7. See P.L. Vaidya (ed.), Astādāsārīka Prajnāpāramitā. With Haribhadra's Commentary Called Alokā, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 185: yadā bodhisattva... evam citram abhinirharati - sarvasatva mamaparyātakah. mayaitte parimocayitvā iti, sunyatam ca samā dhīvimoaksamukham abhinirharati..., tada upāyakauśalyasamanāt gata bodhi-sattvo... veditavyah - nāyam antara bhūtakotim sā kṣatkarīṣay atapipurnair buddhādhammah;... asyopayakausalyam rakṣam karoti.
8. Ibid., p. 184: bodhisattvo mahāsattvah sarvasattvahitāntukampi maitri-... karunā-... muditā-... upekṣāvighotī... upāyakauśalyaśa praṇjāpāramitāja ca pariśāntaḥ.
9. See Hisao Takahashi et al. (eds.), Vimalakirtinirdesa. A Sanskrit Edition Based upon the Manuscript Newly Found at the Potala Palace. Taisho University Press, Tokyo, 2006, p. 15 (chapter II) with reference to Vimalakirti and the six perfections realized by him for the benefit of sentient beings: praṇjāpāramitāṃ jñātā, upāyakauśalyāgamitaḥ... "He is expert in the perfection of wisdom and an adept at skill in means..."); See ibid., p. 79 (chapter VII): praṇjāpāramitā mātā bodhisattvāvā ma rīsa/putī copayakausalyam yato jīvantī nāyakah // "The Bodhisattva's mother, friend, is the perfection of wisdom and [their] father is skill in means of whom are born the guides [of all beings]."
12. See Pye 1978, p. 113f.; see also ŚUNYATĀ As for the Tantric context in which the opposites of upāya and praṇā merge as yab yum, see TATHAGATAMANDALA.
13. See Mark Tatz (transl.), The Skill in Means Sutra (Upayakausalyasutra), Delhi, 1994, 2001, p. 16f.
17. Ibid., p. 87.
18. Ibid., p. 33.

Bhikkhu Pasādika.

UPEKKHĀ, (Skt. upeksā), is mostly translated as "equanimity", and can be derived from upa and īks, to "look upon". In order to explore the various nuances of upekkhā, the present article will begin by surveying Buddhaghosa's analysis of the term, and then employ the main distinctions derived from this analysis as a scaffolding for examining relevant passages from the Pāli discourses. Though not all of these passages fit Buddhaghosa's scheme neatly, the main distinctions offered by him provide a useful ground plan for exploring upekkhā and its different shades of meaning.

Buddhaghosa's analysis of upekkhā

Buddhaghosa's analysis distinguishes between ten types of upekkhā (1) chālaṅgupekkhā, the "six-fold equanimity" of an arahant towards objects of the six senses.
(2) brahmavihārupekkhā, "equanimity" as the last of the four "divine abodes".
(3) bojhāṅgupekkhā, "equanimity" as the last of the seven "factors of awakening".
(4) viriyupekkhā, "equanimity of energy" in the sense of a balance between striving and laxity.
(5) saṅkhārupekkhā, "equanimity about formations" as a result of progress in meditation.
(6) vedanupekkhā, "equanimity" as a type of "feeling".
(7) vipassanupekkhā, "equanimity" as a result of the development of "insight".
(8) tattaramajjhātupekkhā, "equanimity" in the sense of "balance" of mental factors.
(9) jhānupekkhā, the "equanimity" experienced during the third jhāna.
(10) pārisuddhupekkhā, the "purified equanimity" experienced during the fourth jhāna.
Buddhaghosa explains that the first three and the last two, i.e. châlanguvekkhā (1), brahma-vihāru-vekkhā (2), bojjhânguvekkhā (3), jhânguvekkhā (9) and pârisuddhuvekkhā (10), are but different modes of equanimity in the sense of balance, târamajhântupekkhā (8). Since the first three and the last two are different modes of the same basic state, they are mutually exclusive in the sense that where one of them is found, the other will not occur.

Of the remaining types of upekkhā, equanimity about formations and equanimity in relation to insight, saûkhârâupekkhā (5) and viûpasamaupekkhā (7) have, according to Buddhaghosa, the same meaning.

“Equanimity of energy”, viriyupekkhā (4), however, in according to him a type on its own, as is the case for equanimity as a feeling, vedânupekkhā (6).

