

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Jun 08, 2010 2:08 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
Indeed. Sammāsamādhī.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Jun 09, 2010 1:14 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
According to the post-canonical abhidhammika analysis, it is designated as cittaja rūpa: "mind produced form."

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Jun 09, 2010 11:54 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
It is saññā.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jun 10, 2010 9:22 pm  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
See above.

[edit: typo]

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 11, 2010 7:23 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
Indeed they are. I forgot to mention the following from SN 47.6 (S v 146), which differentiates between the kāmaguṇa-s and the four satipaṭṭhāna-s. It's worth remembering in this regard that the contemplation of the body satipaṭṭhāna includes objects of contemplation such as mindfulness of breathing, the foul parts of the body, and the stages of corpse decomposition. Clearly the body, the tactile sensations associated with the breath, the 32 parts of the body, and the stages of corpse decomposition are not considered to be "strings of sensuality." SN 47.6 (S v 146):

"[Y]ou should not wander into what is not your proper range and is the territory of others. In one who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others, Mara gains an opening, Mara gains a foothold. And what, for a monk, is not his proper range and is the territory of others? The five strands of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable by the eye — agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable by the ear... Aromas cognizable by the nose... Flavors cognizable by the tongue... Tactile sensations cognizable by the body — agreeable,

pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others.

"Wander, monks, in what is your proper range, your own ancestral territory. In one who wanders in what is his proper range, his own ancestral territory, Mara gains no opening, Mara gains no foothold. And what, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory? The four frames of reference. Which four? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 15, 2010 5:08 am

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

SN 12.70 (S ii 121) Susima Sutta tells of arahant-s who were liberated through discernment but hadn't realized any of the other five higher gnoses (abhiñña-s) or the formless attainments.

MN 70 (M i 477) Kīṭāgiri Sutta and AN 9.44 (A iv 452) Paññāvimutta Sutta tell us that to be liberated through discernment one does so via at least the first jhāna. Thus the arahant-s in SN 12.70 were able to attain at least the first jhāna (in the suttantika sense of jhāna).

Liberated both ways (ubhatobhāgavimutta) is usually understood to have both the jhāna-s and formless attainments, as well as the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodha). There is an abhidhamma distinction between those liberated both ways who don't attain cessation of apperception and feeling and those who do. I can't remember if this is specifically addressed in the sutta-s.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 15, 2010 9:17 pm

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

According to the discourses it is quite clear. The difficulty arises when one reads abhidhammika terms and categories into the discourses. Ven. Brahmāli Jhāna and Lokuttarajjhāna: Samādhi and jhāna are terms used in the Suttanta-bhājanīya and thus they refer to Sutta usage. In particular, as they are closely related to the above mentioned sets that constitute the path to Enlightenment, they are factors of that same path. Lokuttarajjhāna, on the other hand, belongs to the Abhidhamma-bhājanīya and is a term for the constellation of mental factors present at the moments of Enlightenment. Being a term peculiar to the Abhidhamma-bhājanīya, it only relates to the Abhidhamma and can therefore not be used to explain samādhi or jhāna as it appears in the Suttas. If this is correct, it follows that the Commentaries make a dangerous blunder when they explain jhāna and samādhi with Abhidhamma terminology that was never capable of being used in this way.

Ven. Ṭhānissaro, Wings to Awakening:

[W]hat jhāna means in the commentaries is something quite different from what it means in the Canon. Because of this difference we can say that the commentaries are right in viewing their type of

jhāna as unnecessary for Awakening, but Awakening cannot occur without the attainment of jhāna in the canonical sense.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 15, 2010 10:21 pm

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

The "long preparations" necessary in order to attain the fourth jhāna and realize triple knowledge require the previous development of jhāna. This is implied in the discourses which describe the path — being integral components of the gradual training.

The possibility of rare cases where one realizes the triple knowledge without much prior meditation practice is more of a theoretical hypothesis than something which accords with the life-experience of any long term practitioner that I know. I'm not saying that it would be impossible, but that it would be a very rare occurrence.

Even if one employs abhidhammika terminology, the concomitant arising of all the mental factors associated with lokuttarajjhāna (as listed in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi for example), would require a great deal of proficiency in the development of sīla, samādhi (jhāna in the suttantika sense), and paññā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 16, 2010 4:25 am

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

Of course.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 16, 2010 5:33 pm

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

Hi Alex,

Another sutta tells us that Ven. Bāhiya had the capacity for sharp understanding (khippābhiññā). And as a dedicated ascetic, it is quite probable that Bāhiya was already at a high level of development with regard to ethical conduct (sīla) and concentration (samādhi). So I would suggest that Ven. Bāhiya was already quite highly developed when he earnestly set out to find the Buddha after being rebuked by the deva.

Ven. Bāhiya was no "average Joe."

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 16, 2010 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

Very true RYB.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 16, 2010 9:47 pm

Title: Re: Touching with the body vs knowing through wisdom

Content:

As I said, it is likely that he had a high level of development with regard to concentration (samādhi). What he lacked was right view (sammādiṭṭhi). Therefore his way of practice (paṭipadā) wasn't conducive as a path to arahantship (arahattamagga), and his samādhi wasn't sammāsamādhi. The instruction he received from the Buddha enabled him to discern right view, and with that the other seven components of the noble eightfold path quickly aligned.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 18, 2010 5:41 pm

Title: Re: how to stop controlling breath

Content:

Developing kindness and compassion for yourself – for the uncomfortable feeling that is present – is also very helpful. Even if you can only develop a little bit of kindness or compassion at first. With practice this can lead to more expansive kindness and compassion. You can recognize that there are many others who experience all sorts of similar feelings – and in some cases, far more painful feelings. Then you can extend kindness and compassion to them as well.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 20, 2010 12:39 pm

Title: Re: The jhana debate

Content:

Please see MN 119: Kāyagatāsati Sutta section on jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 20, 2010 12:50 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

It isn't a problem at all. IMO the few occurrences which list five factors are not as old as the basic jhāna formula. At any rate, the list of five factors doesn't add or take away anything from the formula for the first jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 20, 2010 8:05 pm

Title: Re: The jhana debate

Content:

Hi Freawaru,

In the Pāḷi suttas the parts of the body are forms derived from the four great existents (mahābhūtā).

SN 22.56 (S iii 59) Upādānaparivatta Sutta:

And what is form? The four great existents and the form derived from them: this is called form. From the origination of nutriment comes the origination of form. From the cessation of nutriment comes the cessation of form. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of form, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

SN 22.79 (S iii 86): Khajjanīya Sutta:

And why do you call it 'form'? Because it is afflicted, thus it is called 'form.' Afflicted with what? With cold & heat & hunger & thirst, with the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, & reptiles. Because it is afflicted, it is called form.

For an analysis of the six elements as they pertain to a living sentient being, see MN 140:

Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 20, 2010 11:53 pm

Title: Re: On "Visuddhimagga Jhanas"

Content:

Hi Mike & Oleksandr,

Ajahn Brahm correlates his experience of what he designates as "jhāna" with a very selective and narrow reading of a few suttas. Such an interpretation doesn't accurately represent what the suttas actually have to say on the matter.

Similarly, Ven. Pa Auk Sayadaw teaches what he designates as "jhāna" based on a very narrow reading of the Visuddhimagga.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 1:10 am

Title: Re: On "Visuddhimagga Jhanas"

Content:

By all means, anyone interested in the teachings of any particular teacher should make a connection with that teacher and follow their instructions accordingly.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 9:30 am

Title: Re: The jhana debate

Content:

Hi Freawaru,

Actually it is precisely the other way around: earth (solidity), water (cohesion), fire (temperature), and air (motility) are considered primary. All other forms, both internal and external, are derived from these four great existents ((mahābhūtā).

Could you please clarify what you mean by a "biological body" (preferably with reference to the discourses) which is something different from: head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's hard, solid, and sustained; bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's liquid, watery, & sustained; that by which [the body] is warmed, aged, & consumed with fever; and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed & tasted gets properly digested; or anything else internal, within oneself, that's fire, fiery, & sustained; up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the stomach, winds in the intestines, winds that course through the body, in-and-out breathing, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's wind, windy, & sustained; the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the [passage] whereby what is eaten, drunk, consumed, & tasted gets swallowed, and where it collects, and whereby it is excreted from below, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's space, spatial, & sustained; cognizing 'pleasure,' cognizing 'pain,' cognizing 'neither pleasure nor pain.'

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 9:39 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

Good to hear from you again. I hope you had a fruitful retreat.

AN 6.63 (A iii 410):

Api ca kho, bhikkhave, nete kāmā, kāmaguṇā nāmete ariyassa vinaye vuccanti –  
Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo,  
Nete kāmā yāni citrāni loke.

Here:

kāmā are not the same as kāmaguṇā  
kāma is not the same as yāni citrāni loke  
kāma is equated with saṅkapparāgo

[edit: typo]

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 11:33 am  
Title: Re: The jhana debate  
Content:  
Some are full of hot air....

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 6:04 pm  
Title: Re: The jhana debate  
Content:  
MN 1 shows that there's no need to ever read any realist ontology or metaphysics of any sort into the discourses.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Jun 21, 2010 8:42 pm  
Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?  
Content:

In Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation, Ven. Ñāṇananda explains the development of vipassanā without any reliance on the awkward two truths theory:  
At the preliminary stage, one avoids the usual mode of attention in the world such as 'woman', 'woman', 'man', 'man' in the case of a visual object, thus dispensing with those details which lead to various unskillful states of mind and attends to those visual objects in such a way as not to encourage those unskillful mental states. So one is content with attending to those visual or auditory objects as 'form' or 'sound'.

However as one proceeds in Insight Meditation, one comes to reflect that in this mode of attention, there is present a certain illusion - a wrong notion one has been cherishing throughout 'saṃsāra'. That is, the concept of two ends and a middle. When one notes a visual object as 'a form' and an auditory object as 'a sound', there is a kind of bifurcation between the eye and form, the ear and the sound. So thereby one is perpetuating the illusion, the wrong notion, of two ends. Whenever there are the two ends, there is also the middle. In short, this way of mental noting leaves room for a subject-object relationship. There is the meditator on one side, whoever it may be, and there is the

object that comes to his mind; and he attends to it as an object, even though he may not go into its details. Now the meditator has to break through this barrier as well. He has to break this bondage. Why?

In the case of 'saññā' or perception, there are the six kinds of percepts - rūpa saññā, sadda saññā, gandha saññā, rasa saññā, phoṭṭhabba saññā, dhamma saññā (i.e., the percepts of form, sound, smell, taste, touch and idea). These are the six objects of the senses. The Buddha has compared the aggregate of perception to a mirage. Now if perception is mirage, what is 'rūpa saññā' or a visual percept? That also must be a mirage. What about 'sadda saññā'? What about the auditory percept or what strikes the ear? That too must be a mirage. Though it is not something that one sees with the eye, it has the nature of a mirage.

To take as real what is of a mirage-nature, is a delusion. It is something that leads to a delusion. It is an illusion that leads to a delusion. In order to understand deeply this mirage-nature in sensory perception, there is a need for a more refined way of mental attending. So the meditator, instead of attending to these objects as 'form', 'form' or 'sound', 'sound', moves a step further and notes them as 'seeing' or 'hearing'. Now he attends to these sense-percepts even more briefly, not allowing the mind to go far - as 'seeing- seeing ', 'hearing- hearing', 'feeling-feeling', 'thinking-thinking'.

In short, the attempt here, is to escape the net of 'saññā' or perception and to limit oneself to the bare awareness. To stop short just at the bare awareness. This is an attempt to escape the net of language, the net of logic and also to be free from the duality of two ends which involves a middle. Everywhere one is confronted with a subject-object relationship. There is one who grasps and something to be grasped. There is a seer and an object seen. But this way of attending leaves room for delusion.

Now, if perception is a mirage, in order to get at this mirage nature, one has to be content with attending simply as 'seeing, seeing'. One way or the other it is just a seeing or just a hearing. Thereby he stops short at the bare awareness. He stops short at the bare seeing, bare hearing, bare feeling and bare thinking. He does not grant it an object status. He does not cognize it as an object existing in the world. He does not give it a name. The purpose of this method of mental noting or attending, is the eradication of the conceit 'AM', which the meditator has to accomplish so as to attain release. The conceit 'AM' is 'asmi-māna'.

And later in the same teaching:

All the delusion in the world is traceable to the illusion that is in perception - 'saññā'. It is because of 'saññā' or perception that knots and grips occur, so much so that one who is free from 'saññā' is free from knots and grips also. That is why it is said in the Māgandiya Sutta of the Sutta Nipata.

'Saññāvirattassa na santi ganthā  
Paññāvimuttassa na santi mohā'

'To one detached from perception there are no knots and to one released through wisdom there are no delusions.'

So the purpose of this training in insight is that release from perception. Until full detachment with regard to perception sets in, knotting will go on. A sort of disgust or disenchantment has to occur for detachment to set in. With the gradual refinement of the mode of mental noting, one is able to eliminate these knots brought about by perception.

It seems possible that some of the abhidhammika proponents of the two truth theory may forget to take into account that the entire forward-order sequence of DO is a process of deluded cognition.



The whole game needs to be shut down. In practice, analyzing deluded cognition in terms of real/unreal just prolongs the game.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 22, 2010 2:23 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Chris & all,

Ven. Ñāṇananda has something to say about the verse you've cited, and the commentarial interpretation of the statement from the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta. In his Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought, pp. 44-45:

[T]he word 'paramattha' in its earlier and non-technical usage, actually meant the Highest Goal as the object of realization, and any words tending towards that goal were called 'paramatthasaṃhita' (connected with the Highest Goal), irrespective of their precision or technicality. However, the Buddha, for his part, was content to treat all of them as 'sammuti'. For him, they were 'merely worldly conventions in common use, which he made use of, without clinging to them' (DN I 202, Poṭṭhapāda Sutta).

One wonders whether this simple though profound attitude of the Buddha towards concepts, has been properly handed down in tradition, when for instance one comes across the following verse quoted approvingly by Buddhaghosa (source unknown) in his commentary to the Anaṅgaṇa Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya:

Duṇe saccāni akkhāsi, sambuddho vadatam varo;  
sammutim paramatthañca, tatiyaṃ nūpalabbhati.  
Saṅketavacanaṃ saccaṃ, lokasammutikāraṇā;  
paramatthavacanaṃ saccaṃ, dhammānaṃ bhūtakāraṇā.  
Tasmā vohārakusalassa, lokanāthassa satthuno;  
sammutim voharantassa, musāvādo na jāyati.

[Translation of verse similar to what Chris has supplied.]

If one can appreciate the significance of the term 'nippapañca,' one might realize that the Buddha could magnanimously afford to dispense with such naïve defenses as the above, against any charges of his having violated the fourth precept.

And also, in his The Mind Stilled, Nibbāna Sermon 13:

[Nibbāna] is not a paramattha in the sense of an absolute. It is a paramattha only in the sense that it is the highest good, parama attha. This is the sense in which the word was used in the discourses, though it has different connotations now. As exemplified by such quotations as āradhaviṛiyo paramatthapattiyā, "with steadfast energy for the attainment of the highest good," the suttas speak of Nibbāna as the highest good to be attained.

In later Buddhist thought, however, the word paramattha came to acquire absolutist connotations,

due to which some important discourses of the Buddha on the question of worldly appellations, worldly expressions and worldly designations fell into disuse. This led to an attitude of dwelling in the scaffolding, improvised just for the purpose of constructing a building....

It is not proper to relegate some sermons as discursive or conventional in style. Always it is a case of using concepts in worldly parlance. In the laboratory one uses a particular set of symbols, but on returning home he uses another. In the same way, it is not possible to earmark a particular bundle of concepts as absolute and unchangeable. As stated in the Poṭṭhapādasutta, already discussed, all these concepts are worldly appellations, worldly expressions, worldly usages, worldly designations, which the Tathāgata makes use of without tenacious grasping. However philosophical or technical the terminology may be, the arahants make use of it without grasping it tenaciously. What is of importance is the function it fulfills. We should make use of the conceptual scaffolding only for the purpose of putting up the building. As the building comes up, the scaffolding has to leave. It has to be dismantled. If one simply clings onto the scaffolding, the building would never come up.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 22, 2010 2:35 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Mike,

As you can probably infer from my previous post in reply to Chris, Ven. Ñāṇananda doesn't seem to be a big fan of the two truth theory. A few more quotations are relevant. From his *The Magic of the Mind*, pp. 62-63:

According to the phenomenalist approach of the Buddha, not only the different types of feelings and mental states but the entire range of doctrinal categories summed up under the last section [of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta] i.e. 'contemplation of mind-objects,' has nothing in it that is worth 'clinging to.' All of them can be subsumed under the term 'concept' and that is to recognize their conditioned nature – the nature of arising and ceasing.

"Friends, when there is the eye and there are forms and there is eye-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact (phassapaññatti). When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling (vedanāpaññatti). When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception (saññāpaññatti). When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a designation of thought (vitakkapaññatti). When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception (papañcasaññāsaṅkhāsamudācaraṇapaññatti).

"When there is the ear... When there is the nose... When there is the tongue... When there is the body...

"When there is the mind and there are mental phenomena and there is mental-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact. When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling. When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception. When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a designation of thought. When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception." – M I 112 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta

It would indeed appear strange to us that in Buddhist psychology even contact and feeling – with which we are so intimate – are treated as ‘designations’ (paññatti). We might feel that this is an intrusion of the ‘designation’ into the jealously guarded recesses of the psyche. Yet this is not the case, for, in the very act of apperception contacts and feelings are reckoned, evaluated, defined, and designated on the basis of one’s latencies (i.e. the aggregates). Thus there is hardly any justification for regarding them as ‘the given’, though we are accustomed to take them for granted. In other words, what we are wont to treat as ‘the given,’ turns out to be ‘synthetic’ and ‘composite’ (saṅkhata).

