sons and the right of the appointed daughter (Putrika), it is very likely that these discussions had found their way in formal works and were not merely confined to

the meetings of the learned. The manner in which Yaska writes suggests that he is referring to works in which certain Vedic verses had been cited in support of particular doctrines about inheritance. It is further a remarkable thing that in connection with the topic of inheritance Yaska quotes a verse, call it a sloka and distinguishes it from a rk, (47). This makes it probable that works dealing with topics of dharma existed either in the sloka metre or contained slokas. Scholars like Buhler would say that the verses were part of the floating mass of mnemonic verses, the existence of which he postulated without very convincing or cogent arguments in his introduction to the manusmṛti (S.B.E.Vol.25, Intro, X c). If works dealing with topics of dharma existed before Yaska, a high antiquity will have to be predicated for them. The high antiquity of works on dharma sastra follows from other weighty consideration. It will be seen later on that the extant dharmasutras of Gautama, Baudhayana and Apastamba certainly belong to the period between 600 to 300 B.C. Gautama ((48) speaks of dharma sastras and the word dharma sastra occurs in Baudhayana also (IV.5.9).

Baudhayana speaks of a dharma pathaka (1.1.9.). Besides Gautama quotes in numerous places the views of others in the words 'ityeke' (e.g. 11.15.11, 58. III.1, IV.21, VII.23). He refers to manu (49) in one place and to 'Acaryas' in several places (III, 36, IV. 18 and 23). Baudhayana mentions by name several writers on dharma, viz. Aupatanghani, Katya, Kasyapa, Gautama, Maudgolya and Harita. Apastamba also cites the views of numerous sages such as those of Eka, Kanva, Kautsa, Harita and others. There is a vartika which speaks of Dharmasastra. Jaimini speaks of the duties of a Sudra as laid down in the dharmasastra. Patanjali shows that in his days dharma sutras existed and that their authority was very high, being next to the commandments of God. He quotes verse and dogmas that have their counterparts in the dharmasutras. The foregoing discussion establishes that works on the dharma sastra existed prior to Yaska or at least prior to the period 600-300 B.C and in the 2nd century B.C. They had attained a position of supreme authority in regulating the conduct of men. The whole of the extant literature on dharma will be dealt with as follows: First come the dharmasutras, some of which like those of Apastamba, Hiranyakesin and Baudhayana form part of a larger Sutra collection, which there are other like-those of Gautama and Vasistha which do not form part of a larger collection; some dharmasutras like that of Visnu are in their extant form, are comparatively later in date than other sutra works. Some sutra works like those of Sankha-likhita and Paithinasi are known only from quotations. Early metrical smṛtis like those of Manu and Yajhavalkya will be taken up for discussion, then later versified smṛtis like that of Narada. There are many smṛti works like those of Brhaspati and Katyayana that are known only from quotations. The two epics - the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and the Puranas also have played a great part in the development of the Dharmasastra as well as the

Dharma. The commentaries on the smrtis, such as those of Visvarupa, Medhatithi, Vijnanesvara, Apararka, Haradatta will be reviewed next. Thereafter, the works of such Hemadri, Todaramalla, Nelakantha and others will be treated.

It is very difficult to settle the chronology of the works on dharmasastra, particularly of the earlier ones. The present writer does not subscribe to the view of the Max Muller (H.A.S.L.P. 68) and others that works in continuous Anustubh metre followed sutra works. Our knowledge of the works of that Period is so meagre that such a generalisation is most unjustifiable. Some works in the continuous sloka metre like the Manusmṛti are certainly older than the Visnudharmasutra and probably as old as, if not older than, the Vasisthadharmasutra. One of the earliest extant dharmasutras, that of Budhayana, contains long passage in the sloka metre, many of which are quotations and even Apastamba has a considerable number of verses in the sloka metre. This renders it highly probable that works in the sloka metre existed before them. Besides a large literature on dharma existed in the day of Apastamba and Baudhayana which has not come to us. In the absence of that literature it is futile to dogmatise on such a point.

The Dharmasutras: It seems that originally many, though not all, of the Dharmasutra formed part of the Kalpasutras and were studied in distinct sutracaranas. Some of the extant dharma Sutras here and there show unmistakable terms that presupposes the Grhyasutra of the carana to which they belong. Compare A.P.Dh.S.I.1.4.16 with Ap. Gr. SL. 12 and 11.5, and Baud.Dh.S.II 1.4. 16 with Baud. Gr.5.11.11.42 (and other sutras) 54. The Dharmasutras belonging to all Sutra caranas have not come down to us. There is no dharmasutra-completing the Asvalayana Sruta and Grhyasutras. No Manava dharma sutra has yet come to light, though the Manava sruta and Grhya sutras are extant. In the same way we have the Sankhayana dharma sutra. It is only in the case of the Apastamba, Hiranyakesin and Baudhayana sutra caranas that we have a complete Kalpa Tradition with its three components of Sruta, Grihya and Dharma Sutras. The Tantravartaka of Kumarila contains very interesting observations on this point. It tells us that Gautama dharmasutra and Gobhila Grhyasutra were studied by the chandogas Samavedine, Vasistha dharmasutra by the Rigvedine, the dharmasutra of sankha-likhita by the followeres of Vajasaneya-samhita and the Sutras of Apastamba and Baudhayana by the followers of the Taittiring Sakha. The Tantravartika (P.179), established itself as a siddhanta (on jaimini 1.3.II) and said that all the dharma and grhya sutras are authoritative for all Aryan people. From this it appears that although originally all Sutracaranas might not have possessed dharmasutras composed by the founder of the carana, yet gradually certain dharmasutras were specially taken-over or appropriated by the certain caranas. As the dharmasutras were mostly concerned with rules about the conduct of men