Equanimity towards sensory experience

The first in Buddhaghosa’s listing is châlanguvekkhâ, the “six-fold equanimity” of an arahant towards objects of the six senses. As an example for this type of equanimity, Buddhaghosa refers to a discourse in the Aûguttara Nikâya that describes how a monk is neither elated, sumana, nor depressed, dumana, in regard to what is experienced through the six senses, but instead dwells with equanimity, mindfulness and clear comprehension, upekkhâko vîharati sato sampâjâno (A. III, 279).

Equanimity towards sensory objects is, however, a topic of relevance not only to an arahant. In fact, such equanimity could be of different types. The Saliyatana Sutta distinguishes between worldly types of equanimity, gehasitâ upekkhâ, experienced by the ignorant worldly towards sense-objects, and equanimity based on renunciation, nekkhammasitâ upekkhâ, which arises as the result of awareness of the impermanent and unsatisfactory nature of sense-objects (M. III, 219). The worldly forms of equanimity result from the object itself, whose features arouse neither a positive nor a negative reaction. In contrast, equanimity based on renunciation transcends its object, attâvattati, as this equanimity is caused by an inner attitude, not by the outer features of the object.

Such an inner attitude of equanimity towards sensory-objects is the outcome of a gradual training. According to the Indriyabhâvanâ Sutta, some contemporaries of the Buddha thought that the way to deal with the attraction of sense-objects is to just avoid them. From the perspective of the Buddha, however, the proper procedure is rather to see sense-experience, be it agreeable or disagreeable, as something that is gross and conditioned. In contrast to such gross and conditioned experience, equanimity is peaceful and sublime (M. III, 299).

The same discourse then describes how to arrive at mastery in regard to sense-experience. According to this description, one trains to perceive what is disagreeable (paṭikkula) as agreeable (appâṭikkula), and what is agreeable as disagreeable, followed by perceiving both as disagreeable, and then both as agreeable. The final stage in such training is reached when the labels “disagreeable” and “agreeable” are left behind and one is able to dwell in equanimity, endowed with mindfulness and clear comprehension in regard to any experience (M. III, 301).

To remain equanimous is not only an important stage in perceptual mastery, but would also be of considerable advantage in relation to other beings. This is in fact the next aspect of upekkhā to be examined, namely equanimity as one of the four brahmavihāras.

Equanimity as a divine abode

The second type of equanimity in Buddhaghosa’s listing is brahmavihārupekkhā. In the standard description of the practice of the four brahmavihāras as forms of “liberation of the mind”, cetovimutti, equanimity comes last and thus constitutes the culmination point of the practice (e.g. D. I, 251). Thus equanimity as a brahmavihāra constitutes the climax of a process that is based on the development of loving kindness, mettā, compassion, karuna, and sympathetic joy, mudita. This indicates that upekkhā is not simply a state of listless lack of concern, but rather an equanimity that rounds of a systematic opening of the heart, in the sense of being a “complement to the first three more concerned dispositions”.

Far from being merely a state of dull indifference, such equanimity is “the result of ... deliberate training, not the casual outcome of a passing mood”. That upekkhā comes last “does not mean that equanimity is to supplant the first three sublime attitudes in one’s future practice”. Much rather, future practice will involve
all four brahmavihāras, not being confined to practice of upekkhā alone (cf. e.g. Sn. 73).

That from an early Buddhist perspective upekkhā is not considered as invariably superior to the other brahmavihāras can be seen in a passage in the Āṅguttara Nikāya. This passage reports that Sāriputta was publicly contradicted several times by another monk. The Buddha finally intervened and upbraided the other monks for not intervening earlier (A. III, 194). Why, he asked, did they not have compassion when a senior monk was being vexed in public, and instead continued to look on with equanimity? This passage shows that in early Buddhism equanimity was not considered the appropriate response to every situation. Instead, at times an active intervention is required and should be undertaken, out of compassion.

The same can also be seen in another passage in the Āṅguttara Nikāya, according to which someone had proposed that to completely refrain from criticizing others is the best attitude, being a superior expression of equanimity (A. II, 101). The Buddha disagreed with this proposal, explaining that one should criticize on those occasions where it is suitable.

The same issue is taken up from a complementary perspective in another discourse, which recommends admonishing someone even if this leads to vexation for oneself and the other, as long as there is hope that the other will thereby become established in what is wholesome (M. II, 241). Only if the situation is such that it can be anticipated that the other will not become established in what is wholesome, then equanimity towards such a person is the appropriate attitude.