And from his *Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought*, p. 87:

The primary significance of the formula of Dependent Arising lies here. Lists of phenomena, both mental and material, are linked together with the term "paccayā" or any of its equivalents, and the fact of their conditionality and non-substantiality is emphasized with the help of analysis and synthesis. Apart from serving the immediate purpose of their specific application, these formulas help us to attune our minds in order to gain paññā. Neither the words in these formulas, nor the formulas as such, are to be regarded as ultimate categories. We have to look not so much at them as through them. We must not miss the wood for the trees by dogmatically clinging to the words in the formulas as being ultimate categories. As concepts, they are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation....

*Concept and Reality*, pp. 55 - 56:

Concepts – be they material or spiritual, worldly or transcendental – are not worthy of being grasped dogmatically. They are not to be treated as ultimate categories and are to be discarded in the course of the spiritual endeavour.... That the emancipated sage (muni) no longer clings even to such concepts as "nibbāna" or "detachment" (virāga) is clearly indicated in the following verse of the Sutta Nipāta:

"For the Brahmin (the Muni) who has transcended all bounds, there is nothing that is grasped by knowing or by seeing. He is neither attached to attachment nor is he attached to detachment. In this world, he has grasped nothing as the highest." [Sn 795]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 22, 2010 10:56 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

According to Ven. Ñāṇananda, dhamma-s "are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation." And in regard to the liberated mind, according to the sutta-s it is measureless (appamāṇa) and therefore can't be measured (pamāṇa) in terms of the aggregates or the forward-order sequence of DO.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 23, 2010 11:02 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

There are numerous problems with the Visuddhimagga and Aṭṭhakathā commentarial exegesis regarding jhāna. The most obvious of which are that the notions of paññatti vs. paramattha and the subsequent notion of a counterpart sign (paṭibhāganimitta), as well as the notion that the counterpart sign is merely paññatti, are all completely absent from the thought-world of the Pāḷi Nikāya-s.

Also, the commentarial exegesis doesn't seem to be very clear on just what the actual referent is for some of the paṭibhāganimitta-s. For example, in regard to ānāpānasati the Visuddhimagga 3.113 states:

"When a man extends the sign of in-breaths and out-breaths, only a quantity of wind is extended, and it has a definite location, [the nose-tip]. So it need not be extended because of the disadvantage and because of the definiteness of the location."

And Visuddhimagga 3.119:

"Mindfulness of breathing must be apprehended by touch."

This seems to indicate that the parikammanimitta, uggahanimitta as well as the paṭibhāganimitta could be "paramattha." But when we get to the descriptions of the paṭibhāganimitta for ānāpānasati we are told that:

"It appears to some like a star or a cluster of gems or a cluster of pearls, to others with a rough touch like that of silk-cotton seeds or a peg made of heartwood, to others like a long braid string or a wreath of flowers or a puff of smoke, to others like a stretched-out cobweb or a film of cloud or a lotus flower or a chariot wheel or the moon's disk or the sun's disk."

Here we have a laundry list of many possible paṭibhāganimitta-s, most of which are mental images, but at least two of which are still within the tactile domain of experience.

Fortunately, in the sutta-s, all of the concomitant dhamma-s pertaining to jhāna are definitely not "paññatti." Therefore one can develop both samatha and/or vipassanā as the means to enter jhāna, as well as develop vipassanā while remaining in any of the four jhāna-s. Thus the entire commentarial exegesis regarding jhāna amounts to just another instance of a foreign, intrusive, and unnecessary conceptual filter superimposed over the sutta-s, resulting in a rerouting of the path into various paths, and thereby distorting the integral harmony of the noble eightfold path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 23, 2010 2:17 pm

Title: Re: The jhana debate

Content:

Hi Freawaru,

Respectfully, it seems that you are unwilling to acknowledge that the Pāli sutta-s explicitly define the four elements: the earth element (pathavīdhātu), water element (āpodhātu), fire element (tejodhātu), and the wind element (vāyodhātū), in terms of the constituent parts of the "biological body" which is one and the same as the gross body (DN 9: "I posit a gross self, possessed of form, made up of the four great existents [earth, water, fire, and wind], feeding on physical food.")

Other passages from the relevant discourses dealing with the analysis of the four elements have already been provided. Yet, you continue to insist upon reading notions into the sutta-s which simply are not stated or implied by any of the discourses dealing with the elements.

Moreover, it seems that you are unwilling to comprehend the soteriological purpose of contemplating the elements in meditation practice. The purpose is to develop renunciation (nekkhamma), disenchantment (nibbidā), dispassion (virāga), eventually resulting in liberation (vimutti) from the continual round of rebirth and re-death which is saṃsāra. The contemplation of the elements as an application of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) has nothing to do with developing the iddhi-s per se.

And FTR, in the context of the Pāli sutta-s, the iddhi-s are considered mundane and superfluous. In DN 11: Kevaṭṭa Sutta the Buddha states:

Seeing this drawback to the miracle of psychic power, Kevatta, I feel horrified, humiliated, and disgusted with the miracle of psychic power....

Seeing this drawback to the miracle of telepathy, Kevatta, I feel horrified, humiliated, and disgusted with the miracle of telepathy.

If you are interested in learning in full the authentic systems of Tibetan yoga, I would recommend that you make a connection with a reputable tsaway lama, complete ngöndro and any other requisites, and save enough money or find a financial sponsor for three year retreat (if you haven't already done so). And that is just the beginning.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 23, 2010 3:03 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

There is little doubt that SN 48.40 is the product of rather late redaction of the sutta corpus. This can be inferred because there is no parallel in the extant Sarvāstivāda corpus, and the relevant sūtra cited in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, the \*Satyasiddhiśāstra, and the Yogācāra Śrāvakabhūmi gives an analysis of the feeling faculties in dhyāna which is closer to the standard jhāna/dhyāna formula.

Nevertheless, given that SN 48.36-48.39 define the feeling faculties the way they do, these vibhaṅga sutta-s are enough to differentiate the suttantika interpretation of SN 48.40 from how the feeling faculties in relation to jhāna are defined in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 24, 2010 5:33 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Your 2nd and 3rd points don't necessarily follow from the 1st point. If that happens (i.e. #2 & #3), then the meditator has strayed into wrong samādhi. Certainly, jhāna as sammāsamādhi includes samatha, vipassanā, and paññā. This is not only stated in the suttas, it is also explicitly stated in the Dhammasaṅgāṇi. For example, in MN 111, anupadadhammavipassanā is employed to develop paññā while remaining in jhāna:

There was the case where Sariputta — quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities — entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Whatever qualities there are in the first jhana — directed thought, evaluation, rapture, pleasure, singleness of mind, contact, feeling, perception, intention, consciousness, desire, decision, persistence, mindfulness, equanimity, & attention — he ferreted them out one after another. Known to him they arose, known to him they remained, known to him they subsided. He discerned, 'So this is how these qualities, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.'

Bhante G. has valiantly attempted to resuscitate and realign at least some aspects of the commentarial understanding of jhāna with what is presented in the suttas. And while I don't necessarily agree with his methodology (I think that by employing commentarial terminology such as paṭibhāganimitta, etc., he may be bending and distorting what the commentaries actually state), at any rate, in his paper *Should we come out of Jhāna to practice Vipassanā?*, he says:

Do we have to come out of Jhāna in order to practice Vipassanā? Is concentration the same as absorption? If Jhānic concentration is the same as being absorbed by our object of focus then yes, we must leave Jhāna to practice Vipassanā. But, when we become absorbed into our object of focus, what we are practicing is "wrong" Jhāna. When we practice "right" Jhāna we will be able to see things as they really are....

It is virtually impossible to find evidence in the Suttas that one should come out of Jhāna to practice Vipassanā. There are a number of passages repeated in many Suttas dealing with the four fine material Jhānas. Nowhere in any of these passages is it said that one should come out of Jhāna to gain the three kinds of knowledge—knowledge of seeing previous lives, knowledge of beings dying and taking rebirth according to their karmas, and knowledge of the destruction of defilements....

The belief that one must come out of Jhāna to gain supernormal knowledge (abhiññās) or to destroy defilements and attain enlightenment is based on an assumption that the concentrated mind becomes one with the object of meditation and is absorbed into that object. For this reason some people translate Jhāna or samādhi as absorption concentration. If the mind is absorbed into the object then the mind is paralyzed and incapable of doing anything.

This may be true when the Jhāna is gained without mindfulness. This is what happened to the teachers of the Bodhisatta Gotama. They were stuck in Jhāna but they thought that they had attained enlightenment. This cannot happen when you practice Jhāna with mindfulness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 24, 2010 6:43 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Most of the venerables quoted thus far mainly teach vipassanā meditation based on the modernist Burmese method, thus the differences regarding vipassanā as a stand alone meditation practice are not as pronounced as the differences that can arise regarding jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 25, 2010 1:19 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

The sutta is SN 22.94 (S iii 138) Puppaha Sutta. And the term translated as "it exists" is atthi, which doesn't have any realist connotations whatsoever. It could well be translated as "it is." It is very far from the ontological and realist implications of the commentarial "sabhāva."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 25, 2010 2:11 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

IMO it's more about contemplating the apparent similarities and differences found in the different historical strata of received tradition. This should always be approached with a sense of humility and respect. But I would suggest that at some point one has to begin to see through and let go of the layers of conceptual filtering and hone in on the actual soteriological message of the Pāḷi discourses. I think this is primarily what Ven. Ñāṇananda has been pointing to for the past 40 years.

Sammādiṭṭhi is important. Historical accruelement, not so much.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 25, 2010 3:43 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

And what criteria, Alex, do you base your acceptance of one of the three above mentioned models of the cognitive process on and reject the other two?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 5:48 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Alex,

It's quite simple. The criteria is explicitly stated in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta. The four great references (mahāpadesā) clearly explain that concerning issues regarding the clarification or authenticity of Dhammavinaya, the dhamma of the sutta-s and the rules of the vinaya are the sole authority. Any commentary or interpretation of dhamma needs to be verified by tracing it back to the sutta-s.

The Mahāvihāra claim that the dhamma referred to in the mahāpadesā includes the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, and that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka was spoken by the Buddha (excepting the Kathāvatthu), cannot be sustained because the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, as well as the abhidhamika exegeses now found in the Khuddakanikāya, are all post-schismatic sectarian compositions which couldn't have existed at the time of the Buddha's parinibbāna.

If the compositions of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, etc., were extant at that time, and were considered to have been spoken by the Buddha, then (1) all of the early Nikāya sects would have very similar abhidhamma compositions (just as they have very similar sutta compositions); and (2) all of the early Nikāya sects would have unquestionably considered their own abhidhamma collections to have been spoken by the Buddha. Neither of these are the case. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the abhidhamika exegeses now found in the Khuddakanikāya are all post-schismatic sectarian compositions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 6:37 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

For a beginner practicing in order to develop samatha, it's usually better to start off with just mindfully attending to the simple felt-sense of pleasantness/pleasure (sukha) without attending to the characteristic of momentary flux. This specifically refers to the characteristic of alteration while persisting (ṭhitassa aññathatta), which is an aspect of the impermanence of all fabrications (saṅkhāra-s). BTW, in its sutta usage this should not be confused with the commentarial theory of radical momentariness (khaṇavāda).



Samatha at that preliminary stage of development is not yet sammāsamādhi.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 9:34 am

Title: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

I would propose that we discuss this issue by referencing relevant citations from the commentaries, as you have done here. In addition, it would also be useful to include references and citations from contemporary authorities on the Abhidhamma and the Mahāvihāra commentarial literature. This would include both scholars and meditation teachers such as the Burmese teachers who rely strictly on Mahāvihāra abhidhammika tenets ("scholar" and "meditation teacher" are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories).

In *The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma*, (BPS, 1996), Dr. Y.

Karunadasa, an authoritative Sri Lankan Abhidhamma scholar, tells us that:

All the different modes of analysis and classification found in the Abhidhamma stem from a single philosophical principle, which gave direction and shape to the entire project of systematization. This principle is the notion that all the phenomena of empirical existence are made up of a number of elementary constituents, the ultimate realities behind the manifest phenomena. These elementary constituents, the building blocks of experience, are called dhammas. The dhamma theory is not merely one principle among others in the body of Abhidhamma philosophy but the base upon which the entire system rests.

It might be worth discussing to what degree the Mahāvihāra commentarial tenets are reliable and accurate references regarding the teaching of the Buddha (Buddhasāsana), particularly as it pertains to right view (sammādiṭṭhi), as right view is essential for right meditation (sammāsamādhi).

Specifically, it seems that there are three interrelated principles that are central to the Mahāvihāra commentarial view:

- 1.the dhamma theory (dhammavāda)
- 2.the theory of radical momentariness (khaṇavāda)
- 3.the theory of two truths (sammutisacca & paramatthasacca)

Again, I would suggest that referencing and citing contemporary abhidhammika authorities is one way of avoiding misrepresenting the commentarial tradition as it is presently understood and taught.

Anything that you or any other member may wish to add is welcome.

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 9:45 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi pt1,

I've taken the liberty of starting a new thread: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View. The issues now under discussion pertain directly to right view (sammādiṭṭhi). How this informs and qualifies right meditation (sammāsamādhī) is a related issue of course, but I think it's worth discussing the view first.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 10:36 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

In The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma (p. 20), Dr. Karunadasa states: What emerges from this Abhidhammic doctrine of dhammas is a critical realism, one which recognizes the distinctness of the world from the experiencing subject yet also distinguishes between those types of entities that truly exist independently of the cognitive act and those that owe their being to the act of cognition itself.

And on page 22 he tells us that:

[A] dhamma is a truly existent thing (sabhavasiddha)

And on page 14:

The description of dhammas as paramattha means ... objective existence.... [T]he ultimate irreducible data of cognition are the subjective counterparts of the ultimate irreducible data of objective existence.

And so according to Dr. Karunadasa, the dhamma theory, which is the basis for the entire abhidhammika project: (1) is realist, and this is because (2) dhamma-s have ontological primacy as truly existent objective things independent of cognition.

Later I will offer some commentarial citations which may hopefully support Dr. Karunadasa's analysis of the dhamma theory.... But that's all I have time for at present.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 3:46 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Hello Ven. Huifeng,

The BPS Wheel publication of The Dhamma Theory was published in 1996, thirty years after the publication of his doctoral thesis. Are you suggesting that it isn't representative of his current understanding?

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 27, 2010 9:00 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

These examples have nothing to do with the theory of radical momentariness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 28, 2010 9:30 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Hi Alex,

This is precisely the point. The individuation of phenomena requires apperceptive memory recognition (saññā) and conceptual designation (paññatti) for differentiation. All such individuation is relational and conventional and therefore phenomena cannot be ultimately established as “truly existing things” (sabhāvasiddhā), or “the ultimate irreducible data of objective existence” independent of the cognitive process.

Ven. Ñāṇananda, The Magic of the Mind (pp. 62-63):

According to the phenomenistic approach of the Buddha, not only the different types of feelings and mental states but the entire range of doctrinal categories summed up under the last section [of the Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta] i.e. ‘contemplation of mind-objects,’ has nothing in it that is worth ‘clinging to.’ All of them can be subsumed under the term ‘concept’ and that is to recognize their conditioned nature – the nature of arising and ceasing.

“Friends, when there is the eye and there are forms and there is eye-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact (phassapaññatti). When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling (vedanāpaññatti). When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception (saññāpaññatti). When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a designation of thought (vitakkapaññatti). When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception (papañcasaññāsaṅkhāsamudācāraṇapaññatti).

“When there is the ear... When there is the nose... When there is the tongue... When there is the body...

“When there is the mind and there are mental phenomena and there is mental-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact. When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling. When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception. When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a designation of thought. When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception.” – M I 112 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta

It would indeed appear strange to us that in Buddhist psychology even contact and feeling – with which we are so intimate – are treated as ‘designations’ (*paññatti*). We might feel that this is an intrusion of the ‘designation’ into the jealously guarded recesses of the psyche. Yet this is not the case, for, in the very act of apperception contacts and feelings are reckoned, evaluated, defined, and designated on the basis of one’s latencies (i.e. the aggregates). Thus there is hardly any justification for regarding them as ‘the given’, though we are accustomed to take them for granted. In other words, what we are wont to treat as ‘the given,’ turns out to be ‘synthetic’ and ‘composite’ (*saṅkhata*).

Noa Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition* (pp. 245-247): The Buddha’s insight reveals that the causal foundation for one’s samsaric experience is the operation of one’s cognitive apparatus. One’s experience in its entirety arises from the cognitive process of making sense of the incoming sensory data. Basic to this process is the *khandha* of conceptualization and apperception, namely, *sañña*, the activity of which results in the identification and differentiation of the incoming data. This identification process necessarily involves naming. As Hamilton points out, in describing the way identification is part of sorting out incoming experiential data the early Buddhist texts emphasize that naming is equivalent to what is called ‘making manifold’ of those data. ‘One might say’, Hamilton suggests, ‘that the process of making manifold in order to identify is the process of making nameable the aspects of one’s experience’. Indeed the Pali term for making manifold, *papañceti*, also means ‘verbal differentiation’, or ‘verbal proliferation’. All this verbal differentiation adds up to language, for, as the apperceptive process develops, one is imposing on the sensory influx categories and references that can be indicated by means of language. Language, then, is intrinsic to our experience: it provides the conceptual criteria and framework by which we make sense of our experience, or rather, by which we construct our world.

