habits by himself and seeing their benefits that the Buddha decided to pass on to his disciples the benefits experienced by himself. "1. monks, do not eat a meal at night (ratti-bhojana), Not eating a meal at night, 1. 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 (sandhīpiṇīkaṇṭha) and run after the things of the future (kālikam)", they reasoned and wanted to continue with their eating habits. Bhaddālī'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 Udāyī, 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 after some nefarious activity or, met with women who would solicit them with sinful activity. Udāyī 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 imprecatory 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 Latakisapana 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 Kāśyapa 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.

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References

2. Middle Length Sayings, PTS. II. 146.
3. ibid. 120
4. ibid. 121

VIMĀNAVATTHU-PETHAVATTHU See PETAVATTHU-VIMĀNAVATTHU

VIMĀNSĀ, "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", pañcittā bhavissāma vimānāsā "ti, evam hi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabbā ti, (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 (pañcica samappāda) of experienced reality; as well as what is possible and what is impossible.

A particularly intriguing type of vimānsā is described in the Vimānásaka 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 VIMAMSAKA 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 vīmāṇṣā 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 Kāli wanted to find out if her mistress Vedeihikā was indeed as gentle and peaceful as everyone else believed. Kāli decided that she would “investigate” her mistress, vīmāṇṣayaṁ (M. I, 125), by getting up late on purpose. After she had repeatedly gotten up late, Vedeihikā got so angry that she hit the slave girl Kāli on the head with a rolling pin, hurting her to the extent of drawing blood. In this way Kāli had successfully completed her investigation, concluding that her mistress Vedeihikā’s gentle and peaceful appearance was only superficial.

The depiction given in the Vīmāṇṣaka Sutta and the Kakacūpama Sutta shows that a central component of vīmāṇṣā is direct observation. Another component of vīmāṇṣā, 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 Parivīmāṇṣaka 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, paticca 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 Mahāpadīna 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 vīmāṇṣā 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 vīmāṇṣā was a central means for stirring him to go forth (Sn. 405).

The contents of this vīmāṇṣā 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-phenomena, dhannavaivipassino dhammacetasattho. The definition of this awakening factor in the Anāpānasati Sutta speaks of undertaking parivīmāṇṣa (M. III, 85), terminology that shows dhannavaivipassino dhammacetasattho and vīmāṇṣā 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 dhannavaivipassino 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’, taṁ dhammam pāṭihāya pavacayati pavacayati parivīmāṇāṁ 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 dhannavaivipassino dhammacetasattho is also the theme of a passage in the Saṁyutta Nikāya, according to which this particular awakening factor should be developed based on having heard, remembered and reflected on the Dhamma, dhannam saṁcetvitacitāṁ ... taṁ dhannam anussaratā 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 dhannavaivipassino dhammacetasattho, which speaks of wise attention directed to wholesome and unwholesome dhannas, blameable and blameless dhannas, inferior and superior dhannas, dark and bright dhannas (S. V, 104). Here direct observation of phenomena in general is the central import of the description given. The same field of investigation for vīmāṇṣā appears to be intended in a verse in the Sutta Nipāta, according to which one who investigates even and uneven is reckoned a sage, vīmāṇṣasamāno visamaṁ samaṁca.
VIMAŚĀKA SUTTA

The interrelation between these two aspects of investigation - theoretical inquiry and direct meditative examination - also underlies a third type of wisdom described in the Saṅghī Sutta. These comprise the type of wisdom that arises from reflecting, cintiṁayā 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 Brahmatātsa 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", takkapariyāhato vimaṁsāmaratāy āsāya påññā (D. I, 16). Such one-sided investigation can result in confusion instead of wisdom.

In fact, according to the Vibhaṅga commentary dharmavacayasyambhojaṅga stands in particular for insight knowledge, vipassanātāya (Vibh. 312). The Petaṅkopaśīsa then explains that to understand in accordance with reality when being concentrated is the task of the awakening factor of investigation-of-phenomena, yaṁ samāhito yathābhātikampajānīti, ayāṁ dhammavacayasyambhojaṅga (P. 187). The definition given in the Petaṅkopaśīsa 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 vimaṁsāsam iddhipadāhānaṁ ykhūrasamamādūga iddhipāda, the "road to spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional effort". To implement this iddhipāda requires a type of vimaṁsā 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 exited by the attraction of sensual pleasures (S. V, 280). Based on such balanced investigation, concentration arises, vimaṁsāṁ nissāya labhati samādhiṁ labhati cittassā ekaggataṁ, ayam vuccati vimaṁsāsamādūga (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 jāguro ca satimā sampajāno,

samāhito nūdito vipassanam ca,
kālena so samādhiṁ dharmam parivimāṁsamāno,

ekodibhiṁ viṁane tamaṁ so (ṁ. 42).

Anālayo

VIMAŚĀKA SUTTA, the "discourse on the inquirer", is the forty-seventh discourse in the Mahānāma 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 Vimaṁsāka 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 ex-pression of true aloofness from defilements or only a façade; and whether he shows any partiu-ality towards some disciples. Once observation in regard to these various manners has been conducted successfully, the