

habits by himself and seeing their benefits that the Buddha decided to pass on to his disciples the benefits experienced by himself. "I, monks, do not eat a meal at night (*ratti-bhojana*). Not eating a meal at night, I, monks, am aware of good health, and of being without illness and of buoyancy and strength and living in comfort"², said the Buddha. But some of the monks argued back that they eat in the evening as well as in the morning and also during the day at the wrong time and experience the same benefits. "Why should we give up things of the present (*sandhiṭṭhikam*) and run after the things of the future (*kālikam*)", they reasoned and wanted to continue with their eating habits. Bhaddāli's reactions were similar at the Buddha's instruction to follow his custom of taking meals in only one sitting (*ekāsana-bhojana*).

But the monk Udāyi, who, in his own words, was one "who looks to the Lord with regard and respect and modesty and fear of blame"³, was full of praise to the Buddha for removing many unpleasant and unwholesome things from their lives and bringing into them many pleasant and wholesome things. He recalls how some of them, who went on alms rounds in the thick darkness of the night, fell into a pool of dirty water near the village or walked into a thorny hedge or blundered on to a sleeping cow. Sometimes they met with men who may or may not have been after some nefarious activity or, met with women who would solicit them with sinful activity. Udāyi reveals how he himself had one night to face a far graver experience. As he stood for alms, one night, at the door of a house, his presence was revealed in a flash of lightning to a woman of the house who was outside washing a bowl. Terrified at the sight, she screamed out that a demon was after her. The monk tried to identify himself as a monk seeking alms. But this time he had to bear with an outflow of imprecations from her tongue "...It were better for you, monk", She lashed, "to cut out your belly with a butcher's sharp knife than to walk for alms food for the sake of the belly in the dense darkness of the night"⁴. Naturally he was now happy being relieved of all those hazards of nightly alms rounds.

But the Buddha's reasoning on such matters is based on deeper considerations. Some people, he points out in the *Laṅkikopama Sutta*, critically look at some of his prohibitions as his being too much concerned over trifling things. But there are people for whom these so-called trifling things are, in reality,

strong, stout and tough bonds. Like a quail bound with a weak, rotting creeper, cannot break free from it, they also cannot free themselves from such bonds which they call trifling. The reference here undoubtedly is to the pleasures of the tongue which they find difficult to break away from (*ibid*, 1.449). In the *Kūṭāgiri Sutta* he points out that not all experiences, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, similarly lead to the increase of wholesome states or the waning of unwholesome states. In the same manner not all these experiences lead to the increase of unwholesome states or the waning of wholesome states. Therefore one has to be discriminative and encourage the experiences leading to positive results and discourage those leading to negative results. That is why, understanding and knowing them quite well, the Buddha instructs his disciples to restrain certain pleasant experiences which would lead to negative results.

C.Witanachchi.

References

1. Dheerasekera, Jotiya, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline*, M.D. Gunesena and Co. LTD., Colombo 1982, p.59.
2. Middle Length Sayings, *PTS*. II.146.
3. *ibid*.120
4. *ibid*.121

VIMĀNAVATTHU-PETHAVATTHU See PETAVATTHU-VIMĀNAVATTHU

VĪMAṂSĀ, "examination" or "investigation", is a quality that is characteristic of the early Buddhist approach to reality. A case in point is the *Bahudhātuka Sutta*, according to which the Buddha emphatically advised his disciples to become wise ones and "investigators", *paṇḍitā bhavissāma vīmaṃsakā 'ti, evaṃ hi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabbaṃ* (*M.* III, 61). Judging from the subsequent exposition given in this discourse, to become a wise one requires investigating the different elements that constitute the world of experience; the six sense-spheres; the dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) of experienced reality; as well as what is possible and what is impossible.

A particularly intriguing type of *vīmaṃsā* is described in the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta*, according to which

the Buddha requested his own disciples to thoroughly investigate and examine him in order to ascertain if his claim to being a fully awakened teacher was justified (M. I, 317; see also V*MAMSAKA SUTTA). The investigation undertaken in this discourse proceeds from observation of the Buddha's conduct to directly inquiring from the Buddha about the presence of unwholesome states in his mind.