The Buddha, however, unveils not only the dominance of language and conceptual thought, but also their inherent insufficiency and inadequacy. Although language is a constant feature of our experience, we are normally unaware of the paradox in the cognitive process: to become knowable all the incoming sensory data must be verbally differentiated, but as such they are mere constructions, mental formations; nothing justifies their reliability because they could equally have been constructed otherwise, in accordance with other conventional guidelines. What the Buddha rejects is realism, conceptual and ontological alike: the notion that the encountered world is made up of distinguishable substances, and the linguistic theory that words refer to these substances which they represent; the conviction that our language corresponds to or mirrors a mind-independent reality. He points towards conventionalism in language and undermines the misleading character of nouns as substance-words. Whatever we can know is part of the activity of language, but language, by its very nature, undermines certified knowledge. The Buddha shows that language is, in principle, faulty: having the power to make manifold and endlessly to proliferate, it makes things appear and disappear; it can construct anything and hence cannot be representational of reality. There can be no innocence of relations between word and world....

Stated otherwise, samsaric experience is rooted in our cognitive apparatus: to rely on our conceptual scheme and language the way we normally do amounts to emotionally and intellectually grasping at and fixing our experience. Having recognized the fiction and imaginative creation inherent in conceptual thought and language, the awakened mind breaks up the apparently solid world that we construct for ourselves. To realize that words and concepts do not name anything, do not represent anything – what could be closer to silence and the eschewal of all views?

Noticeable in this context is the Atthakavagga of the Suttanipata, which promulgates an ascetic discipline of silence and repudiation of our very cognitive apparatus as based on linguistic and conceptual delineation:

“Neither conceptualizing, nor conceptualizing wrongly, nor lacking conceptualization, nor conceptualizing nothing – in one who has achieved this state sensory recognizable experience (rupa) ceases, for what is called ‘verbal proliferation’ (papañca) has its origin in conceptualization.”

What comes to a halt according to this description is but namarupa: nama referring to all that is conceived of, thus providing an abstract, conceptual identity for the person, rupa designating the physically (though not necessarily visibly) recognizable data, that is, all that lends itself to apperception and that is given shape by means of sensory impression. Covering the range of whatever is either conceived or apperceived, namarupa therefore signifies the entirety of what is cognizable. That namarupa is related to papañca is attested by another Suttanipata passage located in the Mahavagga:

“Having understood namarupa as verbal proliferation (papañca) that is the root of inward and outward disease, one is released from bondage to the root of all disease. Such a one is called in truth ‘one who knows well’.”

[Edit: typo]

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 28, 2010 9:39 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

“Present moment” is another completely conceptual designation with no locatable referent whatsoever. When you look close enough it vanishes.

Ven. Sujato, The Mystique of the Abhidhamma:

In the later abhidhamma, the treatment of time is dominated by a radical new theory, totally unlike anything in the suttas or even the canonical abhidhamma, the theory of moments (khaṇavāda). This postulates that time is constituted of a series of discrete, indivisible units, rather like a series of billiard balls lined up on a table. Each unit, or ‘moment’, is infinitesimally small, such that billions pass by in a lightning-flash. So while the suttas emphasize the length of time, the abhidhamma emphasizes the shortness. This theory shapes the abhidhamma conception of a whole range of central doctrines. Thus impermanence becomes, not simply being subject to birth and death, rise and fall, but the momentary dissolution of phenomena – one dhamma rises and ceases in an instant, leaving no trace of residue in the next. Samadhi becomes, not an exalted, stable coalescence of mind, but a ‘momentary samadhi’ running after the fluctuations of phenomena. The path becomes, not a gradual program of spiritual development, but a ‘path-moment’, gone in a flash. And the mind itself

becomes just a series of 'mind-moments'.

Now it is quite possible to take this theory, compare it with the suttas, and refute it point by point. But here I would simply like to point out what an implausible and useless idea it is. Quite obviously, time may be analyzed as finely as we wish, its divisibility determined only by the sharpness of our analytical razor. Any unit of time has a beginning, a middle, and an end. That beginning, too, has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and so on ad infinitum. There is simply no good reason to postulate an ultimate substratum of time to which other strata can be reduced. This idea seems to derive some of its impressiveness from its air of acrid, pessimistic, reductionist severity, which is often mistaken as a sign of really uncompromising wisdom.

The guiding objective for the formulation of the mind-moment theory would seem to be for exactitude of definition. So while the Buddha spoke of the mind 'changing while it stands', the abhidhamma just speaks of 'standing'. It is much easier to define a static entity than a process evolving over time. This is why a butterfly collector wants to have his butterflies dead, with a pin stuck through their heart and a little label underneath, not madly meandering about in the woods. The dead mind. But the Buddha was not a butterfly collector, he was an observer of nature. He wanted us to watch the flight and flutter of the butterfly, to understand how it behaves in its natural environment, and to follow it gently, delicately, quietly until it settles down to rest and be still according to its nature – which he called 'samadhi'...

Just what is going on here? Why postulate such an odd theory, raising so many pseudo-problems, and so contrary to the suttas, to common sense, and to experience? What is occurring, I suggest, is that the domain of discourse has been shifted from the empirical to the metaphysical. The suttas treat time in a straightforward, pragmatic, empirical terms – birth, ageing, and death, the changing states of the mind, the progressive development of spiritual qualities. The purpose, the sole purpose, is to empower the practitioner to get a handle on this stuff of life, directing attention to the seat of the problem – how our attachments cause suffering, and how to find peace by letting go. But the abhidhamma aims to describe, not just the spiritual problem and its solution, but the totality of existence. Inevitably, the subjective stance of the suttas becomes objectified, and as the focus moves from meditation to study, the concepts in the books become imposed on reality; in fact, they become reality itself. The quest for truth becomes a quest for definition, and reality becomes as neatly departmentalized as a mathematical table. 'Ultimate reality' becomes, not what you are experiencing now, but what you read about in abhidhamma books.

Find this hard to swallow? You might be interested to know that in contemporary abhidhamma circles it is, apparently, the orthodox position that the series of 'mind-moments' can only be directly seen by Buddhas, and perhaps chief disciples. This is, admittedly, challenged by some, who claim it can be seen in meditation. In just the same way, a Christian meditator will claim to see God, or a Hindu to see the universal Self. Seek and ye shall find. The very fact that such a controversy could possibly arise is a sign how far we have drifted from the Buddha's pragmatic empiricism. This is bad enough; but even worse when we realize that the theory in question made its appearance a millennium after the Buddha's time. This, for me, is as good as an admission that the whole thing is mere metaphysical speculation. No wonder the abhidhammikas have been so keen to father the canonical abhidhamma (and sometimes even the commentaries!) on the Buddha himself, despite massive evidence to the contrary.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 28, 2010 10:07 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 28, 2010 5:08 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Please do show some examples of his "blunders" in the excerpt cited above.

Thanks,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 29, 2010 3:31 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

None of the sutta citations you have supplied are referring to the theory of radical momentariness.

All the best,

Geoff

BTW, I have gone against my own inclinations by starting this thread. I have no intention of trying to change anyone's opinion on these issues. I know that even questioning these matters which people feel deeply invested in can elicit anything from emotionally charged reactions to the outright denial of the specific issues involved. I wish that weren't the case. Nevertheless, the elephant in the living room can be difficult to ignore.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 30, 2010 7:48 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 30, 2010 8:05 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Would you not agree that bhangānupassanāññā and bhayatupaṭṭhāññā can induce existential anxiety, distress, agitation, angst, fear, dread, terror, confusion, helplessness, etc.?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 30, 2010 9:03 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Hi Robert,

That may very well be the case. Could you elaborate on what you see as the differences between the commentaries and Mahāsi Sayādaw's Visuddhiññākathā?

Thanks,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 30, 2010 9:12 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Hi Mike,

I'm not interested in pointless debate either. And I've already offered my opinion as well as the basis for that opinion (i.e. the Visuddhiññākathā). From what I can gather, you practice the Burmese vipassanā method, and so I'm interested in hearing what your opinion is. I personally see no need to attempt to establish a "correct" interpretation in regard to this question. But I'm quite interested in what others have to say, especially those practicing Burmese vipassanā. It's an opportunity for me to further my own understanding of the tradition.

Thanks,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 1:19 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:



I'm always reticent to discuss these things too openly where anyone can read it. In one sense, this is a private and personal matter to be discussed with one's teacher and closest dhamma friends.... Anyway, the specifics can vary, but I'll try to offer a brief description.

Prior to the arising of pītisukha, the inner felt-sense of the entire body is experienced as a continual flux of subtle vibrational energy-sensations flowing throughout the whole body. It's important for awareness to be expansive enough so that it can experience the entire body without it collapsing into attending to any specific tactile sensations. The body is calm and the mind is wide open and at ease. By remaining aware in this way, pītisukha eventually arises spontaneously as waves of universal bliss coursing throughout the body. It feels like passing through an invisible 'membrane' wherein all sense of constriction is simply gone and the felt-sense of the body vastly expands along with waves of universal bliss.

But no part of this experience is static. There is a vast, expansive flowing of waves of pītisukha (it's really beyond what can be described in words to anyone who hasn't experienced it). Anyway, that's what I call the characteristic of momentary flux of pītisukha.

If this isn't helpful to you then disregard it.

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 1:30 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Brizzy,

Indeed. It's worth noting just how closely related mindfulness of the body (kāyānupassanā, kāyagatāsati) and the mental factors of mindfulness and full awareness (sati and sampajañña) are to the development of the four jhāna-s. This can be seen from the following sutta excerpts.

You should train yourself thus: 'I will remain focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture... not accompanied by rapture... endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity. [AN 8.63]

Monks, those monks who are trainees, who have not attained their mind's ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage — they too dwell contemplating the body in the body, ardent, alert, unified, with limpid mind, concentrated, with one-pointed mind, in order to fully understand the body as it really is. [SN 47.4]

When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed (kāya passambhati), the mind is calmed (citta passambhati), thinking & evaluating are stilled (vitakkavicārā vūpasama), and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body (kāyagatāsati). [AN 1.227]

And how is mindfulness immersed in the body developed, how is it pursued, so as to be of great fruit

& great benefit?

There is the case where a monk — having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building — sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect and setting mindfulness to the fore. Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

Breathing in long, he discerns that he is breathing in long; or breathing out long, he discerns that he is breathing out long. Or breathing in short, he discerns that he is breathing in short; or breathing out short, he discerns that he is breathing out short. He trains himself to breathe in sensitive to the entire body and to breathe out sensitive to the entire body. He trains himself to breathe in calming bodily fabrication (the breath) and to breathe out calming bodily fabrication. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body (*kāyagatāsati*). [MN 119]

Having abandoned the five hindrances — imperfections of awareness that weaken discernment — the monk remains focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. [MN 125]

As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact.... As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness (*satisampajañña*). [SN 47.8]

Seeing that they have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. Glad, he becomes enraptured. Enraptured, his body grows tranquil (*pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati*). His body tranquil, he is sensitive to pleasure (*passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti*). Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated (*sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati*). [DN 2]

Furthermore, quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful mental qualities, he enters & remains in the first *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal. Just as if a skilled bathman or bathman's apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again & again with water, so that his ball of bath powder — saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within & without — would nevertheless not drip; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of withdrawal. There is nothing of his entire body unpermeated by rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body (*kāyagatāsati*). [MN 119]

Then the Tathagata trains him further: 'Come, monk, remain focused on the body in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with the body....' With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. [MN 125]

He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of composure. Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and with the skies supplying abundant showers time & again, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate & pervade, suffuse

& fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of composure. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of composure. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

And furthermore, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert (*upekkhā, sati, sampajāna*), and senses pleasure with the body (*sukhañca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti*). He enters & remains in the third *jhāna*, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful (*upekkhako sati*), he has a pleasant abiding.'

He permeates & pervades, suffuses & fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. Just as in a lotus pond, some of the lotuses, born & growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated & pervaded, suffused & filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates... this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body.

And furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth *jhāna*: purity of equanimity & mindfulness (*upekkhāsati*), neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. Just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. And as he remains thus heedful, ardent, & resolute, any memories & resolves related to the household life are abandoned, and with their abandoning his mind gathers & settles inwardly, grows unified & centered. This is how a monk develops mindfulness immersed in the body. [MN 119]

On seeing a form with the eye, he does not lust after it if it is pleasing; he does not dislike it if it is unpleasing. He abides with mindfulness of the body established (*kāyagatāsati*), with an immeasurable mind, and he understands as it actually is the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain holding to it. As he does not do so, delight in feelings ceases in him. With the cessation of his delight comes cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of being; with the cessation of being, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

On hearing a sound with the ear....

On smelling an odor with the nose....

On tasting a flavor with the tongue....

On touching a tactile sensation with the body....

On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not lust after it if it is pleasing; he does not dislike

it if it is unpleasing. He abides with mindfulness of the body established, with an immeasurable mind, and he understands as it actually is the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain holding to it. As he does not do so, delight in feelings ceases in him. With the cessation of his delight comes cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of being; with the cessation of being, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. [MN 38]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 12:59 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

It's your life. Nevertheless, some people are interested in a dhamma which is both cogent and practical. In fact, incoherence simply cannot be practical. Speaking on the very practical matter of how the Visuddhimagga jhāna-s bear no resemblance to how this very essential component of practice is integrated into the sutta presentation of the noble eightfold path, Ven. Ṭhānissaro adds: Some Theravadins insist that questioning the commentaries is a sign of disrespect for the tradition, but it seems to be a sign of greater disrespect for the Buddha – or the compilers of the Canon – to assume that he or they would have left out something absolutely essential to the practice.

Being cynical and dismissive of the usefulness of well-considered demonstrations regarding where the commentaries have veered away from experience and pragmatic soteriology seems to me to be a rather rigid approach. You can ignore it if you so choose, but there is an elephant in the living room.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 1:26 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

What you are describing is a case of being "stuck internally" (MN 138). Such a description of jhāna as sammāsamādhi cannot be sustained by a close reading of the sutta-s.

Phenomena present and abandoned in each jhāna

- the five hindrances are abandoned (pañcanīvaraṇā): sensual desire (kāmacchanda), aversion (vyāpāda), dullness and drowsiness (thīnamiddha), restlessness and anxiety (uddhaccakukkucca), doubt (vicikicchā) [MN 43]

## 1st jhāna:

- pain faculty ceases (dukkhindriya) [SN 48.40] which is any physical pain, physical discomfort born of body-contact to be experienced as pain and discomfort [SN 48.37]
- apperception of sensual pleasure ceases (kāmasaññā) [DN 9, AN 9.31]; sensual pleasure (kāma) is the resolve of passion (saṅkapparāga) [AN 6.63]
- unskillful resolves cease (akusalā saṅkappā), which are the resolves of sensual pleasure, aversion, harmfulness (kāmasaṅkappa, byāpādasāṅkappa, vihiṃsāsaṅkappa) [MN 117]
- sign of first jhāna (nimitta): the first jhāna which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as rapture and pleasure born of seclusion; he sticks with that sign, develops it, pursues it, and establishes himself firmly in it [AN 9.35]
- directed thought and evaluation are present (vitakkavicārā) [DN 22: standard jhāna formula]
- non-carnal rapture and pleasure are present (nirāmisā pīti, nirāmisā sukha) [SN 36.31]
- actual refined apperception of rapture and pleasure born of seclusion is present (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā) [DN 9]
- rapture of seclusion (viveka pīti): When a noble disciple enters and remains in the rapture of seclusion, at that time five things do not occur for him: (1) pain and unhappiness connected with sensual pleasure do not exist at that time; (2) pleasure and happiness connected with sensual pleasure do not exist at that time; (3) pain and unhappiness connected with the unskillful do not exist at that time; (4) pleasure and happiness connected with the unskillful do not exist at that time; (5) pain and unhappiness connected with the skillful do not exist at that time. [AN 5.176]
- clear seeing of mental phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā): Whatever mental phenomena there are in the first jhāna: directed thought, evaluation, rapture, pleasure, singleness of mind, contact, feeling, apperception, intention, mind, desire, decision, persistence, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention; he ferreted them out one after another. Known to him they arose, known to him they remained, known to him they subsided. He discerned, 'So this is how these qualities, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.' (Ye ca paṭhame jhāne dhammā vitakko ca vicāro ca pīti ca sukhañca cittekaggatā ca, phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittaṃ chando adhimokkho vīriyaṃ sati upekkhā manasikāro – tyāssa dhammā anupadavavattitā honti. Tyāssa dhammā veditā uppajjanti, veditā upaṭṭhahanti, veditā abbhatthaṃ gacchanti. So evaṃ pajānāti – 'evaṃ kirame dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventi.) [MN 111]
- seeing the three characteristics of the five aggregates (samanupassati): He sees whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, apperception, fabrications, and consciousness, as impermanent, unsatisfactory, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. (So yadeva tattha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāgataṃ, te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati.) [MN 64, AN 9.36]

## 2nd jhāna:

- unhappiness faculty ceases (domanassindriya) [SN 48.40] which is any mental pain, mental discomfort born of mind-contact to be experienced as pain and discomfort [SN 48.37]
- directed thought and evaluation ceases (vitakkavicārā) [AN 9.31]
- skillful resolves cease (kusalā saṅkappā), which are the resolves of renunciation, non-aversion, harmlessness (nekkhammasaṅkappa, abyāpādasāṅkappa, avihimsāsaṅkappa) [MN 117]
- sign of second jhāna (nimitta): the second jhāna which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has rapture and pleasure born of concentration; he sticks with that sign, develops it, pursues it, and establishes himself firmly in it [AN 9.35]
- non-carnal rapture and pleasure are present (nirāmisā pīti, nirāmisā sukha) [SN 36.31]
- actual refined apperception of rapture and pleasure born of concentration is present (samādhijapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā) [DN 9]
- clear seeing of mental phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 111]
- seeing the three characteristics of the five aggregates (samanupassati): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 64, AN 9.36]