These passages show that early Buddhism did not consider equanimity as the only appropriate attitude towards others, but rather saw it as an attitude that, in spite of its many advantages, may at times not be opportune. In fact, equanimity can be of two types, as some forms of equanimity lead to an increase of wholesome states, but others lead to an increase of unwholesome states (D. II, 279). For this reason, certain types of upekkhā should not be developed.

In order to develop the wholesome types of equanimity, the Mahākathātipadopama Sutta recommends calling to mind the famous simile of the saw. With the help of such recollection, it becomes possible to generate “equanimity based on the wholesome”, upekkhā kusalamissitā, to such a degree that one is able to bear even being attacked with fists, sticks and knives (M. I, 186). Another recollection that can help to face even extreme situations is described in the Puṇṇovāda Sutta. According to this discourse, the monk Puṇṇa was ready to bear any type of attack with the reflection that his aggressors were kind in that they were not attacking him in ways even worse than what they were already doing (M. III, 268).

These passages reveal the potential of equanimity in overcoming the tendency to resistance, paṭigha (M. I, 424), or to anger, ágháta (A. III, 185). In addition, if equanimity is developed as a liberation of the mind it also becomes an antidote to lust, rāga (A. III, 292). The relationship between equanimity and the removal of lust is further elaborated in another discourse, which explains that due to the perception of absence of beauty, asubhahasāti, the attraction of sexuality will be replaced by equanimity (A. IV, 47).

According to the Jīvaka Sutta, the Buddha’s own practice of equanimity and the other divine abodes had its foundation in his complete freedom from lust, anger and delusion (M. I, 370). Due to the aloofness of the Buddha’s equanimity from any defilement, his brahmavihāra was superior even to that of Brahmā.

For the Buddha, to dwell in the divine abode of equanimity or any of the other brahmavihāras was like a divine resting place (A. I, 183). His equanimity as a teacher was such that, even though only some disciples might listen to his teachings while others might not listen, he would still remain equanimous (M. III, 221).

Equanimity was a quality possessed by the Buddha even previous to his awakening. The Mahāvibhaṅga Sutta describes a former time during which the bodhisattva was molested by cow-herds who would spit at him, urinate on him, throw dirt at him and poke sticks into his ears (M. I, 79). In spite of such harassment, he remained completely equanimous. According to the Cariyāpitaka, the bodhisattva’s maintenance of equanimity in such adverse circumstances constituted his development of the perfection of equanimity, upekkhāpārami (Cp. 102). Notably, in the list of altogether ten such perfections
that according to the Theravāda tradition are required for future Buddhahood, upekkhā again forms the culmination point.

A discourse in the Sānụutta Nikāya clarifies that the development of upekkhā and the other divine abodes should not be considered to be only a domain of Buddhists, as the same was also undertaken by contemporaries of the Buddha (S. V, 116). The same discourse throws into relief the decisive difference between their mode of practice and the way this was undertaken in the Buddha’s dispensation. This difference lies in combining the practice of equanimity, or of any of the other brahmavihāras, with the development of the factors of awakening (S. V, 120). This leads us on to the next topic, to the role of upekkhā as a factor of awakening.

**Equanimity as a factor of awakening**

Bojhaṅgupekkhā, “equanimity” as a “factor of awakening”, is the third type of equanimity in Buddhaghosa’s listing. Similar to the position of upekkhā in relation to the other divine abodes (brahmavihāra) and the perfections (pāramitā), in the context of the factors of awakening upekkhā again forms the last in the listing. According to the Ānāpānasati Sutta, the factors of awakening arise in conditioned dependence on each other (M. III, 85). This indicates that upekkhā as a bojhaṅga constitutes the climax of a process of meditative development that involves the previous establishment of mindfulness, sati, investigation of phenomena, dharmavicaya, energy, viriya, joy, pīti, tranquillity, passaddhi, and concentration, samādhi.

