

recommending that a wise man “should expound the analytical theory”.

- 4 T. stands for the Taisho edition
- 5 Prasad: “Theravāda and Vibhajjavāda, A Critical Study of the Two Appellations”, *East and West*, 1972, 22.1/2: 106 comments that “from the use of the term ‘herein’ (*ettha*)... it is clear that he declared himself to be so only in that given context”.
- 6 Kalupahana: *The Buddha’s Philosophy of Language*, Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha 1999: 73
- 7 Karunadasa: “Theravāda as Vibhajjavāda: A correct Identification for Wrong Reasons?”. *Wilhelm Geiger and the Study of the History and Culture of Sri Lanka*, Colombo 2000: 26.

VIBHAṄGAATṬHAKATHĀ See SAMMOHAVINODANI

VIBHAṄGAPPAKARAṆA: *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa* is the second treatise of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* of the Theravāda School of Buddhism. It is the Theravāda counterpart of *Dharmaskandha Sāstra* of *Sarvastivāda Abhidharma*. It is regarded as the supplement and continuation of *Dhammasaṅgani*, the first treatise of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*.

Vibhaṅga means exposition, classification or analysis. Accordingly *vibhaṅga* contains analysis of eighteen topics of Buddhist doctrines such as (1) *khandha*-aggregates, (2) *āyatana*-base (3) *dhatu*-elements (4) *sacca* –truths (5) *indriya*- faculty (6) *paccayākāra* –cause and effect (7) *satipatthāna* – mindfulness (8) *sammappadhāna*- right exertion (9) *iddhipāda* – basis of psychic power (10) *maggaṅga* – constituents of path (11) *bhojjhaṅga* – factors of enlightenment (12) *jhāna*- absorption (13) *appamaññā* – noble living (14) *sikkhāpada* –precepts (15) *patisambhidā* –analytical knowledge (16) *ñāna* – wisdom (17) *khandhakavatthu* – minor section dealing with numerous classification of *dhammas* and (18) *dhammahadaya* –mental elements.

It is also important that each of the eighteen *Vibhaṅgas* are discussed under three criteria i.e. *suttantabhājanīya* according to suttanta, *abhidhammabhājanīya* according to abhidharma, and *pañhāpucca* by way of question and answers

(catechism). All the eighteen expositions (*vibhaṅgas*) are complete in themselves and independent. Among the eighteen *vibhaṅgas* the *khandha vibhaṅga* which occupies nearly one third of the whole *pakarāṇa* appears to be the biggest *vibhaṅga*. Traditionally *vibhaṅga* contains thirty five *bhānavaras*. Many of the passages of the *Vibhaṅga* are found in the *Patisambhidāmagga*, to which it has a great resemblance, in contents, as well as in arrangements.

The tradition attributes the authorship of *vibhaṅga* (also the authorship of the remaining six *pakarāṇas*) to Buddha himself. But scholars are of the opinion that they must have been produced during a period of two or three hundred years, beginning from second or third century, after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. The scholars assign seven *abhidhamma* treatises into three periods of composition chronologically. i.e. early, middle and late. Accordingly the *Vibhaṅga* along with the *Dhammasaṅgani* and the *Puggalapaññatti* are assigned to the proposed early period. The scholars also point out quotations from the first four *nikāyas* often found in the above three treatises indicate that they belong to the early period.

The *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa* is published in the roman script by PTS. edited by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids in 1904. The *Vibhaṅga* commentary is assigned to the great commentator Ven. Buddhagoshācārya and it is named “*Sammohavinodanī*” (Expeller of Bewilderment). The commentary is published in Roman scripts by the PTS. edited by Ven. A.P. Buddhagoshā in 1923.

K. Arunasiri

VIBHĀṢĀŚĀSTRA See MAHĀVIBHĀṢĀ

VIBHAVA, “non-existence” or “non-becoming”, occurs regularly in the early discourses together with such synonyms as “annihilation”, *uccheda*, and “destruction”, *vināsa*. Another sense of the term *vibhava*, found mainly in commentarial literature, is “wealth” or “prosperity”. The present article, however, is concerned with *vibhava* in the sense of non-existence.