### 3rd jhāna:

- pleasure faculty ceases (sukhindriya) [SN 48.40, AN 9.31] which is any physical pleasure, physical comfort born of body-contact to be experienced as pleasure and comfort [SN 48.37]
- sign of third jhāna (nimitta): he remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences pleasure with the body; he sticks with that sign, develops it, pursues it, and establishes himself firmly in it [AN 9.35]
- pleasure of equanimity is present (upekkhāsukha) [AN 9.42]
- non-carnal pleasure is present (nirāmisā sukha) [SN 36.31]
- actual refined apperception of equanimity is present (upekkhāsukhasukhumasaccasaññā) [DN 9]
- clear seeing of mental phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 111]
- seeing the three characteristics of the five aggregates (samanupassati): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 64, AN 9.36]

### 4th jhāna:

- happiness faculty ceases (somanassindriya) [SN 48.40] which is any mental pleasure, mental comfort born of mind-contact to be experienced as pleasure and comfort [SN 48.37]

- in and out breathing has been calmed, has been stilled, has ceased (assāsapassāsā) [SN 36.11, AN 9.31]
- sign of fourth jhāna (nimitta): the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness; he sticks with that sign, develops it, pursues it, and establishes himself firmly in it [AN 9.35]
- non-carnal equanimity is present (nirāmisā upekkhā) [SN 36.31]
- actual refined apperception of neither pleasure nor pain is present (adukkhamasukhasukhumasaccasaññā) [DN9]
- apperception of form is present (rūpasaññā) [AN 9.42]
- clear seeing of mental phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 111]
- seeing the three characteristics of the five aggregates (samanupassati): same as first jhāna minus eliminated mental phenomena [MN 64, AN 9.36]

Formless attainments:

- only when abiding in the fully purified formless attainments is the mind isolated from the five sense faculties [MN 43] and does not experience any of the five sensory spheres [AN 9.37]

Attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling:

- equanimity faculty ceases (upekkhindriya) [SN 48.40]

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 9:41 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

Regarding the Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta (SN 48.40). since it is speaking specifically about the five feeling indriya-s in relation to the jhāna-s, if we first look at what other sutta-s have to tell us on these specific points, then we can find a very satisfactory reading of the Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta.

First, if we look at AN 9.42 it tells us that the pleasure commonly referred to in the descriptions of the third jhāna is actually the pleasure of equanimity (upekkhāsukha). This accords well with SN 48.40, when it states that the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases in the third jhāna. What remains

is the equanimity faculty (upekkhindriya) and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya), which in light of SN 48.37, in the third jhāna refers to bodily equanimity (kāya upekkhā) and mental pleasure (cetasika sukha).

And when SN 48.40 tells us that the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases in the fourth jhāna, what remains is both bodily and mental equanimity (kāya & cetasika upekkhā) as stated in SN 48.37.

With regard to the formless attainments, since MN 43 states that it is with the attainment of the fully purified formless apperception attainments that the mind is isolated from the five sense faculties and AN 9.37 states that the same is the case with regard to the experience of the five sensory spheres, we can deduce from this that with entrance into the formless attainments bodily equanimity (kāya upekkhā) is no longer experienced, and what remains is mental equanimity (cetasika upekkhā). And as SN 48.40 states, the equanimity faculty, i.e. mental equanimity, ceases with the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling.

Once again the suttas explicate themselves, revealing an integral symmetry and remarkably high degree of internal coherence.

Also, if we look at some discourses where the reference is specifically to the first satipaṭṭhāna, then it becomes clear that the meaning of kāya in the context of jhāna doesn't entail interpreting it in terms of nāmakāya, and in fact to interpret it as nāmakāya is completely uncalled for. As an example, MN 125:

Then the Tathagata trains him further: 'Come, monk, remain focused on the body in & of itself, but do not think any thoughts connected with the body.' (Tamenam tathāgato uttariṃ vineti – 'ehi tvam, bhikkhu, kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi, mā ca kāmūpasamhitam vitakkaṃ vitakkesi.') ... With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance.

And AN 8.63:

You should train yourself thus: 'I will remain focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture... not accompanied by rapture... endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity. (Evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: 'kāye kāyānupassī viharissāmi ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassa'nti. Evañhi te, bhikkhu, sikkhitabbaṃ. Yato kho te, bhikkhu, ayaṃ samādhi evaṃ bhāvito hoti bahulīkato, tato tvam, bhikkhu, imaṃ samādhiṃ savitakkasavicārampi bhāveyyāsi, avitakkavicāramattampi bhāveyyāsi, avitakkaavicārampi bhāveyyāsi, sappītikampi bhāveyyāsi, nippītikampi bhāveyyāsi, sātasahagatampi bhāveyyāsi, upekkhāsahagatampi bhāveyyāsi.

And AN 1.227:

When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed (kāya passambhati), the mind is calmed (citta passambhati), thinking & evaluating are stilled (vitakkavicārā vūpasama), and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body (kāyagatāsati).

Etc....



All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 01, 2010 10:02 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

In that case, here's an idea: don't read my posts.

Be well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 12:49 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

All of 'em!... With regard to saṅkhāra-s, the relative alteration while persisting (tītaṣṣa aññathatta) during any sensory contact is the same for the momentary flux of the feeling, the apperception, and the sensory consciousness (even though this flux cannot be quantified, i.e. the immediate experiential present cannot be measured). If there is an abrupt change in feeling, for example, from pleasure to pain, even if we conventionally designate the sensory object as the same referent, something has occurred even at the level of sensory consciousness which would be most accurately designated as a passing away of one process of sensory cognition and the arising of another (which still doesn't entail radical momentariness).

This is why designation is such a slippery snake at any level of reference, no matter how reductionist we choose to be. What we designate as an object is just a phantom with no real referent that can ultimately be established. The same is true for all of the dhamma-s of each of the aggregates. And the same is true for any experiential measurement of duration. The closer we look, the more elusive the referent. Until eventually we see through the cruel game of tyrannical empiricism altogether...

If I've misunderstood what you were asking, we can try again.

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 6:50 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

I think it's a good idea to try to keep things objective as possible by referring to the texts and other citations. This can hopefully avoid any appeals to personal experience. But I have a few friends who either used to practice Burmese vipassanā or who still do. And I specifically based that "existential tizzy" phrase on the memory of a few discussions I had in the past on the subject. I do appreciate you bringing it to my attention. It was a poor choice of words and I should have recognized it at the time.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 2:24 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Mike,

I would consider this to be nothing more than conceptual proliferation. How is one to directly cognize or even infer the cessation of the four internal elements based on the movements of the body? It isn't empirically possible, nor is it inferentially valid. It is purely a conceptual filter which has no practical application.

Ven. Buddhaghosa, Vism 8.39:

As to the shortness of the moment: in the ultimate sense the life-moment of living beings is extremely short, being only as much as the occurrence of a single conscious moment. Just as a chariot wheel, when it is rolling, rolls [that is, touches the ground] only on one point of [the circumference of] its tyre, and, when it is at rest, rests only on one point, so too, the life of living beings lasts only for a single conscious moment. When that consciousness has ceased, the being is said to have ceased....

I would suggest that there is no "in the ultimate sense" with regard to cognition based on the individuation of particulars, and that "the occurrence of a single conscious moment" is mere designation, just as "being" is mere designation. Neither can be discerned when one applies vipassanā thoroughly.

All the best,

Geoff

[Edit: typo]

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 2:44 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

BTW, if it's a misreading (and I'm not saying that it is or isn't) it's Mahāsi Sayādaw's misreading. Visuddhiññākathā, section on bhayatupaṭṭhāñña:  
At that time, his mind itself is gripped by fear and seems helpless.

And from the endnotes of this section (written by Ven. Ñāṇaponika Thera, but carefully scrutinized by Mahāsi Sayādaw):

The word bhaya has the subjective aspect of fear and the objective aspect of fearfulness, danger. Both are included in the significance of the term in this context.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 2:56 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Ven. Yuttadhammo,

I'd suggest that it's telling of the confusion created by the Visuddhimagga's convoluted treatment of the issue.

It's surely better, instead of attempting to confirm any particular point of view, to clarify sammāsamādhī so that there is no need for any unnecessary "struggle."

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 02, 2010 4:49 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Because SN 48.37 expressly differentiates between kāyika/cetasika and kāyosamphassa/manosamphassa with regard to the feeling faculties.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 03, 2010 11:08 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

There are a few short references to the theory of momentariness in the main commentaries. Spk ii 266:

Hence the Ancients said: 'Arising was called birth and dissolution referred to passing away. Change referred to aging and endurance to maintenance.'

Thus each khandha has three characteristic marks called arising, aging and dissolution, of which it is said in the passage (A I 152): 'These are, monks, the three conditioned characteristic marks of the conditioned [khandha].'

Tenāhu porāṇā uppādo jāti akkhāto bhaṅgo vutto vayoti ca aññathattaṃ jarā vuttā t̥hitī ca anupālanā ti evaṃ ekekassa khandhassa uppādajarābhaṅgasāṅkhātāni tīṇi lakkhaṇāni ti.

And Mp ii 252:

Origination is said to appear at the origination moments, aging at the subsistence moments and dissolution at the destruction moments.

Uppādo ti jāti vayo ti bhedo t̥hitassa aññathattaṃ nāma jarā ... uppādādayo saṅkhatalakkhaṇā nāma tesu uppādakkaṇe uppādo thānakkhaṇe jarā bhedakkhaṇe vayo.

Also, Ācariya Ānanda (medieval period VbhAA.) cites the Abhidhamma Yamaka as canonical support for his understanding of radical momentariness. The Yamaka does use the terms arising moment (uppādakkhaṇa) and dissolution moment (bhaṅgakkhaṇa), even if these terms do not necessarily entail interpreting khaṇa as radical momentariness in the Yamaka itself.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 03, 2010 11:51 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

No doubt, the abhidhamma project was well-intentioned, but I would suggest that the entire enterprise was also ill-conceived. The very notion that all of the corners of samsaric cognition can be “squared” is to miss the point that samsaric consciousness is deluded from the get-go, and therefore can’t be unequivocally validated in terms of the individuation of empirical particulars (whether as things or event-processes). This very process is itself part of the problem, not the solution.

Moreover, attempts to account for liberated cognition in terms of the fabricated aggregates misses the point stated in many sutta-s that such cannot be done. For example, the mind liberated through discernment is designated as “measureless mind” (appamāṇacetasa) in a number of discourses (S iv 119, S iv 186, S iv 189, S iv 199, MN 38). Elsewhere it is designated as unestablished (appatiṭṭha), and featureless (anidassana), and one thus liberated is said to be independent (anissita), etc.

One of the most elegant and subtle aspects of the dhamma of the sutta portion of the Nikāya-s is that it doesn’t impose any sort of fabricated view regarding the nature of the liberated mind. This is clear in the sense of measureless mind → appamāṇacetasa, being free from any sort of measurement → pamāṇa.

Once all mental designations (pannatti; also saṅkhā, samannā, etc.) are done away with, there is no way (and no need) for defining liberation in any way at all. This is a “freedom of absence.” It is also non-proliferation (nippapanca: “Dhammo nippapancarantino, nāyaṃ dhammo papancārāmassa papancarantino.”), etc.

This is what distinguishes the exquisite dhamma of the sutta-s from everything that came before the Buddha or after the sutta corpus. It’s unfortunate that virtually all commentators – early abhidhamma, classical, and modern commentators – and all Buddhist doctrinal schools haven’t seen fit to follow the Buddha’s wisdom on these points.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 03, 2010 6:18 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

To approach this by way of experience: taste it yourself and see. Afterward you can superimpose whatever conceptual filters that you wish. Or you might even be able to drop the cruel game of tyrannical empiricism altogether. BTW, according to the discourses, mental proliferation is a bad thing.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 03, 2010 6:33 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

I don't for a moment doubt your sincerity and good intentions, but it's pretty apparent to me that we will never come to an agreement on this issue. And that's fine. We approach the subject with different hermeneutics, and that has consequences which would take more time and effort to sort through than I am willing to invest. I approach the Pāli sutta-s with a methodology similar to the following statement by professor Lambert Schmithausen:

I presuppose that the texts I make use of are to be taken seriously, in the sense that one has to accept that they mean what they say, and that what they mean is reasonable within its own terms.

I do appreciate your input and find it helpful, but I believe that my reading of the sutta material pertaining to this subject is at this point consistent and displays the internal harmony and integral structure of the eightfold path as it was put together by the compilers of the sutta-s.

It seems to me that your interpretation requires some hermeneutical gymnastics to make the sutta-s accord with your understanding of the Visuddhimagga. In the process there seems to be an assumption that straightforward passages don't mean what they say, or aren't inclusive of enough variables to be meaningful. Moreover, it seems that you read into the sutta-s definitions and processes according to classical abhidhammika developments (eg. terms like vitakka and processes such as the cognitive series). There is nothing wrong with this approach per se, but in my opinion it will never sufficiently interpret the thought-world of the sutta era strata of received tradition. (And you may very well disagree with this assertion as well.)

Anyway, for your enjoyment, here's the relevant passage from the (Mahā)Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta commentary. (This section is the same in both the Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā and the Majjhimanikāya

Aṭṭhakathā):

Sāmisam vā sukhantiādīsu sāmīsā sukhā nāma pañcakāmaguṇāmisasannissitā cha  
gehasitasomanassavedanā. Nirāmisā sukhā nāma cha nekkhammasitasomanassavedanā. Sāmīsā  
dukkhā nāma cha gehasitadomanassavedanā. Nirāmisā dukkhā nāma cha  
nekkhammasitadomanassavedanā.

Ven. Ānandajoti tr: Sensual pleasant and so on - “sensual pleasant” is a name for the five strands of  
sensuality dependent on the sensual, and the six happy feelings connected with the life of the  
householder; “spiritual pleasant” is a name for the six happy feelings connected with the life of  
renunciation; “sensual unpleasant” is a name for the six sorrowful feelings connected with the life of  
the householder; “spiritual unpleasant” is a name for the six sorrowful feelings connected with the  
life of renunciation.

Ven. Soma Thera tr: Pleasant worldly feeling refers to the six joyful feelings connected with the six  
sense-doors, and dependent on that which is tainted by defilements. Pleasant spiritual feeling refers  
to the six joyful feelings connected with the six sense-doors, and not dependent on sense-desire.  
Painful worldly feeling refers to the six feelings of grief connected with the six sense-doors, and  
dependent on that which is tainted by defilements. Painful spiritual feeling refers to the six feelings  
of grief connected with the six sense-doors, and not dependent on sense-desire.

Neither of these translations are satisfactory, but you know Pāḷi (or enough Pāḷi) to comprehend.  
Anyway, even though this commentarial analysis interprets all four as either somanassa or  
domanassa, it allows for six types for both carnal and non-carnal (one of which should be dependent  
on body-contact at some point in the cognitive series). The narrowing of sukha and dukkha to  
somanassa and domanassa can be traced back to the Dhammasaṅgaṇi and later commentarial  
developments. Of course, IMO it doesn’t represent an accurate treatment of the subject in terms of a  
suttantika based analysis.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 8:23 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

My reading of the above sutta-s doesn’t entail this consequence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 10:00 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Apparently, from the traditional point of view there's no possibility of liberation anymore in this

world anyway. So it's probably better for traditionalists to follow Ven. Buddhaghōṣa's lead and generate merit & aspire for a heavenly rebirth to await Metteyya's awakening.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 10:28 am

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Um, why don't you tell me?...

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 1:43 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

Yes, I followed your analysis of the two sutta-s. But it seems to me, as I replied above, given that SN 48.38 states that the sukhindriya and somanassindriya are both sukha vedanā and the dukkhindriya and domanassindriya are both dukkha vedanā, therefore, based on the analysis of this vibhaṅga sutta the sukha and dukkha arising from mind-contact in MN 148 are actually somanassa and domanassa. They are both cetasika vedanā arising from manasamphassa. Neither of them are kāyika vedanā followed by cetasika vedanā.

Do you have a third sutta source which specifically states that vedanā arising from manasamphassa is kāyika?

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 1:53 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

Non-traditional traditionalists....

Anyhoo, the Metteyya reply was my apparently meager attempt to inject a bit of levity into this thread after the fire and brimstone sermons.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 8:35 pm

Title: Re: Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View

Content:

"The usual commentarial stuff" is the actual subject.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 04, 2010 8:46 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

MN 137 is tangential to this discussion of vedanā in jhāna which is very clearly analyzed with reference to SN 48.37-40 and other discourses which speak of vedanā in jhāna. I have already demonstrated this.

But if we must look at MN 137, the statement in question is:

In this case the Tathagata is not satisfied nor is he sensitive to satisfaction, yet he remains untroubled, mindful, & alert. (Tatra, bhikkhave, tathāgato na ceva anattamano hoti, na ca anattamanataṃ paṭisaṃvedeti, anavassuto ca viharati sato sampajāno.)