as members of the Aryan community and did not deal with ritual of any kind, all dharama sutras gradually become authoritative in all schools. The dharmasutras were closely connected with grhyasutras in subjects and topics.

Most of the Grhyasutras treaties deal with the domestic fire, the division of Grhya Sacrifices on new and fullmoon, sacrifices of cooked food, annual sacrifices, marriage, pumsavana, fatakarma, upanayana and other Samskaras, rules for students and snatakas and holidays, sraddha offerings, madhuparka. In most cases the Grihya sutras confine themselves principally to the various events of domestic life. They rarely give rules about the conduct of men, their rights duties and responsibilities. The dharmasutras also contain rules on some of the above topics such as marriage and the samskaras, rules for the Brahmacharya and Snatakas and holidays, on sraddha and madhuparka. It is therefore not surprising that in the Apastamba-grhyasutra the topic of the duties of the Brahmacharin and of the householder atithi and of sraddha are meagrely treated as compared with the Apastamba dharmasutra. The dharmasutras very rarely describe the ritual of domestic life, they merely touch upon it, their scope is wider and more ambitious; their principal purpose is to dwell upon the rules of conduct, law and custom. Some sutras are common to both the Apastamba-grhya and the dharma sutra. Sometimes the grhyasutra appears to refer to the dharmasutra. There are certain points which distinguish the dharmasutras (the more ancient of them at least) from Smritis: (a) Many dharmasutras are either part of the Kalpa belonging to each sutra carana or are intimately connected with the Grhyasutras; (b) the dharmasutras sometimes have a partiality for their Vedic quotations from the texts of the Veda to which they belong and for the caranas in which they are studied; (c) the authors of the (older) dharmasutras do not claim to be inspired by seers or superhuman beings, while the other Smritis such as those of Manu and Yajnavalkya are ascribed to Gods like Brahma; (d) the dharmasutras are in prose or in mixed prose and Verse; the other smritis are in Verse; (e) the language of the dharmasutras is generally more archaic than that of the other smritis; (f) the dharmasutras do not proceed upon any orderly arrangement of topics, while the other smritis even the oldest of them, viz-manusmriti, arrange their contents and treat the subjects under three principal heads viz acara, Vyavahara, and Prayascitta; (g) most of the dharmasutras are older than most of the other Smritis. " You, O Bhikkhus, are my own true sons, born of my word, born of dharma, formed by dharma, heirs of dhamma, not of compounded things".

What is dharma? It may be rendered as nature, essence, the state of things as they are, life, a living thing. Because it is life and a living thing, this dhamma is respected and revered even by the Buddhas. And how is it revered? By sinking the peripheral faculties to diaphragm-centre and impermeating the spheres of dhamma there. This is revering the dhamma. In its mundane aspect, dhamma is the emer-

gence of all component forms. In its supramundane aspect, it is the dhamma Kaya, or essence form. In its collective transcendental aspect, it is the Ideal, the uncaused, the always-so. Of dhamma, the contemporary of the Buddha has this to say:- "The Dhamma which can be expressed in words is not the eternal name. Without a name, it is the beginning of heaven and earth. With a name, it is the mother of all things. Only one who is ever free from desire can apprehend its spiritual essence. He who is ever a slave to desire can see no more than its outer beings. These two things, the essential and the physical, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery, the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all wonders. The Buddha in himself is vague, impalpable, how impalpable! how vague! Yet within it there is Form. How vague! how impalpable! How profound! How obscure! Yet within it there is a vital principle. This principle is the quintessence of reality and out of it comes Truth. All things under heaven are products of being, but being itself is the product of not being the Buddha produced unity, unity produced duality, duality produced trinity and trinity produced all existing things. Not visible to sight, not audible to ear, in its uses, it is inexhaustible. The Buddha lies hidden and cannot be named, yet it has the power of transmuting and perfecting all things. The Buddha produces all things; its virtue nourishes them all; each formed according to its nature; and each perfected according to its strength. "Man takes his law from the earth, earth takes its law from heaven, heaven takes its law from the Buddha. But the law of the Buddha is its own spontaneity "o" which is formless, standing alone without change, reaching every where without incurring harm! It must be regarded as the mother of the universe. Its name I know not. To designate it, I call it Buddha Endeavouring to describe it, I call it Great." The ancient terms of Dhamma are universal representation of that which is not merely abstract and ideal, but also immediate and concrete. They are abstract and ideal in that they represent a collective potentiality which may be aspired to. Where as they are immediate and concrete in that they permeate life as essential values, which gravitated into a specific field of personality being actualized.