Views that propound future non-existence, ‘*vibhava -ditṭhi*’, are an extreme that has its counterpart in views that propose external existence. Those who

uphold either of these two views are at odds with each other and, being under the influence of craving and clinging, will be unable to reach liberation (*M. I*, 65). Caught up in these two types of views, mankind either lags behind or else overshoots the goal, as out of disgust with existence one develops delight in the notion of non-existence, perceiving the cessation of the self at death as peaceful and sublime. Someone endowed with vision, in contrast, sees what has come into being just as something that has come into being, *bhūtaṃ bhūtaṃ passati*, and develops detachment in regard to it.

A stark instance of annihilationist types of view that propound future non-existence would be the stance that according to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* was taken by Ajita Kesakambali (*D. I*, 55; see also AJITA KESAKAMBAI and SĀMAÑÑAPHALA SUTTA), propounding that a human being merely consists of the four elements. According to this view, when someone passes away all that happens is that the body will be carried to the cremation ground, the bones will turn white and all offerings turn into ashes. To assume some form of survival after death is according to this doctrine merely empty prattle, as fools and wise alike will be annihilated at death and perish entirely. As the *Sandaka Sutta* points out, to uphold such a doctrine renders the living of a life dedicated to spiritual progress meaningless (*M. I*, 515).

In its survey of the various grounds for views held among contemporary Brahmins and recluses, the *Brahmajāla Sutta* lists altogether seven grounds for proclaiming the annihilation of a self (*D. I*, 34; see in more detail VIBHAVA—TANHĀ). In whatever way those Brahmins and recluses may proclaim *vibhava* to be the escape from *bhava*, they will be unable to escape from existence (*Ud.* 33). Only when *vibhava* and *bhava* are both left behind can future becoming be eradicated *vibhavañca bhavañca vippahāya khīnapunabbhavo* (*Sn.* 514). The situation of those who uphold annihilationism is quite vividly depicted in the *Pañcattaya Sutta*, which compares their predicament to a dog that is bound to a pillar and keeps running in circles around this pillar (*M. II*, 232). The point of this imagery is that, in spite of being motivated by disenchantment with personal existence, *sakkāya*, annihilationism is unable to go beyond the inherent sense of identity. Instead, the annihilationist

keeps on running, as it were, in circles around the same personal existence he or she tries to abandon.

The decisive shift of perspective that is required can best be illustrated with the help of an aspiration that a discourse in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* presents as the expression of an annihilationist view, *uccheda—diṭṭhi* (*S. III*, 99). This aspiration reads: “may I not be, may it not be for me, I shall not be and it will not be for me”, *no c’assam, no ca me sia, na bhavissami, na me bhavissati*. The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* discourse points out that this aspiration is rooted in ignorance and an expression of craving. A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* reckons this type of aspiration as the supreme among heterodox views, *aggam bāhirakānaṃ diṭṭhigatānaṃ* (*A. V*, 63). The reason for this comparatively favourable assessment in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* discourse may well be that a somewhat similar maxim was employed in Buddhist circles, with a small but decisive difference. The modified mode of this aspiration reads “may it not be, may it not be for me, it shall not be and it will not be for me”, *no c’assa, no ca me siyāna bhavissati, na me bhavissati* (*M. II*, 24; *S. III*, 55; *A. IV*, 70; *Ud.* 78). By replacing the first person formulation in the verb forms with the third person, the need to go beyond the self-notion implicit in the annihilationist approach becomes apparent, and the maxim becomes adoptable for the early Buddhist aspiration for the cessation of existence, *bhavanirodha*.¹

A discourse in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* explains how this aspiration can lead to the eradication of the lower fetters and onwards to final liberation. An uninstructed worldling does not realize that each of the five aggregates is impermanent and will any way come to be non-existent, *vibhavissati*. A noble disciple, in contrast, understands the true nature of the five aggregates and thereon applies himself or herself to the above aspiration (“may it not be, may it not be for me, it shall not be and it will not be for me”). In this way the destruction of the lower fetters can be expected (*S. III*, 57). If this aspiration does not cause the arising of fear, and if any lust in regard to the five aggregates is overcome, then consciousness becomes unestablished, *apatiṭṭhita*, and final liberation will be attained. The *Āneñjasappāya Sutta* notes that clinging to the equanimity developed in this way needs to be avoided in order for practice in accordance with this maxim to lead to final liberation (*M. II*, 265).