According to the Ānāpānasati Sutta, the awakening factor of equanimity arises due to looking on with equanimity, ajjhupakkhati, at the concentrated state of mind that has been reached at this point of practice (M. III, 86), a point of practice with which the attainment of knowledge and liberation comes within reach. The Ānāpānasati Sutta speaks of looking on with equanimity, ajjhupakkhati, also in its correlation of the fourth tetrad of mindfulness of breathing with the fourth satipatthāna, contemplation of phenomena, dhammānupassanā (M. III, 85). According to its explanation, to contemplate impermanence, dispassion, cessation and relinquishment when breathing in and breathing out corresponds to contemplation of phenomena, dhammānupassanā, because at this stage of practice one has seen with wisdom that desire and discontent have been overcome and looks on closely with equanimity. A nuance common to the perspectives given on upekkhā in the Ānāpānasati Sutta is that of mental balance, a balance that covers the realm of tranquillity as well as of insight.

Upekkhā as an awakening factor could be directed towards internal or towards external objects (S. V, 111). To foster its development, attention should be given to things that are a basis for the awakening factor of equanimity, upekkhā-sambojhaṅgatthāniyā dhammā, (S. V, 67). Further explanation of this statement can be gathered from the commentaries, according to which one should in particular be detached towards people and things, avoid prejudiced people and associate with impartial people, and incline the mind towards the arousing and establishing of this particular factor of awakening (MA. I, 299). The commentaries also explain that the characteristic of the awakening factor of equanimity is careful consideration and proceeding evenly, paṭisaiṅkhāna-lakkhaṇa samāvāhita-lakkhaṇa vā, its specific function is to prevent deficiency and excess and to cut off partiality, unādhiṅkatā-nivāraṇa-rasa pakkha-pitupac-chedha-rasi vā, and its manifestation is as a state of balance, majjhatta-bhāva-pac-cupatthāna (MA. I, 84).

The presence of wisdom and clear discernment inherent in the awakening factor of upekkhā is also reflected in a simile found in the Sanụutta Nikāya, which compares the seven factors of awakening to the seven precious and magical possessions of a wheel-turning king. In the context of this simile, the awakening factor of equanimity corresponds to the king’s adviser, parināyaka (S. V, 99).

Further illustrations of upekkhā can be found in two similes that employ various parts of a chariot and of an elephant to illustrate mental qualities. Here upekkhā is what keeps the burden loaded on the chariot in balance (S. V, 6), or else corresponds to the two white teeth of the elephant (A. III, 346; Thag. 694). Another simile indicates that just as a goldsmith will at times simply look on with equanimity, ajjhupakkhati, after having alternately heated up gold and sprinkled it with water, so too during the
meditative development of the mind one should at
times just give attention to the sign of equanimity,
upākkhāṁiṁītta (A. I, 257). The nuance of balance
between striving and laxity, alluded to in this imagery,
leads us on to the next aspect of equanimity, namely
equanimity in the sense of balance of energy.

Equanimity as balance of energy

Viriyupakkhā, “equanimity of energy” as a balance
between striving and laxity, is the fourth in
Buddhaghosa’s listing. In addition to the above-
mentioned simile of a goldsmith, another imagery
describes the same need for equanimous observation
without interference with the case of a wood fire,
which at times needs to be tended, at times to be
quenched, but at times just needs to be looked upon
with equanimity (A. IV, 45). For exertion to be fruitful,
the Devadaha Sutta points out, one has to know not
only when it is the time to strive, but also when the
time has come to simply remain with upakkhā (M. II,
223). As another discourses points out, one who does
not look on with equanimity when this is required
will not reach liberation (A. III, 435).

The topic of equanimity in relation to the progress
towards liberation, in particular in regard to its two
aspects of tranquility and insight, is the next theme
to be explored, which is equa-nimity about formations.

Equanimity about formations

Saṅkhāraupakkhā, “equanimity about formations”,
is the fifth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. The
Pati-sambhidāmagga treats this topic by
distinguishing between eight types of saṅkhāra-ukkhā
that arise in relation to the development of tranquility,
samatha, and ten types of saṅkhāra-upakkhā in
relation to the development of insight, vipassanā (Ps.
I, 64). The eight types related to tranquility are the
equanimity towards those factors that have been
overcome with the attainment of a particular level of
concentration, such as the hindrances with the first
jñāna, initial and sustained mental application
(vitakka-vicāra) in the case of the second jñāna etc.
The ten types related to insight are the equanimity
towards any formation related to the four noble paths,
the four noble fruits, dwelling in emptiness and
dwelling in signlessness.