The ineffability of dhamma, therefore is not something upon which to speculate, but to initiate. For as it is said:-"Even in this very body.....is the world". In so far as dhamma may be gravitated into a specific field of personality, it has its culmination as consciousness, as thought, as word, and as deed. It is here that whiteheads' observation regarding temporality ('some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact') begins to take on a really effective ring, although whitehead himself would never have dreamed of the limits to which it might be pushed. The aim of life is indeed "the process of eliciting into actual being those factors in the universe which exist only in the mode of unrealized potentialities. The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential

into the actual, and the fact of such transformation includes the immediacy of self enjoyment" All things (dhamma) are the product of process and process in not something which is capable of being disassociated from the flow of temporal fact for it derives its very existence from the flow of that temporal fact, from the nature of its becoming. This becoming necessarily implies some sort of power as its face, or it would not flow and become at all. As plato says: "My suggestion would be that anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another even for a moment, however trifling the cause and however slight and momentary the effect, has real existence. And I hold that the definition of being (becoming) is simply power".

Now of all dhammas, the mind is the most active and potent. As it is said:- "Whensoever, Ananda, the Tathagata concentrates form in mind, and mind in form, and entering on awareness of buoyancy and ease abides therein, at that time, Ananda, the Tathagata's form is more buoyant, softer, more pliable, and radiant.

With little effort it rises from the earth into the sky, and in diverse ways enjoys supernormal powers, to wit: "being one he become many, being many he becomes one. And so forth." However if the mind is to attain the real potency, the first thing it has to do is to stop. That the mind is the most difficult of things to 'stop' cannot be too often stressed, for unless it stop jumping from one thing to the next it is a thing devoid of strength. To stop, however, is not to be confused with inactivity but the capacity to harness energy so as to penetrate anything at which it is aimed at. Experience reveals that motionlessness is an impossibility insofar as life is concerned. And yet it is said:- "I stand still, Angulimala. do you likewise". This utterance to the bandit of the name is as simple as it is profound. It is the third Noble Truth. For to stop is to put an end (nirodha) to pain. When mind, itself a Product of time, has 'stopped', then it attains to ascendancy overtime. And how? Past time is recollected, future time unrolled. It is in control. In consequence of this facility the Buddhas are regarded as timeless. However, the Buddhas themselves are products of time, without which there would be no arising of Buddhas, since Buddhahood implies resolve initiated, effort applied, experience accumulated, enlightenment realized, and release attained. All of which has basis in time, impermeated in temporal fact. Without which nothing has ever been known to arise. To 'stop' is the most difficult of things to do. This in itself is a paradox. A paradox which issues in release.

Insofar as 'stopping' is concerned, it can be achieved only under the process of another frequency altogether than that by which consciousness is normally perpetuated. Namely, the concentrated absorption of Jhana.

And why? Because it has peculiar and far-reaching attributes. We might say, transcendental attributes. 'Stopping' implies either of two possibilities. Namely, consciousness (the quantity to be stopped) must be a potentially capable of mo-

tionlessness, or possessed of an immense velocity. In the first instance, only something which is motionless can penetrate the flux around. On the other hand, a higher degree of vibrative intensity is capable of penetrating a lower degree. This is true of Jhana. For although Jhana may possess a deceptive- appearance of inactivity, it vibrates at a higher degree of intensity than the most rapid of phenomena. It must be classified as activity in equilibrium. In that the Jhanic consciousness vibrates at a higher degree of intensity than its objective field, and it possesses the capacity to apprehend the flux in things, for afflux (Jhana being also a flux) to apprehend a flux is a debatable affair. However. That is how things function, and the Jhanic consciousness is not only capable of apprehending the flux in things, but its own flux as well, a technique whereby the mind abstracts itself from its environmental supports and absorbs itself. It is as plato suggests for the mind:- "To withdraw from all contact with the body and concentrate itself by itself, and to have its dwelling, so far as it can, both now and in the future, alone by itself, freed from the shackles of the body". If the mind depends constantly on externalities for its support, then it will never be able to free itself, from subjection thereto, without detachment of mind no lasting happiness can ensue, since such happiness cannot depend upon the whim and fancy of every incident that springs up.