The *Alagaddūpama Sutta* reports that contemporary recluses and Brahmins were of the opinion that the Buddha was an annihilationist, since according to them he taught the annihilation, destruction and non-existence of a [truly] existing being. *Sato sattassa ucchedaṃ vināsaṃ vibhavaṃ paññāpeti* (M. I, 140). In reply to such mistaken assessments of his teaching, the Buddha would point out that what he taught as merely *dukkha* and its cessation. General Siha and the Brahmin Verañja had a similar misunderstanding of the Buddha's teaching. In reply to their assumptions that he was an annihilationist, the Buddha admitted, tongue in cheek, that in a way he could indeed be considered to be teaching annihilation, as he taught the annihilation of unwholesome mental states, or else the annihilation of lust, anger and delusion (*Vin. I, 235 = A. IV, 182; Vin. III, 2 = A. IV, 174*).

Not only recluses and Brahmins, but at times even Buddhist monks could have misunderstandings in this respect. According to a discourse in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the monk Yamaka had proclaimed that an arahant will be annihilated at death (*S. III, 109*). This amounts to adopting one of the four modes of the tetralemma about the future destiny of an awakened being, a *tathagata*, according to which *tathagata* either exists after death, or does not exist, or both, or neither. The Buddha consistently refused to take up any of these positions (e.g. M. I, 484). The basic problem involved in such proposals is the same as the one illustrated in the *Pañcattiya Sutta* with the imagery of a dog that keeps running in circles around a pillar to which it is bound, namely the assumed existence of self about which predications can be made. The monk Yamaka's mistaken assertion was taken up by Sāriputta for closer examination, with the result that Yamaka had to admit that it was impossible to find a *tathāgata* in truth and fact even here and now, hence what to say of any future existence or non-existence of a *tathāgata* after death (*S. III, 112*, see also TATHĀGATA).

What happens at the death of an awakened one is put rather succinctly by the novice Adhimutta, who was about to be killed by a gang of brigands.

Unruffled by any fear of death, he told the gang leader that from his perspective there was no cause to lament at the prospect of being killed, as merely *sañkhāras* will come to be non-existent, *sañkharā*

vibhavissanti, tattha kā paridevanā (*Thag. 715*). Hence, far from being a frightening teaching that leads to the annihilation of a self, the Buddhist path to liberation is a path that leads to the annihilation of any fear, even to the annihilation of the fear of being annihilated at death.

Anālayo

Reference

- 1 Cf. e.g. A.V, 10: *bhavanirodho nibbānam*; or the explanation of the *anupādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu* at It. 38 as *yamhi nirijjhanti bhavāni sabbaso*.

VIBHAVATAÑHĀ, "craving for non-existence" or "craving for non-becoming", is the third of the three types of craving listed in the standard expositions of the second noble truth (e.g. M. III, 250, see also TAÑHĀ). Such craving for non-existence would cover suicidal intentions, in the sense of those types of craving that motivate someone to forcefully put an end to life (see also SUICIDE). Yet, for *vibhava-taṇhā* to be explicitly mentioned in the succinct presentation of the arising of *dukkha* in the formulation of the second noble truth, alongside such basic motivating forces as sensual craving and craving for existence, *kāma-taṇhā* and *bhava-taṇhā*, one would expect *vibhava-taṇhā* to have broader implications than merely the wish to commit suicide.

Here it is of interest that the *Brahmajāla Sutta* lists altogether seven grounds, *vattu*, that lead to the arising of annihilationist views (*D. I, 34*). These seven are different modes of identifying a type of self and its cessation. The first of these seven modes identifies the self with the material body, assuming that with the death of the body the self will become annihilated. This mode of thinking would correspond to the type of reasoning that motivates suicide, which assumes that, by cutting short life and forcefully bringing about the death of the material body, all problems will similarly come to an end. Whether this is based on an explicit belief in a self or only on an implicit self-notion, the rationale behind such a suicidal attempt is to find a solution through escape from the material body.

In its treatment of annihilationist views, the *Brahmajāla Sutta* also lists the possibility of identifying the self with a divine material body that

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