VIHESĀ, "injury", "vexation", or "frustration", is a term used in the dis-course with somewhat similar connotations to vi-himsā (see VI-HIM-SĀ), but with a broader range of reference. The similarity in meaning between the two terms can be seen in instances where vi-hesā replaces vi-himsā. Examples for this are when the standard set kāma, vyāpāda, vihīmsā, "sensuality, ill-will and harming" instead reads kāma, vyāpāda, vihesā. Such replacing of vihīmsā by vihesā can be found in a listing of six [mental] elements, dhātu (M. III, 62); in a listing of elements of release, nis-sarāpa dhātu (A. III, 245); and in a listing of different inclinations of the mind, cittaupāda (M. III, 50). In each of these cases, vihesā stands in place of vihīmsā. The close relationship between these two terms is also reflected in the circumstance that the antidote to vihesā is the development of compassion, karupa (D. III, 248), which would also be the way to overcome vi-himsā.

In addition to being at times a near synonym to vihīmsā - in the sense of standing for actual violence, cruelty or harming - vihesā can also connote various degrees of vexation and frustration, or even just disturbance, nuisance, or fatigue. This sense of the term can be seen, for example, in the complaint that the minor rules for monks are a nuisance, as they only lead to worry and vihesā (Vin. IV, 143). Or else a monk who remains silent when questioned about an offence in the midst of the Sāṅgha would in this way cause vihesā to other monks through his behaviour (Vin. IV, 36).

According to a verse in the Sutta Nipāta, monks who delight in quarrel can cause vihesā to others who have already progressed on the path of self-development (Sī. 276-277). This indicates that vihesā can even arise in those who are at a more developed stage of development. In fact, vihesā can even qualify the experience of an arahant. A case in point is reported in the Aṅgut-tara Nikāya, according to which on one occasion Sāriputta was publicly contradicted by another monk up to three times. When the Buddha finally intervened, he censured the other monks that had been present on this occasion for their lack of compassion, as they had not intervened when an elder was being "vexed", theram bhikkhum vihesiyamanāy (A. III, 194). Since Ānanda was present on this occasion, who became the Buddha's attendant only twenty years after the Buddha had started to teach (Thag. 1041-1043; see also ĀNANDA), the present incidence would have to be placed at a time when Sāri-putta had already become an arahant. Thus, according to this discourse, even an arahant can be "vexed" or perhaps better be "bothered".

In fact, the same can even be the case for a Buddha. According to the Ariya-ya-pariyesa Sutta, the recently awakened Buddha was dis-inclined to teach his discovery to others, as he anticipated that this would lead to fatigue and vihesā, so nam' assa kilamatho, sānam' asa vihesā (M. 1, 168). A verse that takes up the same theme even speaks of "perception of harm", vihīmsa-satā-dī, when referring to the reason why the Buddha wanted to remain silent (M. 1, 169). This disinclination and apprehension of vihesā should apparently be considered typical for Buddhas, as the previous Buddha Vipassi was similarly hesitant to teach, anti-êî-pating that this would lead to vihesā (D. II, 36).

The theme of the Buddha's vihesā recurs also in other contexts, such as when the Buddha indicates that it causes him vihesā if Ānanda keeps on asking after the fate of people who have passed away (D. II, 93). Again, just when the Buddha was about to pass away the same vihesā makes its appearance, when nanda tells the wanderer Subhadda to not insist on wanting to see the Bud-dha, ma Tathāgatam vihēñi (D. II, 149).

At first sight, these passages might seem difficult to reconcile with the total removal of any unwholesome
states or tendencies in the mind of one who has reached final liberation. Moreover, in the case of a Buddha an additional problem could seem to be the contrast between his anticipation or even experience of vihesā and the dictum that it is impossible for vihesā to overwhelm and remain in the mind of someone who has developed the liberation of the mind through compassion, aṭṭhānām etam anavakāsa, yaṃ karunāyā cetovimuttiya bhāvītāya bhāviliṅgāya ... atha ca paṇ' assa vihesā cittam pariyaṭṭhāya ṭhassati (D. III, 248).