Consciousness, or the mind, necessitates a specific field of containment, and is not just lossely dispersed in space without a centre of gravitation. Consciousness being a product of occasion, of unification process, vibrates in field, and does not exist otherwise. Since they are developed from the five sense-door field as the base, the aggregates of personality, no matter how they may be processed, must still partake of the nature of aggregates in a specific field. Nothing can be processed to its ultimate refinement unless based on antecedent material. Thus, as we have already observed from the previous chapter, the five sense-door field of human personality is capable of being pushed (bhavana) by concentrated technique to translucent limits, culminating in what is called the Dhamma kaya. This Dhammakaya is a composite impermeation and fusion of element (dhatu) and essence (dhamma). Commencing with the five sense door field of human personality, the aggregates are pushed (magga) until they change their lineage (gotrabhu) from mundane to supramundane, emerging (Phala) as essence aggregates (dhammakkhandha). The specific field of personality is still there, only its quality has been changed, transmuted into the next, until the most translucent qualities have emerged. This is the perfection of consciousness through concentration, and the attainment of the transcendent mind (adhicitta).

It is this transcendent mind, purged of all mundane residue, which the Eman- cipated ones take with them (as bird its wings) in final withdrawal. And how is this transcendent mind of the Dhamma Kaya attained? "There are three factors, o Bhikkhus, necessary for one intent on the attainment of higher consciousness

(adhicitta). Namely, the factors of concentration, the energy, and of equanimity."

By the potential of these three factors, the elemental dhatu portion of the human aggregate is processed, until it emerges in pure form. The essence (dhamma) portion is processed, until it emerges in pure form. The essence (dshamma) portion is processed, until it emerges in perfect qualities of consciousness (Parami). The elemental portion is the ultimate resultant of the cognitive (Vannana) base. The essence portion is the fusion of experience into the specific field of personality as signified by the cognitive base. Element and essence are fused in a specific field, to issue in the establishment of the Dhammakaya. Now when it is said that to reverse the dhamma one sinks the peripheral faculties, commencing with the potential faculty of vision (cakkhindriya), to the diaphragm centre, it is to be understood that this form of penetration sinks consciousness deeper and deeper into space, and as a consequence accomplishes ascendancy over external supports. In so far as spatiality is concerned it is to be understood that the space which presents itself to the five sense door field of apprehension is a compounded element, inextricably fused on to the four basic principles of elemental solicity (Pathavi dhatu), and fluxive liquidity (apodhatu). Pure space, uncompounded and underived, exists in primal state only as the Nibbanic element (Nibbana Dhatu), and is cognized through introverted technique by the pure mind (Vinnanam) of the Dhammakaya.

What normally passes for space is not an absolute essence. Although space is a category of experience, its extensibility is indefinite and amorphous, to say the least. The more refined consciousness becomes, the greater penetration it attains over the five sense door field of spatiality, which as a consequence becomes more elastic. It is said to be 'elastic' because it is not merely a subjective phenomenon, but also in the transcendental sense objective. Due to this facility of expansion and contraction peculiar to pure mind, it is able to investigate phenomena in detail, revealing as a consequence that all component things are void at core. Much has been said of this void centre, or core inherent in things but the mystery remains, "Thirty spokes unite in one nave. The utility of the cart depends on the hollow centre in which the axle turns. Clay is moulded into pot. The utility of the pot depends upon the hollow inside. Doors and windows are cut in order to make a house. The utility of the house depends on the empty space within. The excellence of a dwelling is its site, the excellence of a mind is its profundity". Voidness is the centre from which all things emerge, have their momentary existence and utility and become void again. Whenever pure mind is established in this voidness freed of elemental tension, it becomes deep, immeasurable, profound. As it is said: "A Tathagata released from what is called bodily form, feeling, perception, aggregates and consciousness (Mundane) is profound, immeasurable, hard to plumb, like the great ocean. It is not fitting to state that he is reborn, not reborn,

both reborn and reborn, neither reborn nor not reborn". Due to the fact that the mind is clouded by the aggregates (Sankharas) of peripheral personality, it is unable to penetrate and comprehend the void core of things, to pass beyond the delusive dreams of its subjective world, endless in its self-creativity. As Shakespeare observes: "We are such a stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep". It is the purpose of right insight to purge the life principal of delusive dreams and to attain to purity of essence. As it is said: "Mud I do not call dirt". Delusion (Moha), hate (dosa), and greed (Lobha), I call dirt". The technique, therefore, is one of transmutation when the consistences of Earth, Water Fire and Air are purged from consciousness, it becomes bright, lucent, pure. As it is said: "Both the personal and external elements are to be regarded as they really are by perfect insight. This not mine, not this am I, herein is not the self of me. So regarding them, one is repelled by them and cleanses one's heart thereof." The elemental bonds of temporal personality are something to be purged. For although the mind develops and fructifies through a temporal process, traversed in compounded spatiality, it nevertheless eventually reaches a stage or sphere of experience, where to paraphrase Buddha:- "There is neither earth, water, fire, nor wind. Nor the formless states of the Arupa Brahmas (akasananca, etc).