In this way, equanimity about formations points
to the role of upakkhā in relation to the development
of jñāna and of insight. Before taking up this role in
more detail, however, equanimity as a type of feeling
needs to be considered.

Equanimous feeling

Vedanāupakkhā, “equanimity” as a type of “feeling”,
is the sixth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. The experience
of equanimous types of feeling is treated in the
discourses predominantly under the heading of the
“faculty of equanimity”, upākkhānādiya. This faculty
arises in dependence on contact to be felt as
equanimous (S. V, 212), and is de-finied as experience
that is bodily and mentally felt as neither comfortable
nor uncomfortable, n’eva sātāṁ na-sātāṁ vedayitāṁ
(S. V, 211).

The faculty of equanimity is one of altogether five
such faculties, of which the others are the faculties of
bodily pleasure, sukha, bodily pain, dukkha, mental
joy, somanassa, and mental dis-pleasure, domanassa
(S. V, 209). While the faculties of bodily pleasure and
mental joy correspond to pleasant feeling, sukha
vedanā, and the faculty of bodily pain and mental
displeasure to unpleasant feeling, dukkha vedanā, the
faculty of equanimity corresponds to neither-
unpleasant-nor-pleasant types of feeling,
dukkhānusātukkha-vedanā (S. V, 210). The other four
faculties cease progressively with the attainment of
the four jñānas, but the faculty of equanimity ceases
only with the attainment of the cessation of
perceptions and feelings, saṅkhāvedayitanirodha
(S. V, 215).

A related type of presentation includes upakkhā in
a list of altogether six elements, dihātu, of which the
first four are again sukha, dukkha, somanassa, and
domanassa, while the remainder are upakkhā and avijjā
(M. III, 62). The reference to avijjā in the present
passage then leads us on the development of insight
as the requirement for overcoming avijjā.

Equanimity in relation to insight

Vipassanāupakkhā, “equanimity” as a result of the
development of “insight”, is the seventh in
Buddhaghosa’s listing. As an example of this particular
type of equanimity, Buddhaghosa refers to a maxim in
the Āneñjasappāya Sutta, which describes the aspiration: “what exists, what has become, that I abandon”, yad atti, yam bhūya, tad pajañhāmi (M. II, 265). The same maxim recurs again in another discourse, according to which those who have developed wisdom through putting this injunction into practice will reach full awakening or become non-returners (A. IV, 70). As the Āneñjasappāya Sutta points out, full liberation will be attained only if even the refined equanimity acquired with the help of the above maxim is not clung to.

This reinforces a point already made above in relation to upekkhā as a divine abode, in that in early Buddhism equanimity is not seen as the final goal, but as something that also needs to be transcended.

A simile that illustrates how equanimity arises through insight can be found in the Devadaha Sutta. This simile describes a man who sorely suffers on seeing the woman he loves conversing and laughing with another man. Yet, once this man realizes the cause of his distress and eventually overcomes his affection for the woman, her behavior will no longer affect him (M. II, 223).

A verse in the Mahāvīrya Sutta speaks in particular of equanimity in regard to views and opinions (Sn. 911). Since the preceding verses offer a penetrative analysis of the evils of upholding views and opinions, perhaps the upekkhā referred to in the present verse should also be reckoned as a form of equanimity that is the result of insight.

In fact, the presence of equanimity and balance as an outcome of progressing insight is a recurrent theme in the discourses, though not always explicitly treated under the heading of upekkhā. Another way of expressing the same state of balance would be, for example, the expression “he dwells independently, without clinging to anything in the world”, anissito ca viharati, na ca kāci loke upādiyati (e.g. M. I, 56). A complementary description of this balanced attitude indicates that for one who has arrived at deeper insight, any feeling will not be delighted in. Even feelings that intimate the approach of death will simply be experienced with a balanced mind that knows that after death feelings will just become cool (M. III, 244). Which takes us on to the topic of equanimity as balance.

**Equanimity as balance**

Tatramajjhātuttekkhā, “equanimity” in the sense of “balance” of mental factors is the eighth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. According to his own presentation, tatramajjhātuttekkhā is an umbrella term for the first three and the last two in his listing, namely chañjuntekkhā (1), brahmavihārutekkhā (2), bhojjaṁntekkhā (3), jhāntekkhā (9) and pārisuddhutekkhā (10). Of these only the final two out of these manifestations of tatramajjhātuttekkhā, which are concerned with the role of equanimity in regard to jhāna attainment, still need to be examined.