Here the designation of “anattamana” is immediately qualified by “anavassuto ca viharati sato sampajāno.” As for how anavassuta relates to mindfulness of the body and the liberated mind see SN 35.243 (S iv 186, CDB 1246, ATI SN 35.202).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 05, 2010 6:12 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

I can find nothing in any of these discourses which sustains your premise or the consequence of your premise, i.e. that vedanā born of manasamphassa includes vedanā born of kāyasamphassa. Regarding just one example, the relevant statements in MN 149 simply highlight the interdependence of mind and body.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 06, 2010 6:11 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

MN 137 Saṅgāyatanavibhaṅga Sutta simply doesn't support your premise either. The entire discourse deals with somanassa, domanassa, and upekkhā. It nowhere states anything about “mental kāyika feelings.”

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 06, 2010 10:49 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

What I see is a category mistake of applying the term kāyika to types of vedanā which are not born of kāyasamphassa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 07, 2010 12:07 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

The liberated mind has abandoned all deluded affective and cognitive defilements with regard to both kāyika and cetasika vedanā. In terms of dependent arising, it isn't feeling that's the problem, it's craving, which is rooted in ignorance.

For example, MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta:

On touching a tangible with the body... cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not lust after it if it is pleasing (piyarūpe dhamme na sārājati); he does not dislike it if it is unpleasing (appiyarūpe dhamme na byāpajati). He abides with mindfulness of the body established, with an immeasurable mind, and he understands as it actually is the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states cease without remainder. Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain holding to it. As he does not do so, delight in feelings ceases in him.

So kāyena phoṭṭhabbaṃ phusitvā...pe... manasā dhammaṃ viññāya piyarūpe dhamme na sārājati, appiyarūpe dhamme na byāpajati, upaṭṭhitakāyasati ca viharati appamāṇacetaso, tañca cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti – yatthassa te pāpakā akusalā dhammā aparisesā nirujjhanti. So evaṃ anurodhavirodhavippahīno yaṃ kiñci vedanaṃ vedeti, sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā, so taṃ vedanaṃ nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati. Tassa taṃ vedanaṃ anabhinandato anabhivadato anajjhosāya tiṭṭhato yā vedanāsu nandī sā nirujjhanti.

MN 148 Chachakka Sutta:

Dependent on the body & tactile sensations.... Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there arises what is felt either as pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. If, when touched by a feeling of pleasure, one does not relish it, welcome it, or remain fastened to it, then one's passion-obsession doesn't get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of pain, one does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, beat one's breast or become distraught, then one's resistance obsession

doesn't get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one discerns, as it actually is present, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, & escape from that feeling, then one's ignorance-obsession doesn't get obsessed. That a person — through abandoning passion-obsession with regard to a feeling of pleasure, through abolishing resistance-obsession with regard to a feeling of pain, through uprooting ignorance-obsession with regard to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, through abandoning ignorance and giving rise to clear knowing — would put an end to suffering & stress in the here & now: such a thing is possible.

Kāyañca, bhikkhave, paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ...pe.... Manañca, bhikkhave, paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā. So sukhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati. Tassa rāgānusayo nānuseti. Dukkāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno na socati na kilamati na paridevati na urattāḷiṃ kandati na sammohaṃ āpajjati. Tassa paṭighānusayo nānuseti. Adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno tassā vedanāya samudayañca atthaṅgamañca assādañca ādīnavañca nissaraṇaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Tassa avijjānusayo nānuseti. So vata, bhikkhave, sukhāya vedanāya rāgānusayaṃ pahāya dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayaṃ paṭivinodetvā adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayaṃ samūhanitvā avijjaṃ pahāya vijjaṃ uppādetvā diṭṭheva dhamme dukkhassantakaro bhavissatīti – ṭhānametaṃ vijjati.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 07, 2010 1:01 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Forgot to mention that the relevant section from MN 44 just highlights the three instances where pleasant feeling, painful feeling, or neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling can be engaged as part of the path without reinforcing the underlying tendencies. Otherwise, in order to abandon the underlying tendencies one is to remain focused on the impermanence, dissolution, dispassion, cessation, and relinquishment of all feelings (aniccānupassī viharati, vayānupassī viharati, virāgānupassī viharati, nirodhānupassī viharati, paṭinissaggānupassī viharati).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 07, 2010 4:34 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

You're certainly free to pursue any interpretive tangents that you wish. Nevertheless, cetasika vedanā born of manosaṃphassa is a necessary condition for the arising of sorrow, lamentation, grieving, weeping, or breast-beating.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 2:26 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

If you think that sorrow (soka), grieving (parideva), etc., are not conditioned by cetasika dukkha, then that's fine by me.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 4:26 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

This has all the makings of another pointless attempt at misdirection. Either you really don't understand the indriya-s, āyatana-s, and dhātu-s, or you're applying another idiosyncratic interpretation like your "kāyika vedanā pertaining to the six āyatana-s" to this as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 4:39 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Kenshou,

There's no need to establish that the eye, etc., makes contact with pītisukha per se. There is no such thing as contact (phassa) without consciousness. And kāyika sukha is certainly cognized by body consciousness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 4:50 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
You do make me smile Sylvester.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 5:30 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
Again, either the intentional misrepresentation of another's position and therefore attempted misdirection, or a complete lack of understanding of said position.... Which is it Sylvester?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 8:02 am  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
Hi Sylvester,

Neither of those statements entails an "idealist model."

Moreover, it has been shown that the discourses differentiate between the kāmagaṇa-s and the four satipaṭṭhāna-s, and also that kāyasamphassa vedanā is experienced in jhāna. You have yet to cite one textual source which informs us that the body is a kāmagaṇa or that kāyasamphassa vedanā is not dependent on body phassa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jul 08, 2010 10:39 pm  
Title: Re: Tha jhana debate  
Content:  
Subjective idealism isn't applicable either. But this is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 09, 2010 8:22 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

If *sāmisā sukha* is present is it accurate or advisable to suggest that the practitioner's "mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness" (*arañña-saññāya cittaṃ pakkhandati paṣīdati santiṭṭhati adhimuccati*)? Especially in light of the above injunction from SN 47.6, and also MN 66 which informs us that any *sukha* and *somanassa* that arises dependent upon the *kāmaguṇa*-s is not to be cultivated or developed, rather it is to be feared:

Now, any pleasure & happiness that arises dependent on these five strings of sensuality is called sensual pleasure, a filthy pleasure, a run-of-the-mill pleasure, an ignoble pleasure. And of this pleasure I say that it is not to be cultivated, not to be developed, not to be pursued, that it is to be feared.

And also SN 35.115:

There are forms, monks, cognizable via the eye — agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. If a monk relishes them, welcomes them, & remains fastened to them, he is said to be a monk fettered to forms cognizable by the eye. He has gone over to Mara's camp; he has come under Mara's power. The Evil One can do with him as he wills.

Now, there are forms cognizable via the eye — agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. If a monk does not relish them, welcome them, or remain fastened to them, he is said to be a monk freed from forms cognizable by the eye. He has not gone over to Mara's camp; he has not come under Mara's power. The Evil One cannot do with him as he wills.

I'm wondering why you find it necessary to maintain that all visible forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects are *kāmaguṇa*-s? Given that SN 3.12 tells us that:

Those same forms... sounds... odors... flavors... tactual objects that are agreeable to one person, great king, are disagreeable to another.

Is there something intrinsic to all visible forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects which binds the mind? In your view, what is it about all visible forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects that is "agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing" and therefore requires all of them to be *kāmaguṇa*-s?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 10, 2010 6:18 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

And as I've said before, I'm of the view that sense objects are neutral, but *kāmaguṇa*-s are any sense objects which one considers to be "agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing." The inner felt-sense of *nirāmisā pītisukha* which arises in *jhāna* is of a completely different kind. For one thing it doesn't arise in dependence upon external sensory impingement.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 10, 2010 7:16 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Sounds good.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 10, 2010 2:50 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

No offense whatsoever. It has been a good discussion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 11, 2010 2:42 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

I would suggest that there are no "things," merely processes.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 11, 2010 6:54 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi dhamma follower,

If you think so and consider it to be a useful representation of your own experiential cognitive

processes, then it's helpful to that extent. But this doesn't mean that it isn't an interpretation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 12, 2010 1:28 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Ven. Yuttadhammo,

That's an admirable intention. And if you find the Visuddhimagga helpful then that's all to the good.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 13, 2010 5:13 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi dhamma follower,

As long as there is contact, feeling and apperception arise together with consciousness. One can refine apperception and eventually discern the empty, mirage-like nature of apperception and thereby realize dispassion towards empirical cognition and liberation from the entire game of empirical cognition; but until one has done so all experiences are filtered through apperception and there is no possibility of "direct experience" unmediated by apperception.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 13, 2010 11:53 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Mādhyaṃaka doesn't confuse or conflate epistemology and ontology.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 14, 2010 8:32 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Straw man argumentation has nothing whatsoever to do with pragmatism. And if you think that Theravāda commentary doesn't veer into "abstract surmising" I would suggest that you haven't looked closely enough.

Moreover, the difficulty with any modern misrepresentation -- be it Theravāda or Mahāyāna -- is that it retards the possibility of meaningful Theravāda Mahāyāna dialogue. This may seem utterly unimportant to you Peter, and that's fine, but that doesn't make it unimportant to others. It simply isn't excusable for any modern post-secondary educated western teacher to continue to promote inaccurate appraisals of other traditions. And this is equally true of any modern western Mahāyāna teachers who misrepresent the Pāḷi Nikāya-s or the Theravāda commentarial tradition. It's unacceptable.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 14, 2010 10:02 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

SN 12.15 Kaccānagotta Sutta represents the mādhyamaka view par excellence. Anyone who doesn't understand this isn't in any position to comment on mādhyamaka nonduality.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 14, 2010 10:34 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

I don't belong to any Mahāyāna forums. And there is no such thing as "the Theravāda view." There are many examples, both historical and modern, of ppl who consider themselves to be very orthodox who disagree with others who consider themselves to be very orthodox. Not to mention the wide range of modern Theravāda teachers who maintain quite divergent views.

All the best,

Geoff



Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 14, 2010 10:22 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi Peter,

The point is simply this: If one is going to critique Indian *mādhyaṃaka* then one necessarily has to do so by approaching *mādhyaṃaka* on its own terms. Failure to do so just amounts to fallacious argumentation.

This doesn't mean that one needs to refer to Nāgārjuna, et al, in order to critique post-canonical Theravāda interpretations of the Pāli suttas. Ven. K. Ñāṇananda has shown that this can be done by relying on the suttas themselves without reference to any later hermeneutics.

And BTW, Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche's understanding of *mādhyaṃaka* is based on a controversial 14th century Tibetan interpretation of Nāgārjuna, et al. Whatever relevance this may have within the thought-world of Tibetan Buddhism, it can't be taken as an accurate interpretation of the writings of the historical 2nd century CE Nāgārjuna, or Āryadeva, Buddhapaṇita, Candrakīrti, Śāntideva, etc..

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 14, 2010 11:11 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

The sayings attributed to Sengcan and Huineng don't represent Indian *mādhyaṃaka* or Indian *yogācāra* in any way whatsoever. The 8th century Indian *mādhyaṃika* Kamalaśīla went to some length to show that such views aren't compatible with the writings of Nāgārjuna, et al. For example, in his *Bhāvanākrama*-s he states:

It is impossible for omniscience [i.e. enlightenment] to arise without causes since this would entail the absurd consequence whereby everyone could be omniscient all the time. If it could arise independently, it could exist everywhere without obstructions, and again everybody would be omniscient. Moreover, all functional things depend exclusively on causes because they only occur for certain persons at certain times. And so, because omniscience does not arise for everybody everywhere at all times, it most certainly depends upon causes and conditions.

Also, from among those causes and conditions, one should rely on unerring and complete causes. If one engages in erroneous causes, even exerting oneself for a very long time, the desired fruition will not be obtained. For example, it would be like milking a cow's horn. Furthermore, an effect will not arise if all of its causes are not practiced. If a seed or any other cause is missing, then the result, such as a sprout, will not arise. Therefore, someone seeking a particular result should develop its unerring and complete causes and conditions.

Indian *mādhyaṃaka* and *yogācāra* can't be conflated with Chinese Chan. For the authors of these two Indian Mahāyāna traditions, it is impossible to do away with the employment of conventional

designations. This would amount to doing away with the thirty-seven factors of awakening, i.e. the entire path. And according to the Indian schools, all of these factors have to be successfully employed for one to attain awakening.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 15, 2010 6:12 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

You want me to step into that cyber minefield on an internet forum? In the words of Bartleby, "I would prefer not to."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 15, 2010 6:32 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

His critique of "all Mahāyāna schools" necessarily includes both Indian Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra since these are the two Indian schools which are the sources of all Mahāyāna exegesis. And his critique is equally problematic in regard to Yogācāra if one wishes to approach Yogācāra on its own terms. The ālayavijñāna is a deluded individual momentary continuum which ceases upon awakening. For an arahant this is the end.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 15, 2010 2:16 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Which verse of the Yuktiṣaṣṭika are you referring to Sylvester?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 15, 2010 5:35 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi Sylvester and all,

It may be worth citing a few verses from the Yuktiṣaṣṭika and see if there is any canonical support for these verses:

4. One is not freed by existence;  
One does not transcend samsara through non-existence;  
It's through understanding existence and non-existence  
That the great beings are liberated.

5. Those who do not see ultimate reality  
Grasp at samsara and nirvana;  
But those who see ultimate reality possess  
No pretensions of world and its' transcendence.

6. Both samsara and nirvana,  
Neither of these two exists;  
The thorough understanding of cyclic existence-  
This is referred to as "nirvana."

35. Inasmuch as the Conquerors have stated  
Nirvana is the sole truth,  
What learned person would imagine  
That the rest is not false?

Regarding verse four, there is Ud. 3.10:

Whatever ascetics or brahmans say that emancipation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not liberated from existence, I say. And whatever ascetics or brahmans say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

Regarding verses five and six, there is Dhp 385:

For whom there is neither a far shore,  
Nor a near shore, nor both,  
Who is undistressed and unfettered,  
Him I call a Brahmin.

And Sn 1.1:

That bhikkhu who has not found any essence in existences,  
As one searching among fig trees (does not find) a flower,  
Leaves this shore and the far shore  
As a snake leaves its old worn out skin.

Ven. Ñāṇananda comments on this verse:

The arahant has abandoned his attachment to existence. As such, he is free from the bondage of those conjoined terms in worldly usage. So the arahant looks at the worldly usage in the same way as a snake would turn back and look at the worn-out skin he has sloughed off....

The monk, it seems, gives up not only this shore, but the other shore as well, even as the snake sloughs off its worn out skin. That skin has served its purpose, but now it is redundant. So it is sloughed off.... The transcendence of relativity involves freedom from the duality in worldly concepts

such as 'good' and 'evil'. The concept of a 'farther shore' stands relative to the concept of a 'hither shore'. The point of these discourses is to indicate that there is a freedom from worldly conceptual proliferations based on duality and relativity....

The term orapāraṃ, too, has many connotations. It stands for the duality implicit in such usages as the 'internal' and the 'external', 'one's own' and 'another's', as well as 'this shore' and the 'farther shore'. It is compared here to the worn out skin of a snake. It is worn out by transcending the duality characteristic of linguistic usage through wisdom. Why the Buddha first hesitated to teach this Dhamma was the difficulty of making the world understand. Perhaps it was the conviction that the world could easily be misled by those limitations in the linguistic medium. We make these few observations in order to draw attention to the relativity underlying such terms as 'this shore' and the 'other shore' and to show how Nibbāna transcends even that dichotomy.

And regarding verse thirty-five, there is MN 140:

His release, being founded on truth, does not fluctuate, for whatever is deceptive is false; Unbinding -- the undeceptive -- is true. Thus a monk so endowed is endowed with the highest determination for truth, for this -- Unbinding, the undeceptive -- is the highest noble truth.

And Sn 3.12:

Entrenched in name and form,  
They conceive that "This is true."

In whatever way (worldlings) conceive it,  
It turns out other than that.  
For that is what is false about it.  
Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

But nibbāna does not have a false nature.  
That the noble ones truly know.  
Through fully comprehending the truth,  
They are without hunger, quenched.

In Nibbāna Sermon 08, Ven. Ñāṇananda comments:

[A practitioner] will realize that, as in the case of the dumb show, he is involved with things that do not really exist. This amounts to an understanding that the factors of the name group are dependent on the form group, and vice versa. Seeing the reciprocal relationship between name-and-form, he is disinclined to dabble in concepts or gulp down a dose of prescriptions. If form is dependent on name, and name is dependent on form, both are void of essence. What is essential here, is the very understanding of essencelessness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 15, 2010 9:42 pm

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi Eric,

As Tilt suggests, Conze believed that the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra-s are referring to a monistic Absolute. Anyone well trained in the Indo-Tibetan tradition cannot support such an interpretation. Also, when approached through mādhyamaka exegesis the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra-s are entirely coherent and any supposed paradox or contradiction is merely superficial.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 16, 2010 8:14 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

I think Nāgārjuna would agree with this.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 16, 2010 9:49 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi all,

In his paper Dhamma and Non-duality Ven. Bodhi begins his critique of the Mahāyāna schools by asserting that:

The Mahayana schools, despite their great differences, concur in upholding a thesis that, from the Theravada point of view, borders on the outrageous. This is the claim that there is no ultimate difference between saṃsāra and Nirvāna, defilement and purity, ignorance and enlightenment.

This is simply an inaccurate appraisal of the two Indian Mahāyāna traditions (i.e. Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra). It is one thing to understand that saṃsāra and nirvāna are not ultimately established as independent ontological realities, and are therefore nominal designations (prajñapti); it is quite another to phrase it in terms implying an absolute unity, as Ven. Bodhi does, and then draw out the unwanted consequences of this characterture.