A state of existence wherein neither this world nor any other, sun or moon may infiltrate its gross materiality. A state such as this, where nothing comes or goes in rebirth process, which neither loiters in shackles of temporality nor passes away there from to again arise. Unsupported by random casuality of process or base, no deleterious repercussion may impinge upon its specific field". There are still some who labour under the misconception that Nibbana is a state bordering on extinction an annihilation of all residues, Consciousness inclusives. They arrive at this view through inference, with the Buddha word itself as reference:- "Since in this very life Tathagata is not to be regarded as existing, is it proper to speak of him thus:- the Tathagata comes to be after death, he come not to be after death, he both comes to be and comes not to be after death, he neither comes to be nor comes not to be after death". Due to the fact that even in this very life the Dharmakaya of the Buddha remains unperceived, whether the aggregates of human personality are present or disintegrated at death makes no difference at all. The term "afterdeath" in this instance has no significance at all and does not apply. Hence it is said:- "A Tathagata is not to be proclaimed in other than these four ways." Nowhere is it ever said that the supramundane consciousness (Lokuttara citta) is in any way rendered extinct, or that an emancipated one is beyond feeling (Vedana), happiness (Somanassa) or equanimity (Upekkha). As it is said-"Even here and now, O Bikkhus, in this present body (not to speak of after death thereof) the essential emancipated consciousness which is the Tathagata's remains unplumbed. And although this is what I teach, there are those who accuse me

falsely of proclaiming a doctrine which is annihilationist. As of old, so now proclaim only this; suffering, and the cessation of suffering ". Annihilations (ucchedaditthi) and eternalism (sassata ditthi) are both condemned out of hand. Extremes are to be deplored. The middle path, avoiding both extremes, is just the great fact of process. Where in cause and effect follow one another, begetting more causes and defects, and infinitum". The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremesEverything exists, that Kaccayana, is one extreme. Everything does not exist, that kaccayana, is the other extreme. Transcending these extremes, kaccayana, the Tathagata expounds dhamma by way of causes". Now, in so far as the attainment of Nibbana is concerned, what is rendered extinct is : (1) the mundane forms subject to decay (Upadana rupa), (2) the mundane feelings of attachments (Upadana vedana), (3) the mundane aggregate of grasping tendencies (Upadana Sankhara), (4) the mundane grasping consciousness (Upadana Vinnana).

The five aggregates of grasping personality (Pancupadanakkhandha) are rendered extinct before entry into final Nibbana. Perception and feeling as pertaining to the human residues is extinguished by Jhanic process (Sannavedayita nirodha). Having extinguished the human residues by this method, only the perception and feeling pertaining to the Dhammakaya remains. It is to be understood that the mundane consciousness is extinct and that which activates henceforth is the supramundane emancipated mind.

This will be better understood in the light of there being higher levels of consciousness than the mere mundane, which may be instigated by the adept at will, and that the lower levels of mundane contact become a hindrance once the highest level is in function, and are therefore put aside. The fivefold mundane aggregates is rendered extinct because it is this which imposes suffering, and since the goal is the cessation of suffering, it is rendered extinct. This however, in no way implies that the perfections of experience (paramis) accumulated through many an aeon also become extinct, because if they become extinct then it would render nonsense of the whole process, for it would be a process which renders its own fulfilment extinct. A contradiction in terms. The extinction of the fivefold mundane base is so often confused with complete oblivion because it is not understood that nature (dhamma) contains the possibility of an infinite refinement in its life process. The fivefold base of form, feeling perception, impressions and consciousness may be processed by integral involuted technique until it culminate in the highest refinement. Thus the Dhammakaya itself is possessed of form, feeling, perception, impressions and consciousness (dhammakhandha), but they are so refined that they are devoid of connection with their original base. It is this Dhammakaya which attains release, and only this. What is this dhammakaya? It is a group or collection of essences. Form is a khandha, so is morality (silakkhandha),

concentration (samadhakkhandha) and wisdom (pannaddhandha). Anything which represents a collection or group is termed thus.

Thus the dhammakhandha implied here is that collection of purified essences which make the supramundane personality. What is it? The Dhammakaya differs from the concept of an antecedent changeless and eternal soul in that it is not something given and readymade. It is something which through a strenuous process of integral discipline, is finally built. And how is it built? By the accumulation of experience, for one thing and by the introverted technique of concentration, supported by morality, and wisdom, result in release. Established at diaphnagmpit, experience is smelted and pounded out of what it is not, processed in essence, to finally issue out in pristine state, as signified by the Dhammakaya. Because this Dhammakaya is a "release" (Vimutti) form it is not correct to say that it exist or does not exist. The central core of the idea does not signify annihilation of the life process as such, but develops and cultivates it to the most refined degree.