How to undertake the type of *vīmaṁsā* that intends to ascertain the presence of unwholesome mental states beneath an externally peaceful appearance is described in the *Kakacūpama Sutta*. According to this discourse, the slave girl Kālī wanted to find out if her mistress Vedehikā was indeed as gentle and peaceful as everyone else believed. Kālī decided that she would "investigate" her mistress, *vīmaṁseyyaṃ* (M. I, 125), by getting up late on purpose. After she had repeatedly gotten up late, Vedehikā got so angry that she hit the slave girl Kālī on the head with a rolling pin, hurting her to the extent of drawing blood. In this way Kālī had successfully completed her investigation, concluding that her mistress Vedehikā's gentle and peaceful appearance was only superficial.

The depiction given in the *Vīmaṁsaka Sutta* and the *Kakacūpama Sutta* shows that a central component of *vīmaṁsā* is direct observation. Another component of *vīmaṁsā* is, however, also a more theoretical type of inquiry, such as when investigating through reasoning the propositions made by a particular doctrine (S. III, 7). The *Parivīmaṁsana Sutta* depicts a step-by-step form of investigation through reasoning (S. II, 81). This step-by-step form of investigation takes up each of the links of dependent arising, *paṭicca samuppāda*, and ascertains the conditional relationship between them. Though this appears to be predominantly a theoretical form of investigation, its import can be seen in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta*, according to which the same type of investigation was undertaken by the previous Buddha Vipassī. Having undertaken this investigation, Vipassī dwelt contemplating the rise and fall of the five aggregates and reached full awakening (D. II, 35). This indicates that though *vīmaṁsā* may start off on a more theoretical footing, it eventually has to issue in actual practice in order to lead to the final goal.

The preparatory role of a more theoretical type of reflection and consideration can also be seen in the case of the present Buddha, where *vīmaṁsā* was a central means for stirring him to go forth (Sn. 405).

The contents of this *vīmaṁsā* are detailed in the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, which records his reflections on the contrast between the ignoble quest after what is subject to old age and death and the noble quest for *Nibbāna* (M. I, 161).

The theme of investigating for the sake of progressing towards awakening comes to the fore also with the awakening factor of investigation-of-phenomena, *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga*. The definition of this awakening factor in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* speaks of undertaking *parivīmaṁsa* (M. III, 85), terminology that shows *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga* and *vīmaṁsa* to be so closely related to each other that they form near synonyms. Hence for the implications of 'investigation' in early Buddhism the awakening factor of *dhammavicaya* is of considerable import.

An element of theoretical inquiry and investigation inherent in this awakening factor can be seen from the circumstance that its development requires examining with wisdom 'that Dhamma', *taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicarati parivīmaṁsaṃ āpajjati* (M. III, 85; see also VICIKICCHĀ). The use of the singular form indicates that the investigation here is concerned with *Dhamma* in the sense of the "teaching" proclaimed by the Buddha.

The relevance of theoretical inquiry to *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga* is also the theme of a passage in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, according to which this particular awakening factor should be developed based on having heard, remembered and reflected on the *Dhamma*, *dhammaṃ sutvā ... taṃ dhammaṃ anussarati anuvitakketi* (S. V, 67). To provide this all-important input for investigation is in fact a central purpose of the discourses delivered by the Buddha.

That investigation should, however, not be confined to theoretical examination can then be seen in another and complementary definition of *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga*, which speaks of wise attention directed to wholesome and unwholesome *dhammas*, blameable and blameless *dhammas*, inferior and superior *dhammas*, dark and bright *dhammas* (S. V, 104). Here direct observation of phenomena in general is the central import of the description given. The same field of investigation for *vīmaṁsā* appears to be intended in a verse in the *Sutta Nipāta*, according to which one who investigates even and uneven is reckoned a sage, *vīmaṁsamāno visamaṃ samañca*,

taṃ vāpi dhīrā muniṃ vedayanti (Sn. 215). Another discourse in the *Samyutta Nikāya* describes how the development of *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga* involves investigating *dhammas* internally as well as externally, *ajjhataṃ dhammesu ... bahiddhā dhammesu* (S. V, 111). Here, too, "phenomena" in general are being investigated.