There can be little doubt that the Buddha had indeed developed libera- tion of the mind through compassion (A. I, 183). In fact, according to the Upādi Sutta the very basis for the Buddha’s endowment with compassion was his total removal of any lust, anger or delusion on account of which he might experience vexation, vihesā assa (M. I, 370).

This suggests that there must be a form of vihesā that is unrelated to un-wholesome states of mind. In fact, the above dictum about vihesā and the libera- tion of the mind through compassion does not state that vihesā does not arise at all, but only that it is impossible for vihesā to overwhelm and remain in the mind, cittam pariyaṭṭhāya ṭhassati.

This, then, reveals an important perspective on the mind of an arahant or a Buddha. With full awakening all unwholesome states and tendencies have been fully removed. Yet, what remains is not just a blank. Wholesome emo-tions are still there, such as compassion etc., and some of their counterparts are also not totally left behind, such as the "bother" or "fatigue" that is represented by vihesā.

A parallel case could be seen in regard to food. An arahant or a Buddha would certainly be beyond greed for any particular food. Yet, this does not mean that they no longer experience the taste of food. As the Brah-māyī Sutta clarifies, when eating the Buddha would clearly experience the taste of the food, without, however, experiencing any greed for the taste, rasa-patiṣamvedi kho pana so bhavaṃ Gotamo āhāraṃ āhāreti, no ca rasariṣa-patiṣamvedi (M. II, 138). In a similar vein, the above passages on vihesā indicate that an ara-hant or a Buddha can also experience some form of tiredness or fatigue caused by irrelevant inquiries or by being faced with those who are simply incapable of understanding.

Notably, according to the account given in the Ariyaparīyesana Sutta the Buddha decided to teach after he had been in-vited to do so by Brahmī and had surveyed the world "out of compassion", kārunīhataṃ paticcā, (M. I, 169). Viewed from this perspective, then, the Ariyaparīyesana Sutta can be seen to accord with the above dictum about the impossibility of vihesā to overwhelm and remain in one who has developed the liberation of the mind through com-passion, as it was precisely compassion that outweighed the Buddha’s anti-ci-pa-tion of vihesā.

The Buddha’s vihesā comes up again in a discourse in the Udāna, which reports how the Buddha, who was in town begging alms, was approached by the non-Buddhist ascetic Bāhiya and asked to give a teaching right there on the spot. Bāhiya insisted up to three times to be taught right there and then, in spite of the clear indication given by the Buddha that it was not the proper time for teach-ings. After the Buddha had agreed to dispense instructions, Bāhiya im mediately put what he heard into practice and became an arahant. The narra-tion of the same discourse concludes with the Buddha remarking that Bāhiya had not caused him any vihesā on account of the Dhamma, na ca mam dhamma ni-puṭhakaraṇaṃ vihe-seti (Ud. 9). That is, the inappropriate circumstances of Bāhiya’s request and his insistence in spite of two refusals did not cause the Buddha vihesā, apparently because the request came from a sincere aspiration and the instructions given were immediately put into practice.

The same appears to be the case with the wanderer Subhadda just before the Buddha’s passing away, where the Buddha told Ānanda to let Subhadda ask his question as it was motivated by desire for knowledge and not in order to cause vihesā, attāhāpakkha va pucchi-sati no vihesāpakkha (D. II, 150). Here, again, the point is the sincerity of the inquiry, not the inappropriate cir-cum-stances of asking questions of someone who is about to pass away.

In regard to the Buddha’s hesitancy to teach the same perspective emerges, since the anticipation of vihesā was not related to any encumbrance related to teaching activities, but rather to the doubt whether beings so deeply entrenched in attachment will have the ability to understand what he had to convey, pare ca me na ajñeyyya, so mam’ assa kilamatho sūdham’ assa vi-hesā (M. I, 168). Hence vihesā in such context seems to stand only for a form of fatigue that can even arise in one who has reached full liberation.

See also VIHIṬSĀ.