Suffering is reduced to zero, leaving only the perfections to stand. How abstract and yet concrete dhamma is, cannot be too often stressed. For although it arises through environmental contact, traversed in spatio-temporality, it is nevertheless transcendental in potentiality, ideal, pure, mind stuff. Although the supramundane consciousness is something which is developed and abstracted from the mundane as base, it finally outlives it, leaving it behind. As it is said :- "Man's eye, ear, nose, tongue, form, and mind, 'O' Bhikkus, are as an ocean. Their motion is made up of shapes, of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of sensations, of ideas. He who conquers these, stands upon the other shore... One who has reached the other shore 'O' Bhikkus, think thus : This raft has been of great use to me, resting on it have I crossed to the further shore. Suppose now I haul it up or sink it in the deep and go my ways! By so doing 'O' Bhikkus, that man would have finished with the raft." It is implicit, therefore, that there is someone who finishes with the raft. The emancipated mind habitually dwells in either of two supports (arammana), happiness (Somanassa) and equanimity (upekkha). They are not considered as defilements (kilesa) because they do not grasp. It is grasping which defiles, and its impulses are the motivating force which determine the arising of mundane form and the other aggregates.

Due to this, this factors of grasping is the very quality which is absent in the emancipated mind. Happiness, however, remains and release is classed as the greatest bliss (nibbanam paramamsukham). If Nibbana is the greatest bliss, then there must be some experiencing subject to appreciate the bliss, otherwise it render nonsense of the whole concept. Besides happiness and equanimity, the emancipated mind absorbs itself in another state of Cessation and attainment (nirodha samapatti) whensoever it wills. This cessation is not to be confused with

unconsciousness in the normally accepted sense of the word. It is impossible for the layman to accomplish this cessation and attainment, because it belongs to the domain of only the emancipated mind. The mind of the Layman is never under control in the emancipated sense. The emancipated one, however, accomplishes cessation and attainment by an act of will by sinking consciousness down into the Dhammakaya and by stopping activity at the depths. It does not imply that the life flow or continuum is rendered extinct, but merely that it sunk into substrate ineffectuality. When the emancipated mind is in nirodha samapatti of the Dhammakaya, it also covers and envelopes the life processes in the physical form. That is why fire or any other calamity is ineffectual against the body of the emancipated one so long as he is in cessation and attainment. The Psychic potential of the Dhammakaya encompasses (unseen) the body, rendering it impervious to externality. An unconscious human cannot control even his limbs, whereas the emancipated one in cessation and attainment can in his elemental equilibrium. This cessation and attainment of the emancipated ones differs again from the jhana of unconsciousness as practiced by a species of Brahmas (asannastta). When such Yogis or Brahmas accomplish cessation it is only a mundane effort, and it is only the Brahma form which covers the physical form. It in no way destroys rebirth or the defilements, something which the emancipated one has already cut off at the root.

Nirodha samapatti, as its name implies, is a cessation and attainment and must be distinguished from the subject who accomplishes it as pleased. And this applies for all the other attainment of formlessness, the experiences of the infinity of space, of consciousness, of Voidness, and of a state which is neither perception nor-perception. They are experiences involving a distinct subject who volitionally instigates the states to immediacy of attainment whensoever he will. Indeed, the margin of distinction between subject (the percipient) and object (the experience of formlessness; etc) is not something involving space-time measurement. Nevertheless, it is for clarity of definition that a margin between experiencer and experience is differentiated.

Thus the term Arupa Brahma may lead one to suppose that the deities who go by the name possess no form, when in reality what is implied is merely that possessing form that these deities absorb themselves in formless states of mind. Also that these so called formless states are not so formless as to be vague, but have a centre of one pointedness, which serves as an orientation base. Namely, the subject himself. This centre is basic, because if no centralization exists then equilibrium will immediately disappear. From this center the radius of experience (whether of the infinity of space, etc) is expanded out. The centre as distinct from the radius always remains otherwise Jhanic state would collapse and is no longer jhana but mere random and stupefied life flow (bhavanga), under no unified control. Sensorial aggregates and tendencies (sankharas) may then arise in

the subject, and all manner of dreams may result. This is so because the lifeflow is not completely pure, and when the mind sinks into subconscious aspect these unpurged aggregates may come into play.

When it comes to Nibbana and those beings who have attained to it, the case is different. It is different because those beings have extinguished the aggregates of defilement, and therefore no delusive or deceptive dreams arise whensoever consciousness sinks into the subconscious aspect of bhavanga. Bhavanga, in the case of the completely emancipated one, flows on like a pure unadulterated stream. This in no way implies that these beings too are formless. Their is the form of the Dhammakaya, and it does not decay because it is made up of pure Nibbanic element. But transmuted from the mundane (Lokiya), Arupa Brahma form as base, become a supramundane (Lokuttara) form by virtue of process. Now when an emancipated one still inhabits a physical form in the sensual world, the mundane aggregates of personality are still in service, whereby contact with the world is made. It is because these mundane aggregates are not completely extinguished they are regarded something to be rendered extinct before final entry into Nibbana, as uses have been outworn. But when these residues are rendered extinct, it in no way implies that the emancipated one ceases to be conscious and no longer exists. It cannot be too often repeated that, as in the case of the unconscious deities (asanna satta) of the Brahma plane, the cessation and attainment known as nirodha samapatti in no way implies extinction of selfhood, but merely the cessation of thought and feeling for temporary predetermined periods, after which thought and feeling would eventually returned to (supramundane) their normal forms. Since an emancipated one, while still in physical form accomplishes nirodha-samapatti at will, it is of no consequence whether he inhabits a physical form or not insofar as Nibbana is concerned.