As the 8th century Indian mādhyamika Kamalaśīla states in his Bhāvanākrama-s, awakening depends upon differentiating and engaging in specific, unerring, and complete causes and conditions:

It is impossible for omniscience [i.e. enlightenment] to arise without causes since this would entail the absurd consequence whereby everyone could be omniscient all the time. If it could arise independently, it could exist everywhere without obstructions, and again everybody would be omniscient. Moreover, all functional things depend exclusively on causes because they only occur for certain persons at certain times. And so, because omniscience does not arise for everybody everywhere at all times, it most certainly depends upon causes and conditions. Also, from among those causes and conditions, one should rely on unerring and complete causes.

There is no reification of an “ultimate” in Indian Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra. And the path structure of these two systems necessitate an accurate differentiation of defilement and purity, ignorance and enlightenment. There is no path without such differentiation.

Moreover, Ven. Bodhi’s assumption that the transcendence of dualities “from the Theravāda point of view, borders on the outrageous” and that according to the Theravāda view “wisdom must respect phenomena in their precise particularity” is also questionable. For example, in *The Mind Stilled* Ven. Ñāṇananda, a Theravāda bhikkhu, states:

The transcendence of relativity involves freedom from the duality in worldly concepts such as 'good' and 'evil'. The concept of a 'farther shore' stands relative to the concept of a 'hither shore'. The point of these discourses is to indicate that there is a freedom from worldly conceptual proliferations based on duality and relativity.

And in his *Concept and Reality* (pp. 55–56), Ven. Ñāṇananda says:

Concepts – be they material or spiritual, worldly or transcendental – are not worthy of being grasped dogmatically. They are not to be treated as ultimate categories and are to be discarded in the course of the spiritual endeavour.... That the emancipated sage (muni) no longer clings even to such concepts as “nibbāna” or “detachment” (virāga) is clearly indicated in the following verse of the *Sutta Nipāta*:

“For the Brahmin (the Muni) who has transcended all bounds, there is nothing that is grasped by knowing or by seeing. He is neither attached to attachment nor is he attached to detachment. In this world, he has grasped nothing as the highest.” [Sn 795]

Ven. Bodhi repeatedly casts the goal of “the non-dual systems” in terms of a realization of a “final unity,” a “metaphysical unity,” an “all-embracing absolute,” an “all-embracing identification with the All,” and an “absolute or fundamental ground.” For example:

For those of such a bent, the dissolution of dualities in a final unity will always appear more profound and complete.... For the non-dual systems, all dualities are finally transcended in the realization of the non-dual reality, the Absolute or fundamental ground.

For the Indian Mahāyāna schools this is incorrect. There is no “final unity” or “absolute or fundamental ground” to be realized in either of the two Indian Mahāyāna traditions (i.e. Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra). In both traditions a mindstream is designated as an individual momentary continuum, and this pertains to buddhas as well as deluded sentient beings.

Ven. Bodhi goes on to opine that:

Since, for the non-dual systems, distinctions are ultimately unreal, meditation practice is not explicitly oriented toward the removal of mental defilements and the cultivation of virtuous states of mind.

Also incorrect. Both Mahāyāna Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra path structures involve employing all the necessary causes and conditions for the attainment of awakening. This means engaging all thirty-seven factors of awakening, which includes penetrating the four noble truths upon attaining the path of seeing. In addition, for the bodhisattva this necessarily involves mastering not only the four dhyāna-s, but also the five mundane higher gnoses, the four formless attainments, and the cessation attainment. This is because the bodhisattva has to develop experiential knowledge of all paths in order to eventually instruct others, and also because the bodhisattva’s aspiration is to attain the perfect awakening of a buddha, which includes mastery of all meditative attainments. To suggest that one can penetrate the four noble truths and master all of these meditative attainments and

eventually realize full awakening without the “removal of mental defilements and the cultivation of virtuous states of mind” is unsustainable.

That mastery of the dhyāna-s, etc., was of significant importance from the beginnings of the Mahāyāna is evident from reading the early Mahāyāna sūtra-s, which go to some length to praise forest seclusion and solitude. And that these passages remained in high esteem throughout the Indian Mahāyāna traditions can be seen from the fact that they were still being quoted in practice texts by the likes of Śāntideva and Vimalamitra many centuries later.

Ven. Bodhi also states that:

Nibbana, even in the early texts, is definitely cast as an ultimate reality and not merely as an ethical or psychological state....

Here we get a whiff of why the Mahāyāna Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra systems are so objectionable to Ven. Bodhi's realist abhidhammika sensibilities. For Ven. Bodhi nibbāna is necessarily an “ultimate reality” independent of cognition. Elsewhere Ven. Bodhi expands on his view of this matter, which further demonstrates a conflation of epistemology and ontology:

Nibbana is not only the destruction of defilements and the end of samsara but a reality transcendent to the entire world of mundane experience, a reality transcendent to all the realms of phenomenal existence....

[T]he Nibbana element remains the same, no matter whether many or few people attain Nibbana....

Nibbana is an actual reality and not the mere destruction of defilements or the cessation of existence. Nibbana is unconditioned, without any origination and is timeless.

Remedying this confusion and conflation of the epistemological and ontological was one of Nāgārjuna's primary concerns. And not only Nāgārjuna. Throughout *The Mind Stilled* as well as his other writings, Ven. Ñāṇananda has addressed this issue. For example:

To project Nibbāna into a distance and to hope that craving will be destroyed only on seeing it, is something like trying to build a staircase to a palace one cannot yet see. In fact this is a simile which the Buddha had used in his criticism of the Brahmin's point of view....

Lust, hate, delusion - all these are fires. Therefore Nibbāna may be best rendered by the word extinction. When once the fires are extinguished, what more is needed? But unfortunately Venerable Buddhaghosa was not prepared to appreciate this point of view. In his *Visuddhimagga* as well as in the commentaries *Sāratthappakāsinī* and *Sammohavinodanī*, he gives a long discussion on Nibbāna in the form of an argument with an imaginary heretic. Some of his arguments are not in keeping with either the letter or the spirit of the Dhamma.

First of all he gets the heretic to put forward the idea that the destruction of lust, hate and delusion is Nibbāna. Actually the heretic is simply quoting the Buddha word, for in the *Nibbānasutta* of the *Asaṅkhatasaṃyutta* the destruction of lust, hate and delusion is called Nibbāna: *Rāgakkhaya*, *dosakkhaya*, *mohakkhaya* - *idaṃ vuccati nibbānaṃ*.

The words *rāgakkhaya*, *dosakkhaya* and *mohakkhaya* together form a synonym of Nibbāna, but the commentator interprets it as three synonyms. Then he argues out with the imaginary heretic that if Nibbāna is the extinguishing of lust it is something common even to the animals, for they also extinguish their fires of lust through enjoyment of the corresponding objects of sense. This argument ignores the deeper sense of the word extinction, as it is found in the Dhamma....

It seems that the deeper implications of the word Nibbāna have been obscured by a set of arguments which are rather misleading....

More often than otherwise, commentarial interpretations of Nibbāna leave room for some subtle craving for existence, bhavataṇhā.... It conjures up a place where there is no sun and no moon, a place that is not a place. Such confounding trends have crept in probably due to the very depth of this Dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 17, 2010 3:11 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

No doubt essential at the higher stages; probably not necessary for stream entry. Of course, even as worldlings we can recognize the futility and hollowness of craving, grasping, and becoming from time to time, but without highly developed mindfulness and full awareness it is fleeting and usually the result of buyers remorse.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 17, 2010 3:21 am

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi DF,

There can certainly be consciousness of the object, as well as feeling and apperception. Even though that apperception is rooted in ignorance, there is still consciousness of an object, which is recognized/identified by apperception.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 19, 2010 11:23 am

Title: Re: Materialism, Dualism, Buddhism

Content:

Hi LE,



Yeah, Zhiyi certainly emphasized dhyāna as well as ethical conduct (śīla), etc. For the development of dhyāna, he suggested a 90 day period of practicing “constantly-sitting samādhi.” His Mohe Zhiguan describes the 90 day practice period:

One should constantly sit and should avoid walking, standing, or lying down. Although it is possible [to do this practice] in a place with other people, it is better to be alone. Sit alone in a quiet room, or in an open and peaceful place [outside], apart from all the tumult and clamor [of daily life]. Sit on a coarse cot, without any other seats [or other clutter] by your side. Ninety days make up one period. Sit properly in a cross-legged position, with your neck and backbone perfectly straight; do not move or waver or stoop or lean on anything. While sitting, vow to yourself that your ribs will not [so much as] touch the poles, let alone that you would sprawl [face-up] like a corpse, prance about, or stand up, except for walking meditation, eating, and going to the toilet. Face in the direction of a single Buddha [image], sitting erect face to face [with the Buddha], continuously for a fixed time without faltering.

“Just sitting” 專坐 is what should be done, and one should not do anything that hinders this purpose. Do not deceive the Buddha; do not burden your mind [with extraneous distractions]; do not fool [other] sentient beings.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 21, 2010 4:27 am

Title: Re: Enlightenment and the aggregates

Content:

Hi P & all,

Upon awakening one cannot be measured or classified in terms of the aggregates. For example, SN 22.36: Bhikkhu Sutta:

If one doesn't stay obsessed with form, lord, that's not what one is measured (anumīyati) by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified (saṅkha).

If one doesn't stay obsessed with feeling... apperception... fabrications...

If one doesn't stay obsessed with consciousness, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

MN 72: Aggivaccha Sutta:

Vaccha, any physical form by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form (rūpasāṅkha vimutto), Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom (gambhīro, appameyyo, duppariyogālo), like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

Any feeling... Any perception... Any mental fabrication...

Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness (viññāṇasaṅkha vimutto), Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom (gambhīro, appameyyo, duppariyogāḥo), like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

MN 22: Alagaddūpama Sutta:

Monks, when the gods with Indra, with Brahmā and with Pajāpati seek a monk who is thus liberated in mind, they do not find anything of which they could say: “The tathāgata’s consciousness is dependent (nissita) on this.” Why? A tathāgata, I declare, is untraceable (ananuvejja) here and now (diṭṭheva).

Dhammapada, v. 93:

Effluents ended, independent of nutriment, their pasture – emptiness and freedom without sign: their trail, like that of birds through space, can’t be traced.

SN 35.188 (CDB 35.229): Dutiyasamudda Sutta:

For whomever passion, aggression, and ignorance have faded away—  
He has crossed over this ocean which is hard to cross  
With its dangerous sharks, demons, and waves.

He has overcome attachment, conquered death, and is without acquisitions;  
Has abandoned suffering, for the sake of no further existence.  
“Gone out,” he cannot be measured (na pamāṇameti),  
I say that he has bewildered the king of death.

In a number of sutta-s (e.g. S iv 119, S iv 186, S iv 189, S iv 199, & M i 270) an arahant’s mind is designated as a “measureless mind” (appamāṇacetasa → being free from any sort of measuring → pamāṇa). Elsewhere it is designated as “unestablished consciousness” (appatiṭṭha viññāṇa). Yet another designation is “featureless consciousness” (anidassana viññāṇa). All of these designations refer to the liberated mind “abiding independent, not clinging to anything in the world” (yāvadeva ñāṇamattāya paṭissatimattāya anissito ca viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 21, 2010 12:05 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

The four jhāna-s play an essential role in the development of the noble eightfold path according to

the discourses. They are given as the definition of right concentration (sammāsamādhi), the training of heightened mind (adhicittasikkhā), as well as the faculty of concentration (samādhindriya) and the strength of concentration (samādhibala) as practiced by a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka).

According to the suttas there can be no awakening without mastery of at least the first jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 21, 2010 12:16 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Inference is employed to discern the impermanence, etc., of whatever is not present. Whatever is present is discerned as either arising, altering while persisting, or passing away. AN 3.47: Monks, these three are fabricated characteristics of what is fabricated. Which three? Arising is discernible, passing away is discernible, alteration (literally, other-ness) while staying is discernible.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 21, 2010 1:45 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi Bodom,

Sorry for the confusion. That is what I meant.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 23, 2010 5:09 pm

Title: Re: Enlightenment and the aggregates

Content:

Hi P,

Yes. A living arahant still has sense faculties. Thus they still experience pleasure and pain (only bodily pain though). This is saupādisesa nibbānadhātu (nibbāna element with fuel remaining). But this doesn't mean that they can be measured or classified in terms of the five aggregates. For the arahant there is no passion for the nutriments of food, contact, intention, or consciousness (cf. SN 12.64).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 23, 2010 5:19 pm

Title: Re: Samatha v. vipassana?

Content:

Hi pt1,

I wouldn't (if you're referring to the theory of momentariness that is). I attempted to articulate why in another previous post of this same thread.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 03, 2010 11:11 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Hi Mike,

You could. But first of all you would have to establish that I hold a "non-dual vision," whatever that is???

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 03, 2010 11:18 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Hi Matt & all,

Mādhyaṃaka arose as a critique and corrective of Sarvāstivāda tenets. Because the Sarvāstivāda was a Nikāya school which didn't accept the authority of any non-canonical sūtra-s, the Indian mādhyaṃika authors cited canonical statements which are common to the discourses of the Sanskrit āgama-s and the Pāli nikāya-s as scriptural support for their critiques. Their critique was never meant to refute the Pāli sutta-s and was never intended as a critique of the early Pāli Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

As for how the two Indian Mahāyāna traditions (i.e. Mādhyaṃaka and Yogācāra) can be misrepresented there is a review of Ven. Bodhi's paper Dhamma and Non-duality in this post.

A brief comparison of a few verses from Nāgārjuna with the Pāli Nikāya-s can be found in this post.

And here are some excerpts from the canonical Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññakathā (Khuddakanikāya):  
What is emptiness in [relation to] change?

Born, form is empty of self-nature (sabhāvena suñña); disappeared, form is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling is empty of self-nature; disappeared, feeling is both changed and empty.

Born, perception is empty of self-nature; disappeared, perception is both changed and empty.

Born, fabrications are empty of self-nature; disappeared, fabrications are both changed and empty.

Born, consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye is empty ... the ear is empty ... the nose is empty ... the tongue is empty ... the body is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, forms are empty ... sounds are empty ... odors are empty ... flavors are empty ... tactile sensations are empty of self-nature; disappeared, they are both changed and empty.

Born, visual consciousness is empty ... auditory consciousness is empty ... olfactory consciousness is empty ... gustatory consciousness is empty ... tactile consciousness is empty ... mental consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, eye-contact is empty ... ear-contact is empty ... nose-contact is empty ... tongue-contact is empty ... body-contact is empty ... mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling born of eye-contact is empty ... feeling born of ear-contact is empty ... feeling born of nose-contact is empty ... feeling born of tongue-contact is empty ... feeling born of body-contact is empty ... feeling born of mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, perception of forms is empty ... perception of sounds is empty ... perception of odors is empty ... perception of flavors is empty ... perception of tactile sensations is empty ... perception of mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, volitional intention pertaining to forms is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to sounds is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to odors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to flavors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, craving for forms is empty ... craving for sounds is empty ... craving for odors is empty ... craving for flavors is empty ... craving for tactile sensations is empty ... craving for mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, directed thought pertaining to forms is empty ... directed thought pertaining to sounds is empty ... directed thought pertaining to odors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to flavors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... directed thought pertaining to

mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, examination pertaining to forms is empty ... examination pertaining to sounds is empty ... examination pertaining to odors is empty ... examination pertaining to flavors is empty ... examination pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... examination pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye sensory sphere is empty ... the form sensory sphere is empty ... the ear sensory sphere is empty ... the sound sensory sphere is empty ... the nose sensory sphere is empty ... the odor sensory sphere is empty ... the tongue sensory sphere is empty ... the flavor sensory sphere is empty ... the body sensory sphere is empty ... the tactile sensation sensory sphere is empty ... the mind sensory sphere is empty ... the mental phenomena sensory sphere is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the visual consciousness element is empty ... the ear element is empty ... the sound element is empty ... the auditory consciousness element is empty ... the nose element is empty ... the odor element is empty ... the olfactory consciousness element is empty ... the tongue element is empty ... the flavor element is empty ... the gustatory consciousness element is empty ... the body element is empty ... the tactile sensation element is empty ... the tactile consciousness element is empty ... the mind element is empty ... the mental phenomena element is empty ... the mental consciousness element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the sensual desire element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the formless element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, ignorance is empty ... fabrications are empty ... consciousness is empty ... name and form are empty ... the sixfold sensory spheres are empty ... contact is empty ... feeling is empty ... craving is empty ... grasping is empty ... becoming is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

What is supreme emptiness?

This dhamma is supreme, this dhamma is superior, this dhamma is excellent: the calming of all fabrications, the release of all acquisitions, the exhaustion of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna. This is supreme emptiness.

What is internal emptiness?

Internally the eye is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is internal emptiness.

What is external emptiness?

Externally form is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally sound is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally odor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally flavor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally tactile sensation is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally mental phenomena are empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is external emptiness.

What is emptiness both ways?

Internally the eye and externally form are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear and externally sound are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose and externally odor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue and externally flavor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body and externally tactile sensation are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind and externally mental phenomena are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is emptiness both ways.

What is the ultimate meaning (paramattha) of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware?

Here, through renunciation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of sensual desire; through nonaggression one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of aggression; through perception of light one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of dullness and drowsiness; through nondistraction one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of agitation; through understanding phenomena one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of doubt; through knowledge one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of ignorance; through gladness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of boredom.