**Equanimity during jhāna**

According to Buddhaghosa’s explanation, equanimity is present in all four jhānas, but it comes to the fore only in the third and fourth jhānas (Visn. 168). To illustrate his point, he compares upekkhā during the first and second jhāna to the crescent moon during daytime, which in spite of its presence will not be seen clearly. For this reason, in his tenfold listing he explicitly mentions only jhāntekkhā, the “equanimity” experienced during the third jhāna, and pārisuddhutekkhā, the “purified equanimity” experienced during the fourth jhāna.

The presence of equanimity in the third jhāna is explicitly mentioned in the standard description of this level of concentration, according to which one who attains the third jhāna is reckoned one who “being equanimous and mindful, dwells in happiness”, upekkhako satimā sukhavihāri (D. I, 75). During such attainment, a subtle but real perception of equanimity and happiness is present, upekkhā-sukha-suhumassacca-saññā (D. I, 183). It is the very presence of this upekkhāsukha that constitutes the last vestige of perturbability, ījīta, during this attainment (M. I, 454), or else the last vestige of confinement, sambuddha (A. IV, 450). The danger here is to become internally stuck, once consciousness becomes intoxicated with the gratification derived from this experience, upekkhā-sukho-saññāsāda-gaṭṭhita (M. III, 226).

Overcoming this last vestige of perturbability and confinement leads to the attainment of the fourth jhāna, characterized in the standard descriptions as a state that has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity,
upekkhā-sati-parisuddhi (D. I, 75). As a verse in the Sutta Nipāta notes, leaving behind sukhā, dukkhā, somanassa and domanassa leads to a type of equanimity that is purified and tranquil (Sn. 67).

Buddaghosa explains that the purity of mindfulness during this deep level of absorption is precisely due to equanimity (Vism. 167). Equanimity then continues to be prominent during the four immaterial attainments, though a discourse in the Saṃyutta Nikāya relates upekkhā cetovimutti in particular to the attainment of the sphere of nothingness, akiñcaññāyatana (S. V, 121).

The unified equanimity of deeper jhāna experience is considerably more refined than worldly types of equanimity that are based on diversity, upekkhānānattā nīnattasāti (M. I, 364). Yet, even the sublime and purified equanimity of deeper stages of concentration is merely a conditioned state and thus needs to be left behind (M. III, 243).

With the unworldly equanimity of the fourth jhāna, nirāmisā upekkhā, the worldly types of equanimity in relation to the worlds of sensuality are left behind, sāmisā upekkhā (S. IV, 237). A form of equanimity that is of an even more unworldly type, nirāmisā nirāmisatāra upekkhā, will arise when one reviews the successful attainment of final liberation.

The role of upekkhā during the progress through the jhānas indicates that it is the very presence of equanimity that “allows the mind to become fully sensitive and effective”.10 This reinforces a point made above in regard to occurrences of upekkhā in other contexts, which similarly go beyond mere indifference or insensitivity and present equanimity as an expression of a maturity of emotional attitudes and of the development of insight and tranquility.11 It is in fact noticeable how again and again upekkhā makes its appearance in the company of mindfulness, saññi, and clear comprehension, sampajāñña, which highlights the degree to which equanimity is related to full awareness and wisdom. In sum, then, upekkhā is an equanimity that “looks at” or “looks upon”, upā+ ikṣ not an indifference that looks away.

Anālayo

References

1. M. Maithrimurthi: Wohlwollen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999: 140, notes that a similar ten-fold analysis of upeksā can be found in the Yogācārabhūmi-Vyākhyā, mdo ‘gre’ yi 1338b and 135a3.


5. Further stories related to his development of equanimity in former lives are noted in Vism. 302.


7. G.M. Nagao: “Tranquil Flow of Mind: An Interpretation of Upekkhā”, in Indienisme et Bouddhisme, Lou-vain: Institut Orientaliste, 1980: 249, draws attention to a passage in the Sāmpadānimocana, according to which in the context of a similar exposition the upekkhā-nimittā stands for effortlessness.

8. Cf. also S. IV, 232, which explicitly refers to worldly types of equanimity, gehasitāupekkhā, and equanimity based on renunciation, nekkhammasitāupekkhā, as types of feeling, veḍanā.