To distinguish them, however, an emancipated one, while still in physical form, is said to be in Nibbana with residue (saupadisesa Nibbana). Without residue it is termed Anupadisesa Nibbana. The Dhammakaya of the emancipated one is perpetually in Nibbana, and the Jhanic states it accomplishes from time to time are only a functional exercise. In Samma Samadhi, it was said that Nibbana is a sphere of establishment endowed with a specific size, abounding edge, and occupying a certain place. And that this (Ayatana) Nibbana is inhabited by Dhammakaya forms. It may be questioned why a sphered establishments, endowed with a specific size and a bounding edge, occupying a certain place.

It is a sphere because its specific field of influence is self contained and has a limit. It is an establishment because all things once manifested are to be established somewhere and not just float about without an orientation centre. It possesses specific size because it has extension and depth in proportion to the extent of Parami of the beings who inhabit it, and which is measured not by Yard-stick

but by nana, the way by which all things are measured in Jhana. It has a bounding edge because internality of each Nibbana is distinct from externality, although the edge itself possesses no physicality but is lucent, and is not an obstacle to visibility or contact because of it being un compounded and pristine.

It occupies a certain place because it is only amorphous abstractions without foundation in manifested fact which can be said to occupy-space in the mind which conceives them no place. It is to be understood that an Ayatana Nibbana is not somethings already given but something to be established. The Buddhas and their disciples who inhabit an Ayatana Nibbana inhabit an establishment which is the product of their collective essence. It does not exist ready made as something for a prospective Buddha to inhabit. He has to establish it for himself. Namely by the collective achievement of parami, by the magnitude of the aeonic travail, by the actuality of accomplishment which is Buddhahood itself. Without this accomplishment, Nibbana would be mere pure space, with no one to experience its purity. That is why although Nibbana is already existent as pure space, it is meaningless without beings to inhabit it. That is why it is to be specified that a 'separate' Ayatana Nibbana comes to be because a Buddha comes to be, and not otherwise. Nor does one Buddha inhabit another Buddha's domain. As such, no readymade Nibbanas strewn about in space exist awaiting prospective Buddhas. And it is said that each Buddha's Nibbana is not standard as to size, because each varies in proportion to the extent of his field of Parami. The varying degrees of effulgence pertaining to these Nibbanic beings are the external symbol of the extent of their accumulated Parami or accomplishment which some have more and others have less.

An Ayatana Nibbana, therefore, is to be understood as the end-result of an aeonic effort. Effort instigated in this temporal world would result in the accumulated potential of a transcendent sphere (ayatana) of release. The Buddha characterizes Nibbana as that 'which is unborn, unmade, un compounded, and unbecome' in that it is the attainment of a primal purity which is essential in its universality. And that this primal purity is something which is to be fashioned into a specific field of consciousness as a status to be achieved through an aeonic effort traversed in temporal fact, being the only method by which it may be so realized. A process of gravitating the perfections of experience through the medium of the sense-door would lead to the unification of personality. Which is how the dhamma becomes personified. Nibbana, therefore, is unborn, unmade, un compounded, unbecome in the aspect of pure spatiality which always existed to be realized. But it is realized at all only because of a conscious entity which does the realizing. Namely, the Dhammakaya consciousness. when such an entity presents itself to realize this primal purity, then what was implicit as a potentiality to be experienced becomes explicit. A specific field of personality would be absorbed in a state of pure mentality. It is apparent that there are two aspects of Nibbana as

psychological and as spatial aspects. At one time the psychological aspect is presented to the fore:- "The cessation of the defilements (asavas) is Nibbana". And at other time, as spatial aspect it says:- "There is, 'O' Bhikkhus, a sphere (ayatana) where there is neither earth, etc".

It has already been cited that the only way to the attainment of this uncompounded spatiality and sphere of establishment is through an integral process and technique, which delimits random phenomenal form encroaching into the individual field of apprehension. That this involves not only a physical but a psychical penetration of residues, and a purging thereof first of all through a moral (sila) sphere of experience which delimits impurity from encroaching into its bounds. That this purity is not sufficient in itself, but has to be channelled again into a concentrated (Samadhi) sphere of intensification. Which again is to be channelled into a sphere of intelligence (Panna) and thus achieve its release (Vimutti) as well as perceive its release (Vimutti nana dassana). This is the therapeutic value of the Noble Path as practiced by the Noble ones. The path so practiced is no dead formula but a living thing, a process of initiation and penetration into layers of becoming and the qualities of experience, a warding off of the superfluous and cultivating the potentials (indriya) latent in the organic psyche. The ultimate attainment of which is the last of the twenty-two potential faculties. Namely, the supramundane faculty (annataindriya) which sets the mind free. Some consider that the emancipated one is absorbed like a drop in the ocean of Nibbana, and therefore is formless, possessing no identity what soever. This view is widely prevalent because in the scriptures it is given that once the five aggregates of grasping personality have been cut off at the root, the mind would become free from the body, and would become 'profound, measureless, unfathomable, even like unto the great ocean'.