The interrelation between these two aspects of investigation - theoretical inquiry and direct meditative examination - also underlies a set of three types of wisdom described in the *Saṅgīti Sutta*. These comprise the type of wisdom that arises from reflecting, *cintāmayā paññā*, from hearing or learning, *sutamayā paññā*, and from practicing, *bhāvanāmayā paññā* (D. III, 219). Hence to cover the whole range of wisdom one needs to proceed from an investigation of a more theoretical type to a practical investigation during actual contemplation.

That mere theoretical investigation on its own will not suffice for developing liberating wisdom can be seen from the exposition given in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, according to which theoretical investigation can become a basis for mistaken views, described as being "hammered out by reason" and as "following up one's own line of inquiry", *takkapariyāhataṃ vīmaṃsānucaritaṃ sayam paṭibhānaṃ* (D. I, 16). Such one-sided investigation can result in confusion instead of wisdom.

In fact, according to the *Vibhaṅga* commentary *dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga* stands in particular for insight knowledge, *vipassanañāṇa* (*VibhA.* 312). The *Peṭakopadesa* then explains that to understand in accordance with reality when being concentrated is the task of the awakening factor of investigation-of-phenomena, *yaṃ samāhito yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo* (*Peṭ.* 187). The definition given in the *Peṭakopadesa* draws attention to another aspect that is of considerable relevance for investigation, namely the presence of concentration (see also SAMĀDHI). A mind that is not concentrated will not be fit for properly executing the task of investigation.

The relationship of investigation to concentration is also a theme that underlies the fourth "road to spiritual power", *iddhipāda*. This is the *vīmaṃsāsamādhīpadhānasa jkhārasamānāgata iddhipāda*, the "road to spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional

effort". To implement this *iddhipāda* requires a type of *vīmaṃsā* that is well balanced, being neither in excess nor in deficiency (S. V, 264), in the sense of being neither lax nor restless, neither overcome by sloth-and-torpor nor excited by the attraction of sensual pleasures (S. V, 280). Based on such balanced investigation, concentration arises, *vīmaṃsaṃ nissāya labhati samādhīṃ labhati cittassa ekaggataṃ, ayaṃ vuccati vīmaṃsāsamādhī* (S. V, 269). Developed in this way, this *iddhipāda* can become the means to supernormal powers as well as to the destruction of the influxes.

The last of these benefits, namely the destruction of the influxes, is the central purpose of investigation in early Buddhism, which leads from a theoretical type of inquiry to an examination of all aspects of experience during meditative contemplation, and culminates in liberation.

"One who vigilant, mindful and clearly comprehending, Concentrated, joyful and with clarity, In due time properly investigates the Dhamma With unified mind, will destroy the darkness [of delusion]".

*Yo jāgaro ca satimā sampajāno,
samāhito mudito vippasanno ca,
kālena so sammā dhammaṃ parivīmaṃsamāno,
ekodibhūto vihane tamaṃ so* (It. 42).

Anālayo

VĪMAṂSAKA SUTTA, the "discourse on the inquirer", is the forty-seventh discourse in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (M. I, 317-320). A parallel to this discourse can be found in the *Madhyama Āgama* (T. I, 731a-732a),¹ which corresponds closely to the Pāli version.

The theme of the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* and its Chinese parallel is an open invitation by the Buddha to a prospective disciple to investigate in a detailed manner his teacher. The first step in this investigation is to find out through observation if the mental states of the Buddha are really of an entirely pure nature. Other topics for investigation are if the Buddha has succumbed to the dangers inherent in becoming a famous teacher; if his outward behaviour is an expression of true aloofness from defilements or only a façade; and whether he shows any partiality towards some disciples. Once observation in regard to these various matters has been conducted successfully, the

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BUDDHISM

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.

VOLUME VIII

FASCICLE 3 : Vācā – Z hong a-han



2009