Through the first jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the hindrances; through the second jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of directed thought and examination; through the third jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of rapture; through the fourth jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of pleasure; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite space one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perceptions of form, perceptions of resistance, and perceptions of diversity; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite space; through the attainment of the sphere of nothingness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite consciousness; through the attainment of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-nonperception one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of nothingness.

Through the contemplation of impermanence one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of permanence; through the contemplation of unsatisfactoriness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of satisfactoriness; through the contemplation of not-self one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of self; through the contemplation of dispassion one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of delight; through the contemplation of fading away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of greed; through the contemplation of cessation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of arising; through the contemplation of relinquishment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of grasping; through the contemplation of decay one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of compactness; through the contemplation of fall one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of accumulation; through the contemplation of change one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of everlastingness; through the contemplation of signlessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of signs; through the contemplation of desirelessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of desire; through the contemplation of emptiness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation; through the clear seeing of phenomena that is higher discernment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to grasping at a core; through gnosis and seeing one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to delusion; through the contemplation of [the] danger [of fabrications] one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to reliance [on fabrications]; through the contemplation of reflection one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of non-reflection; through the contemplation of turning away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to bondage.

Through the stream-entry path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of defilements associated with wrong view; through the once-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of gross defilements; through the non-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of secondary defilements; through the arahant path one who is fully aware



terminates the occurrence of all defilements [i.e. ignorance].

Or through the nibbāna element (nibbānadhātu) without any grasping remaining for one who is fully aware this occurrence of eye ends and no further occurrence of eye arises; this occurrence of ear ends and no further occurrence of ear arises; this occurrence of nose ends and no further occurrence of nose arises; this occurrence of tongue ends and no further occurrence of tongue arises; this occurrence of body ends and no further occurrence of body arises; this occurrence of mind ends and no further occurrence of mind arises.

This is the ultimate meaning of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 03, 2010 11:59 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Indeed. Nailed a complete misrepresentation of Indian Mahāyāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 03, 2010 6:47 pm

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

Hi Porpoise & all,

All feeling (vedanā) is designated as mental (cetasika; cf. MN 44). But the suttas differentiate between pleasure & pain (sukha & dukkha) born of body-contact (kāyasamphassa) on the one hand (cf. SN 48.37), and happiness & unhappiness (somanassa & domanassa) born of mind-contact (manosamphassa) on the other (cf. SN 48.37). A noble disciple still experiences bodily pain but no mental distress because of it (cf. SN 36.6: "He feels one feeling -- a bodily one, not a mental one.").

Translating dukkha exclusively as either "pain" or "suffering" in the context of dukkha ariyasacca isn't very accurate. A better translation is "unsatisfactoriness." This unsatisfactoriness is to be fully understood (dukkha pariññeyya), and consists of:

Dukkhadukkhatā: the unsatisfactoriness of pain

jāti: birth

jarā: aging

byādhi: illness

marāṇa: death

soka: sorrow

parideva: grieving

dukkha: pain

domanassa: unhappiness

upāyāsā: despair

Vipariṇāmadukkhata: the unsatisfactoriness of change

appiyehi sampayogo: association with what is unpleasant

piyehi vippayogo: separation from what is pleasant

yampiccha na labhati tampi: not getting what is wanted

Saṅkhāradukkhata: the unsatisfactoriness of fabrications

pañcupādānakkhandhā: the five aggregates of grasping

MN 141 Saccavibhaṅga Sutta gives an analysis of the different designations of dukkha listed here in the context of the first noble truth. Among those designations are:

And what is pain (dukkha)? Whatever is experienced as bodily pain, bodily discomfort, pain or discomfort born of bodily contact, that is called pain.

And what is unhappiness (domanassa)? Whatever is experienced as mental pain, mental discomfort, pain or discomfort born of mental contact, that is called unhappiness.

Itivuttaka 44 tells us that a living arahant still experiences pain. From the above we can infer that the pain experienced by the living arahant who has realized nibbāna (i.e. saupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna element with fuel remaining) is bodily pain only. The complete cessation of all dukkha whatsoever only occurs when there is no more "fuel" remaining (i.e. anupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna element with no fuel remaining).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 05, 2010 2:11 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Pretty simple really: the three N's:

1. Not wavering (i.e. the development of sīla)
2. Non-distraction (i.e. the development of samādhi)
3. Not grasping (i.e. the development of paññā)

Ajahn Chah explains the development of the latter two quite nicely in the following:

If the breath is coarse, we know that it's coarse, if it's subtle we know that it's subtle. As it becomes increasingly fine we keep following it, while simultaneously awakening the mind. Eventually the breath disappears altogether and all that remains is the feeling of wakefulness. This is called meeting the Buddha. We have that clear wakefulness that is called "Buddho," the one who knows, the one who is awake, the radiant one. It is meeting and dwelling with the Buddha, with knowledge and clarity. For it was only the historical flesh-and-blood Buddha that entered parinibbana; the true Buddha, the Buddha that is clear radiant knowing, we can still experience and attain today, and when we do so the heart is one.

So let go, put everything down, everything except the knowing. Don't be fooled if visions or sounds arise in your mind during meditation. Put them all down. Don't take hold of anything at all. Just stay with this non-dual awareness. Don't worry about the past or the future, just be still and you will

reach the place where there's no advancing, no retreating and no stopping, where there's nothing to grasp at or cling to. Why? Because there's no self, no "me" or "mine." It's all gone. The Buddha taught us to be emptied of everything in this way, not to carry anything with us. To know, and having known, let go.

Realizing the Dhamma, the path to freedom from the round of birth and death, is a job that we all have to do alone.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 05, 2010 5:09 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Personally, I don't find either the realist inclinations of the classical Theravāda or the dialectical bent of Nāgārjuna to be of much value, or in keeping with the soteriological teachings of the Pāḷi dhammavinaya.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 05, 2010 10:12 am

Title: Re: Nondualism

Content:

Hi Peter,

That was "realist," not "realistic." And was in reference to the commentarial conflation of epistemology and ontology with regard to nibbāna. Ven. Ñāṇananda:

More often than otherwise, commentarial interpretations of Nibbāna leave room for some subtle craving for existence, bhavaṭaṇhā.... It conjures up a place where there is no sun and no moon, a place that is not a place. Such confounding trends have crept in probably due to the very depth of this Dhamma.

But each to their own.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Aug 06, 2010 9:51 pm

Title: Re: the five aggregates  
Content:  
Good reply Jason.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Aug 09, 2010 3:50 am  
Title: Re: Buddhism, Religion?  
Content:  
Hi Thaibebop,

How do you know that the Buddha didn't understand and teach about rebirth based upon his own direct knowledge of former existences?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Aug 09, 2010 4:29 pm  
Title: Re: Buddhism, Religion?  
Content:

There is no good reason to dismiss this possibility. A self-limiting approach will only yield (i) limited results, or (ii) no results.

Moreover, since there is no historical record whatsoever of an atheistic dhammavinaya, I would suggest that your atheistic, rationalist-only buddha is a myth of your own creation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Aug 09, 2010 4:49 pm  
Title: Re: Buddhism, Religion?  
Content:

Yes, seriously. There is absolutely no call for self-righteous indignation, aggressive sarcasm, and belligerence here on Dhamma Wheel Thaibebop.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Aug 10, 2010 8:53 am  
Title: Re: Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda  
Content:  
Hi all,

Some of Ven. Ñāṇananda's books can be downloaded here:  
<http://seeingthroughthenet.net/eng/gen. ... =other&p=1>

His Ideal Solitude: An Exposition on the Bhaddekaratta Sutta can be downloaded here:  
<http://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh188.pdf>

Audio files of Ven. Ñāṇananda reading the first 25 of his Nibbāna Sermons (in English) can be downloaded here: <http://seeingthroughthenet.net/eng/gen. ... cat=nn&p=1>

His Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation can be downloaded as a .doc file here:  
<http://www.beyondthenet.net/calm/SEEING%20THROUGH.doc> (You will need to have the Times\_CSX+ fonts installed in your operating system fonts folder for the diacritics of this .doc file to display properly. They can be downloaded here:  
[http://www.beyondthenet.net/calm/clm\\_main1.asp](http://www.beyondthenet.net/calm/clm_main1.asp).)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Aug 10, 2010 1:15 pm  
Title: Re: Buddhism, Religion?  
Content:  
I'll leave it up to you and others to delimit just what is or is not religious about the dhamma. I don't have an opinion one way or the other.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Aug 14, 2010 6:43 am  
Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana  
Content:  
Hi Mike & all,

Nettipakaraṇa 4.42, which is the first of nine examples of “the mode of conveying ways of entry to the truths,” explains guidelines for how to comment upon the fruition attainments. A careful reading provides us with at least a conceptual map of the four fruition attainments, and some appropriate designations to use to describe them. First, the Netti cites the verse from Ud 7.1 Paṭhamalakunḍakabhaddiya Sutta, and then explains how this verse pertains to a non-learners

liberation (asekhāvimutti), i.e. the arahant's fruition attainment, and then a learner's liberation (sekhāvimutti), i.e. the first three fruition attainments, but specifically in terms of the fruition of stream entry:

Above, below, everywhere released,

He does not see that "I am this."

Thus liberated, he crosses the flood

Not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

[Non-learner's liberation: Asekhāvimutti]

Above is the form element and the formless element. Below is the sensual desire element. Everywhere released is the non-learner's liberation (asekhāvimutti) from the triple element [of existence]. That itself is the non-learner's five faculties (pañcindriyāni: i.e. faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment). This is the way of entry by faculties.

These same non-learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional fabrications; with the cessation of volitional fabrications, the cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form; the cessation of the six sense spheres; with cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, the cessation of grasping; with the cessation of grasping, the cessation of becoming; with the cessation of becoming, the cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death cease, and [also] sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair; that is how there is the cessation to this whole aggregate of unsatisfactoriness. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

Those same non-learner's five faculties are comprised within the three aggregates, namely the aggregate of ethical conduct (sīlakkhandha), the aggregate of concentration (samādhikkhandha), and the aggregate of discernment (paññākkhandha). This is the way of entry by aggregates.

Those same non-learner's five faculties are included in fabrications. These fabrications, [which in this case are] free from mental outflows (āsavā) and are not factors of existence, are comprised within the dhamma element (dhammadhātu). This is the way of entry by elements.

That dhamma element is included in the dhamma sphere (dhammāyatana), which [in this case] is free from mental outflows and not a factor of existence. This is the way of entry by spheres.

[Learner's liberation: Sekhāvimutti]

He does not see that "I am this." This is the eradication of identity-view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi). That is the learner's liberation (sekhāvimutti). That itself is the learner's five faculties. This is the way of entry by faculties.

Those same learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional fabrications; thus the whole of dependent arising. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

That same knowledge is the discernment aggregate (paññākkhandha). This is the way of entry by

aggregates.

That same knowledge is included in fabrications. These fabrications, [which in this case are] free from mental outflows and are not factors of existence, are comprised within the dhamma element (dhammadhātu). This is the way of entry by elements.

That dhamma element is included in the dhamma sphere (dhammāyatana), which [in this case] is free from mental outflows and not a factor of existence. This is the way of entry by spheres.

It is one liberated by means of the learner's liberation and the non-learner's liberation (sekkhāya ca vimuttiya asekkhāya ca vimuttiya) who crosses the flood not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

Also, in Nibbāna Sermon 15 Ven. Ñāṇananda states:

What actually happens in the attainment to the fruit of arahant-hood? The worldling discerns the world around him with the help of six narrow beams of light, namely the six sense-bases. When the superior lustre of wisdom arises, those six sense-bases go down. This cessation of the six sense bases could also be referred to as the cessation of name-and-form, nāmarūpanirodha, or the cessation of consciousness, viññāṇanirodha.

The cessation of the six sense-bases does not mean that one does not see anything. What one sees then is voidness. It is an in-'sight'. He gives expression to it with the words suñño loko, "void is the world." What it means is that all the sense objects, which the worldling grasps as real and truly existing, get penetrated through with wisdom and become non-manifest.

And from his Concept and Reality (p. 67):

With his penetrative insight the Arahant sees through the concepts. Now, an object of perception (ārammaṇa) for the worldling is essentially something that is brought into focus -- something he is looking at. For the Arahant, however, all concepts have become transparent to such a degree in that all-encompassing vision, that their boundaries together with their umbra and penumbra have yielded to the radiance of wisdom. This, then, is the significance of the word 'anantaṃ' (endless, infinite). Thus the paradoxically detached gaze of the contemplative sage as he looks through concepts is one which has no object (ārammaṇa) as the point of focus for the worldling to identify it with.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 15, 2010 10:05 am

Title: Re: I Believe in Literal Rebirth - Poll

Content:

Indeed. And if we ever need a bit of help motivating us to get to the cushion and remain there, the sutta-s offer us some skillful contemplations and themes for reflection:

There are these five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. Which five?

'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' This is the first fact that one should reflect on

often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.' This is the second fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.' This is the third fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.' This is the fourth fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am the owner of my actions (kamma), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.' This is the fifth fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

These are the five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. [AN 5.57]

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed the monks. "Whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, 'O, that I might live for a day & night... for a day... for the interval that it takes to eat a meal... for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal' — they are said to dwell heedlessly. They develop mindfulness of death slowly for the sake of ending the effluents.

"But whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, 'O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food... for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal' — they are said to dwell heedfully. They develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents. [AN 6.19]

This Dhamma is for one who wants little, not for one who wants much.

This Dhamma is for the contented, not for the discontented.

This Dhamma is for the secluded, not for one fond of society.

This Dhamma is for the energetic, not for the lazy.

This Dhamma is for the mindful, not for the unmindful.

This Dhamma is for the composed, not for the uncomposed.

This Dhamma is for the wise, not for the unwise.

This Dhamma is for one who is free from impediments, not for one who delights in impediments. [AN 8.30]

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 15, 2010 10:29 am

Title: Re: vimuttimagga

Content:

Hi JC & all,

Not sure about when BPS will publish another edition of the old translation, but Ven. Ñāṇatusita (BPS editor) is working on a new translation which he says should be finished in the next year or two.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 15, 2010 11:12 am

Title: Re: I Believe in Kamma and its Effects - Poll

Content:

Indeed. This present life affords us a rare and precious opportunity to hear and practice the dhamma.

AN 8.29 Akkhaṇa Sutta:

Bhikkhus, there are eight times, eight instances not suitable to lead the holy life. What eight?

Here, bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One, worthy, rightfully enlightened endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knower of the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, the Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed is born in the world. The Teaching leading to quietness and extinction, taught by the Well Gone One, is preached. This person is born in hell. Bhikkhus, this is the first unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Again, bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One, worthy, rightfully enlightened endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knower of the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, the Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed is born in the world. The Teaching leading to quietness and extinction, taught by the Well Gone One, is preached. This person is born in the animal world. Bhikkhus, this is the second unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Again, bhikkhus, ... re ... this person is born in the sphere of ghosts ...

Again, bhikkhus, ... re ... this person is born as a certain god with long life ...

Again, bhikkhus, ... re ... this person is born to someone in the bordering states among not learned Barbarians, where bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples male or female are not seen. Bhikkhus, this is the fifth unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Again, bhikkhus, ... re ... this person is born to someone in the central states, he is with wrong view, with a perverted view- There are no results for giving gifts, there are no results for an offering, for a sacrifice. There are no results for good and evil actions. There is no this world, there is no other

world. There is no mother, no father. There are no beings spontaneously arisen. In this world there are no recluses and Brahmins who have come to the right path and having realized by themselves declare it ... re ...

Again, bhikkhus, ... re ... this person is born to someone in the central states without wisdom, with saliva dripping, not able to discriminate between good and evil words to know something. Bhikkhus, this is the seventh unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Again, bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One worthy and rightfully enlightened ... re ... Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed is born in the world. The Teaching leading to quietness extinction preached by the Well Gone One is not preached. This person is born to someone in the central states wise, without saliva dripping, able to discriminate between good and evil words to know the meanings. Bhikkhus, this is the eighth unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Bhikkhus, there is one right instance to lead the holy life, the Thus Gone One, worthy, rightfully enlightened endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knower of the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, the Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed is born in the world. The Teaching leading to quietness and extinction, taught by the Well Gone One, is preached. This person is born to someone in the central states wise, without saliva dripping, able to discriminate between good and evil words to know the meanings. Bhikkhus, this is the only instance to lead the holy life.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 15, 2010 11:43 am

Title: Re: I Believe in Literal Rebirth - Poll

Content:

Hi Pariyatti,

No, different Geoff.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 15, 2010 2:43 pm

Title: Re: How common is stream entry?

Content:

Yes. Credentialism -- a worldly dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 16, 2010 12:29 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Hi Kenshou,

There are numerous Theravāda teachers and practitioners who don't subscribe to the (rather late) commentarial interpretation of the paths and fruitions which rests on the theory of momentariness and the reification of nibbāna as a vacuum state (i.e. such as the attainment of cessation of apperception and feeling). I think you're probably already aware of this, but for the sake of presenting an alternate perspective there's the following....

Itivuttaka 43 (Iti 37):

This said by the Blessed One, the Worthy One, was heard by me in this way: "Monks, there is freedom from birth, freedom from becoming, freedom from making, freedom from conditioning. For, monks if there were not this freedom from birth, freedom from becoming, freedom from making, freedom from conditioning, then escape from that which is birth, becoming, making, conditioning, would not be known here. But, monks, because there is freedom from birth, freedom from becoming, freedom from making, freedom from conditioning, therefore the escape from that which is birth, becoming, making, conditioning is known."

[Here the Buddha, The Blessed One, offers his own verse commentary on his statement.]