It is not taken into account that the emancipated mind can be profound like the great ocean but not the ocean itself as such, and that an analogy is an analogy, to aid the understanding but not to confuse it. If the emancipated mind is absorbed into the ocean of Nibbana and loses its identity altogether, then it is only another name for extinction. This, however is a contradiction in terms, and renders nonsense of the whole process of psychic evolution, whereby a stream of life, starting from scratch, builds itself up aeon after aeon to culminate in the perfection of experience. Why all the build-up is only to end in an ocean of nonentity? Truly, indeed, an 'emancipated one is to be proclaimed in other than these four ways'. Others, again, uphold that there is no such thing as 'temporary release', and that once emancipation of mind is attained there is no falling from that state. But this is in direct opposition to the texts which are never weary of repeating that all things are impermanent, and therefore to be vigilant up to the end is of the essence. This is made clear enough in the case of Godhika who having attained

temporary emancipation of mind for six times, but because of some ailment couldn't uphold it, thus fell there from. Just, as when a man is dying in such a state and the destiny is uncertain, he will then decided to cut his life short by his own volition, so as to attain Nibbana in full vigilance of mind which Godhika did and which was confirmed by the Buddha in his discourse. This is only to illustrate that temporary release is not only possible but inevitable, so long as the physical body remains, and that there is no such thing as permanent release except once the physical body has been completely abandoned for good.

That is way we observe Buddha going through all the gymnastic of Jhana before his final passing away, just to rid himself of the body for good, for that is the only way whereby in full presence of mind the supramundane consciousness is extricated from mundane residues. This is by no means championing suicide, because, for the ordinary unemancipated mind, suicide would unleashed undesirable results right upto the end in which death's door is the most crucial moment of all. Also it is generally understood that there is no death, and the consequent attaining of Nibbana, when in Jhana. This applies only to the Jhana of cessation and attainment (*nirodha sa-ma patti*), where in the mental impulses and concomitants are temporarily extinguished, and when in such state death is an impossibility, because there is no life-continuum chain. But it is obvious from the *parinibbana sutta* that it is in Jhana that Buddha took off when in the fourth Jhana to be precise. The implication is that the attainment of Nibbana signifies direction and purpose, of mental impulses, and therefore those who uphold the Nibbana as tantamount to extinction of identity do not know what they are talking about. That the attainment of Nibbana is impossible without Jhana is too obvious to need further mention. It is to be gathered from this, that there are various levels of truth, and he who only strikes the surface level, which is truth but only the surface truth, thinks that is all there is to it, when as a matter of fact there is much more to delve below.

For as it has been said over and over again:- this dhamma is hard to understand, rare, excellent, beyond the sphere of logic, to be understood only by the wise. Verily, as has been said, the one who know merely the written word is like unto a man who keeps cows for hire. Whereas the one who practices and understands the path is as the owner himself, enjoying the five products of the cow. An emancipated one may be viewed as carrying his Nibbanic horizon with him wherever he goes (like a bird its wings) and cannot be separated therefrom. And if in this temporal world he lives, then in this temporal world his Nibbana is. When, however, at the dissolution of the residues he departs beyond, then he departs taking his specific field of effulgent spatiality (like a bird to its wings) therewith. Due to this integrated centrality, the specific field of effulgent spatiality which is the emancipated one's is said to be beyond elemental reach:- "Where do earth,

water, fire and air find their footings? It is like the state of consciousness (vinnanam) which is unseen, unbounded, accessible from every side". This is reminiscent of the Buddha who says, "without moving you shall know, without looking you shall see, without doing you shall achieve". For whensoever he wishes to apprehend a certain quarter from that quarter apprehension does arise. Thus wisdom itself is a kind of purge. To achieve such a purge, a special path (magga) of temporal intensification is a requisite means, so as to culminate into fruition (phala) in a specific field of release.

Therefore, in conclusion, the temporal world (lokiya dhamma) may be viewed as a manifestation of reality in fluctuation, in contrast to the Nibbanic state (Lokuttara dhamma) as a reality which endures. Buddhism is a living religion not only a living religion, but one that gives signs of a fresh vitality and (realia) impulse. The interest it arouses in the west is not merely scientific, but also spiritual. It appears that Buddhism has something to say in these troubled times when so many moral and religious values are collapsing.

And, lastly, but not least, the Buddha said, "As of old, 'O' Bhikkhus, so now I proclaim only this-suffering and the ceasing of suffering".

With Metta!!!