9. Cf. also S. IV, 114, which speaks of sense-objects that are a basis for equanimity, upekkhāthānīya, which then lead to the arising of neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling, adukkhamasukha-vedanā.

UPOSATHA


UPOSATHA. Derived from the Sanskrit word upavasatha, the Pāli term uposatha denotes a ceremony to be performed by the Buddhist clergy on the 14th or 15th day of the half-month and by the laity on the 8th and 14th or 15th days of the half-month and on certain special days (pāṭhāriya-pakkha). In Buddhist Sanskrit the term takes the form uposadha (sometimes also given as p参考资料adha or posadha). In Jainia Sanskrit it occurs as p参考资料adha or p参考资料adha while in Ardha Māgadhi it occurs as posadha.

The Sanskrit term upavasatha literally means ‘living close to’. On the day of the ritual the gods are said to descend to the sacrificial room where the sacrificer is observing the religious fast tending the sacred fire. It was an ancient Indo-Aryan ritual from Vedic times. This was done by the sacrificer on the eve of the Darsha and Pau参考资料māsa sacrifices, performed respectively on the new-moon and the full-moon days in preparation for it. The performance is said to purify the sacrificer. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says that the sacrificer spends the time on this day in the sacrificial chamber in full or semi fast. According to the Āruneya Upanishad the sacrificer should complete these penances on this day but the Brahmin Sanyāsins should chant the Upanishads or the Āranyakas.

According to Monier Williams upavasatha is a fast day, especially the day preceding the Soma sacrifice. It is the period of preparation for the Soma sacrifice. With the observance of religious fasting (upavāsa) in Brahmanism is also included abstinence from all sensual gratification, from perfumes, flowers, ungents, ornaments, betel, music, dancing etc. Rhys Davids and William Stede (PED. s.v. uposatha) confirm that upavasatha, from which is derived the Pāli form uposatha, denotes the eve of the Soma sacrifice, the day of preparation. They go on to say that at the time of the rise of Buddhism the word had come to mean the day preceding four stages, of the moon’s waxing and waning, viz. 1st, 8th, 15th and 23rd nights of the lunar month.

Upavasatha in Non-Vedic Religions Although it originated in the Vedic tradition other non-Vedic religions could not completely ignore its socio religious significance. They gradually adapted it as a weekly day of religious observance to suit their own religious views. According to Buddhist sources (Vin.1.101f) wandering ascetics of heretical sects (aniṬatiṭhiyā paribhiyāka) used to assemble on the 14th, 15th and 8th days of the half month and preach the dharmma (dhammaṃ bhāsati). Buddaghosa explains this as speaking on what should be done and what should not be done (Vin.A. 1034). However, it also could mean the reciting or chanting the dharmma or discussing the dharmma. Consequently many people used to come to their monasteries to listen to the dharmma, resulting in gaining in popularity by the heretics. On seeing this situation the Magadhan king, Seniya Bimbisāra, wished that Buddhist monks also should gather on these days and intimated his wish to the Buddha. Having considered the king’s wish the Buddha enjoined that his disciple monks also should assemble on the 8th, 14th or the 15th days of the half-month. (see below for subsequent developments).

The story of the origin of the uposatha (posadha) ceremony given in the Mūla Sarvāstivāda Vinaya texts differs from the Pāli tradition. Accordingly it was not the Magadhan king Bimbisāra but a group of lay devotees of Rāja-gruha who were instrumental in the initiation of the ceremony. These lay devotees who were on their way to the Buddha, as the time was not opportune to visit the Buddha, decided to visit first the monastery of a group of heretical recluses. In their discussions with them the Buddhist lay devotees found that there were three practices, viz n参考资料dāya, kriyā and posadha observed by the heretical sects but not found in the Buddhist practice. Thus they met the Buddha at the proper time they reported all the conversation they had with the heretics and requested him to enjoin his disciples too to observe these three practices. The Buddha agreed. The Buddha explained n参考资料dāya as meditation (yog) and especially the meditation on the constituent elements of the body. For this he also recommended a meditation hall (prakahā-śāla or pradhānaśāla) with all facilities. By kriyā is meant the selection of a suitable monk to look after the meditators (prakahā pratijāgrako bhikṣu).
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Founder Editor-in Chief
G. P. MALALASEKERA, M. A., Ph. D., D. Litt., Professor Emeritus

Editor-in Chief
W. G. WEERARATNE, M. A., Ph. D.

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