This meaning the Blessed One spoke, it is spoken here in this way:

That which is born, become, arisen, made, conditioned,  
And thus unstable, put together of decay and death,  
The seat of disease, brittle,  
Caused and craving food,  
That is not fit to find pleasure in.

Being freed of this, calmed beyond conjecture, stable,  
Freed from birth, freed from arising, freed from sorrow,  
Freed from passions, the elements of suffering stopped,  
The conditioning [of greed, hatred and delusion] appeased,  
This is ease [bliss].

This fruitional liberation is realized through discernment of dependent arising in reverse sequence giving rise to dispassion, etc., eventually culminating in gnosis of the complete elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion (i.e. nibbānañāṇa) . For example, Nettippakaraṇa 4.42:

These same non-learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, cessation of volitional fabrications; with the cessation of volitional fabrications, cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form; cessation of the six sense spheres; with cessation of the six sense spheres, cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, cessation of grasping; with the cessation of grasping, cessation of becoming; with the cessation of becoming, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death cease, and [also] sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair; that is how there is the cessation to this whole aggregate of unsatisfactoriness. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

Which for the non-learner (i.e. arahant) is experienced as unestablished consciousness (appatiṭṭha viññāṇa), as in SN 12.38 (S ii 65): Cetanāsutta:

[W]hen one doesn't intend, arrange, or obsess [about anything], there is no support for the stationing of consciousness. There being no support, there is no establishing of consciousness. When that consciousness doesn't land & grow, there is no production of renewed becoming in the

future. When there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering & stress.

Which elsewhere is designated as a "measureless mind" (appamāṇacetasa, cf. S iv 119, S iv 186, S iv 189, S iv 199, & M I 270), or "featureless consciousness" (anidassana viññāṇa), etc. DN 11 (D i 211) Kevaḍḍhasutta:

Consciousness without feature,  
Without end, luminous all around:  
Here water, earth, fire,  
And wind have no footing.  
Here long & short  
Coarse & fine fair & foul  
Name & form  
Are all brought to an end.  
With the cessation of consciousness  
Each is here brought to an end.

That is, viññāṇassa nirodhena etth'etaṃ uparujjhati: With the cessation of the stationing of consciousness [i.e. viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā nirodhena] each is here brought to an end. Or as Ven.

Ñāṇananda says:

The vacant gaze [of an arahant] is, in fact, not established anywhere (appatiṭṭham). It has no existence (appavattaṃ) and it is objectless (anārammaṇaṃ).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 16, 2010 4:28 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Hi Mike,

I can't speak for Ven. Ñāṇananda, but yes, that is how I understand what he is saying. We can also look at what else he says on the subject. In Concept and Reality he equates the experience of featureless/non-manifestative consciousness (anidassana viññāṇa) with the fruition-gnosis samādhi (aññāphala samādhi) of an arahant, which after first attainment can be re-entered later as the arahant's meditation. AN 9.37 describes this samādhi as follows:

Sister, the concentration whereby -- neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed -- still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of gnosis.

On page 61 of Concept and Reality Ven. Ñāṇananda discusses this samādhi:

The unique feature of this samādhi is its very fluxional character. In it there is no such fixity as to justify a statement that it 'depends on' (nissāya) some object (ārammaṇa) as its support -- hence the frustration of gods and men who seek out the basis of the Tathāgata's consciousness. Normally, the jhānas are characterized by an element of fixity on which consciousness finds a footing or a steadying point. It is on this very fixity that the illusion of the ego thrives. In the above jhāna of the

emancipated one, however, the ego has melted away in the fire of wisdom which sees the cosmic process of arising and cessation. Not only has the concept "I" (*papañca* par excellence) undergone combustion, but it has also ignited the data of sensory experience in their entirety. Thus in this *jhāna* of the Arahant, the world of concepts melts away in the intuitional bonfire of universal impermanence.

And on p. 67:

With his penetrative insight the Arahant sees through the concepts. Now, an object of perception (*ārammaṇa*) for the worldling is essentially something that is brought into focus -- something he is looking at. For the Arahant, however, all concepts have become transparent to such a degree in that all-encompassing vision, that their boundaries together with their umbra and penumbra have yielded to the radiance of wisdom. This, then, is the significance of the word '*anantaṃ*' (endless, infinite). Thus the paradoxically detached gaze of the contemplative sage as he looks through concepts is one which has no object (*ārammaṇa*) as the point of focus for the worldling to identify it with.

The following excerpts from the *Nibbāna Sermons* help clarify these passages:

What actually happens in the attainment to the fruit of arahant-hood? The worldling discerns the world around him with the help of six narrow beams of light, namely the six sense-bases. When the superior lustre of wisdom arises, those six sense-bases go down. This cessation of the six sense bases could also be referred to as the cessation of name-and-form, *nāmarūpanirodha*, or the cessation of consciousness, *viññāṇanirodha*.

The cessation of the six sense-bases does not mean that one does not see anything. What one sees then is voidness. It is an in-'sight'. He gives expression to it with the words *suñño loko*, "void is the world." What it means is that all the sense objects, which the worldling grasps as real and truly existing, get penetrated through with wisdom and become non-manifest....

With the dispelling of the perception of permanence, the tendency to grasp a sign or catch a theme is removed. It is due to the perception of permanence that one grasps a sign in accordance with perceptual data. When one neither takes a sign nor gets carried away by its details, there is no aspiration, expectation, or objective by way of craving. When there is no aspiration, one cannot see any purpose or essence to aim at.

It is through the three deliverances, the signless, the desireless, and the void, that the drama of existence comes to an end. The perception of impermanence is the main contributory factor for the cessation of this drama....

Why do we call the vision of the arahant a vacant gaze? At the highest point of the development of the three characteristics impermanence, suffering and not-self, that is, through the three deliverances *animitta*, *appaṇihita* and *suññata*, the "signless", the "undirected" and the "void", the arahant is now looking at the object with a penetrative gaze. That is why it is not possible to say what he is looking at. It is a gaze that sees the cessation of the object, a gaze that penetrates the object, as it were....

Since the world is built up by the six sense-spheres, it has also to cease by the cessation of those six sense-spheres. That is why *Nibbāna* is defined as the cessation of the six sense-spheres, *saḷāyatananirodho Nibbānaṃ*. All those measuring rods and scales lose their applicability with the cessation of the six sense-spheres.

How can there be an experience of cessation of the six sense-spheres? The cessation here meant is

actually the cessation of the spheres of contact. A sphere of contact presupposes a duality. Contact is always between two things, between eye and forms, for instance. It is because of a contact between two things that one entertains a perception of permanence in those two things. Dependent on that contact, feelings and perceptions arise, creating a visual world. The visual world of the humans differs from that of animals. Some things that are visible to animals are not visible to humans. That is due to the constitution of the eye-faculty. It is the same with regard to the ear-faculty. These are the measuring rods and scales which build up a world. Now this world, which is a product of the spheres of sense-contact, is a world of *papañca*, or "proliferation". *Nibbāna* is called *nippapañca* because it transcends this proliferation, puts an end to proliferation. The end of proliferation is at the same time the end of the six sense-spheres....

It is the substructure of this sense created world that the Buddha has revealed to us in this particular discourse on impermanence. The substructure, on analysis, reveals a duality, *dvayaṃ*, *bhikkhave*, *paṭicca viññāṇaṃ sambhoti*, "dependent on a dyad, monks, arises consciousness". Consciousness is not something substantial and absolute, like the so-called soul. That is precisely the point of divergence for Buddhism, when compared with those religious systems which rely on soul theories.

In the Dhamma there is mention of six consciousnesses, as *cakkhu-viññāṇa*, *sotaviññāṇa*, *ghānaviññāṇa*, *jivhāviññāṇa*, *kāyaviññāṇa* and *manoviññāṇa*, eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-consciousness. Everyone of these consciousnesses is based on a dyad. Just as in the case of eye-consciousness we are given the formula beginning with *cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca*, "dependent on eye and forms", so with regard to ear-consciousness we get *sotañca paṭicca sadde ca*, "dependent on ear and sounds", and so on. Even when we come to mind-consciousness, the theme is the same, *manañca paṭicca dhamme ca*, "dependent on mind and mind-objects". Mind also is vibrating, changing and transforming with extreme rapidity every moment. So are the objects of the mind.

The entire world is structured on these vibrant, transient and evanescent basic elements. That is the burden of this powerful discourse of the Buddha. Therefore, if someone developed the contemplation of impermanence to the highest degree and brought his mind to the signless state, having started from the sign itself, it goes without saying that he has realized the cessation of the world. That is, the experience of *Nibbāna*.

It is, at the same time, the cessation of proliferation, *papañcanirodha*. Prolific conceptualization is founded on the perception of permanence, whereby one comes under the sway of reckonings born of prolific perceptions, *papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*. Proliferation creates things, giving rise to the antinomian conflict. Duality masquerades behind it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 17, 2010 12:18 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 17, 2010 1:50 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

That which is the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion is nibbana. -- S.N. IV 251 and IV 321

That which is the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion is asankhata. -- S.N. IV 359 and S.N. 362

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 17, 2010 2:07 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 18, 2010 1:11 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Not all arahants are liberated both ways. SN 12.70 and AN 4.87 tell us of arahants liberated through discernment who don't have any of the formless attainments. Without mastery of the formless attainments one cannot attain the cessation of apperception and feeling.

Moreover, the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling (or any other vacuum state "attainment" of any duration that one might posit as asaṅkhata) cannot be synonymous with nibbāna because these states are impermanent. One enters them and one exits them. On the other hand, the complete elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion -- i.e. nibbāna -- is a not-conditioned (asaṅkhata) attainment which is irreversible. The other three fruitions are irreversible also, each with their respective degree of liberation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 1:28 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Even the commentaries admit that cessation of apperception and feeling is not asaṅkhata (cf. Kathāvatthu).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 2:17 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Hi Eric,

Whenever one is engaged in supramundane right view there is no generation of mental effluents at that time.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 6:32 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

One who has attained the fruition of stream entry has abandoned identity view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), i.e. self-view (attānudiṭṭhi), but still hasn't abandoned craving for existence (bhava-taṇhā), which includes craving for a high birth, i.e. desire for form existence (rūparāga).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 12:13 pm

Title: Re: About nibbana

Content:

Hi Zom,

Even in the Visuddhimagga the cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti), a.k.a. the cessation of apperception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodha), while nominally mentioned as similar to nibbāna in a couple of passages, nevertheless is not the same as nibbāna. Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.



It also can't be designated as the same as nibbāna because, as the Visuddhimagga points out, the cessation attainment requires mastery of the four formless attainments before it can be entered. Since there are arahants who haven't developed the formless attainments, they are incapable of attaining the cessation of apperception and feeling. Nevertheless, they are fully liberated through discernment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 1:32 pm

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Hi Sunrise,

There are these ten fetters. Which ten? Five lower fetters & five higher fetters. And which are the five lower fetters? Self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at precepts & practices, sensual desire, and ill will. These are the five lower fetters. And which are the five higher fetters? Passion for form, passion for what is formless, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. These are the five higher fetters. And these are the ten fetters. [AN 10.13]

In this community of monks there are monks who are arahants, whose mental effluents are ended, who have reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, laid to waste the fetter of becoming, and who are released through right gnosis: such are the monks in this community of monks.

In this community of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of the five lower fetters, are due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world: such are the monks in this community of monks.

In this community of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of [the first] three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, are once-returners, who — on returning only once more to this world — will make an ending to stress: such are the monks in this community of monks.

In this community of monks there are monks who, with the wasting away of [the first] three fetters, are stream-winners, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening: such are the monks in this community of monks.

In this community of monks there are monks who remain devoted to the development of the four frames of reference... the four right exertions... the four bases of power... the five faculties... the five strengths... the seven factors for awakening... the noble eightfold path: such are the monks in this community of monks. [MN 118]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 19, 2010 3:52 pm

Title: Re: About nibbana

Content:

The Nikāya-s and the Abhidhammapiṭaka are both in agreement that there can be no gnosis (ñāṇa) without simultaneous concomitant perception (saññā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Aug 20, 2010 9:15 am

Title: Re: "advice for stream entry"

Content:

A bit of Ajahn Chah's advice on the subject from Food for the Heart:

The Buddha is still alive to this very day, go in and find him. Where is he? At aniccam, go in and find him there, go and bow to him: aniccam, uncertainty. You can stop right there for starters.

If the mind tries to tell you, "I'm a sotapanna now," go and bow to the sotapanna. He'll tell you himself, "It's all uncertain." If you meet a sakadagami go and pay respects to him. When he sees you he'll simply say "Not a sure thing!" If there is an anagami go and bow to him. He'll tell you only one thing..."Uncertain." If you meet even an arahant, go and bow to him, he'll tell you even more firmly, "It's all even more uncertain!" You'll hear the words of the Noble Ones..."Everything is uncertain, don't cling to anything."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 21, 2010 7:30 am

Title: Re: About nibbana

Content:

Hi Zom & all,

All four main Nikāya-s define right concentration (sammāsamādhi) as the four jhāna-s (D ii 313, M iii 252, S v 10, A ii 25). AN 3.88 (A i 235) lists the four jhāna-s as the training of heightened mind (adhicittasikkhā). SN 48.10 (S v 198) lists the four jhāna-s as the faculty of concentration (samādhindriya) as practiced by a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka). AN 5. 14 (A iii 11) lists the four jhāna-s as the strength of concentration (samādhibala) as practiced by a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka). Moreover, SN 12.70 (S ii 121) and AN 4.87 (A ii 87) both state that there are arahants who don't have the formless attainments. And of 500 arahants mentioned in SN 8.7 (S i 191), only 60 are said to be liberated both ways (i.e. have mastery of the formless attainments).

Also, in the Dhammasaṅgaṇi, where the distinction is made between mundane form sphere jhāna (rūpāvacarajjhāna) and formless sphere jhāna (arūpāvacarajjhāna) on the one hand, and supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna) needed for all four paths on the other hand, supramundane jhāna is defined exclusively as the four jhāna-s (or five by dividing the first jhāna into two).

In none of these instances are the four formless attainments or the cessation attainment ever mentioned in the context of right concentration as a component of the noble eightfold path. Thus your equating nibbāna with the cessation of apperception and feeling is unsustainable, since it is entirely possible to realize nibbāna without ever experiencing the cessation attainment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 21, 2010 11:03 am

Title: Re: vimuttimagga

Content:

For anyone interested, here are a couple of papers which discuss aspects of the Vimuttimagga in relation to the Visuddhimagga:

The Treatise on the Path to Liberation and the Visuddhimagga by Ven. Anālayo.

The Mystery of the Breath Nimitta by Ven. Soṇa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 22, 2010 7:09 am

Title: Re: Experience (of?) Nibbana

Content:

Bad translation and therefore meaningless conclusion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 22, 2010 7:48 am

Title: Re: About nibbana

Content:

There are numerous dedicated meditators and commentators who have devoted their life to the

dhammavinaya and who disagree with Mahāsi Sayādaw.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 22, 2010 5:01 pm

Title: Re: About nibbana

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 24, 2010 11:24 pm

Title: Re: If you could only recommend 4 books...

Content:

Without trying to separate dhamma from meditation, I often recommend one of these (depending on the individual):

A Path With Heart by Jack Kornfield.

A Heart as Wide as the World by Sharon Salzberg.

Food for the Heart: The Collected Teachings of Ajahn Chah by Ajahn Chah. (Same teachings available online here.)

The Wings to Awakening by Ven. Ṭhānissaro. (Available online here.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 25, 2010 4:46 am

Title: Re: If you could only recommend 4 books...

Content:

An advanced student of what???

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 5:14 pm

Title: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāli dhamma

Content:

Hmmm.... That's true, "emptiness" has been used in all sorts of ways throughout the centuries in

support of various views. Nevertheless, there are many teachings on emptiness (suññatā) and related teachings throughout the Pāḷi dhamma. IMO it might be worthwhile to consider how emptiness is used in its various applications in the Pāḷi canon. For example:

And what is the emptiness awareness-release (suññatā cetovimutti)? There is the case where a monk, having gone into the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or into an empty dwelling, considers this: 'This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self.' This is called the emptiness awareness-release. [MN 43, SN 41.7]

“Sāriputta, your faculties are clear. The color of your skin is pure and bright. What abiding do you often abide in now, Sāriputta?”

“Now, venerable sir, I often abide in voidness (suññatāvihāra).”

“Good, good, Sāriputta! Now, indeed, you often abide in the abiding of a great man. For this is the abiding of a great man, namely, voidness.

“So, Sāriputta, if a bhikkhu would wish: ‘May I now often abide in voidness,’ he should consider thus: ‘On the path by which I went to the village for alms, or in the place where I wandered for alms, or on the path by which I returned from the almsround, was there any desire, lust, hate, delusion, or aversion in my mind regarding forms cognizable by the eye?... regarding sounds cognizable by the ear?... regarding odors cognizable by the nose?... regarding flavors cognizable by the tongue?... regarding tangibles cognizable by the body?... regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind?’ If, by reviewing, he knows thus: ‘On the path by which I went to the village for alms...there was desire, lust, hate, delusion, or aversion in my mind regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind,’ then he should make an effort to abandon those evil unwholesome states. But if, by reviewing, he knows thus: ‘On the path by which I went to the village for alms...there was no desire, lust, hate, delusion, or aversion in my mind regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind,’ then he can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states.” [MN 151]

'Empty village' (suñña gāma) stands for the six internal sense media. If a wise, competent, intelligent person examines them from the point of view of the eye, they appear abandoned, void, & empty. If he examines them from the point of view of the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the intellect, they appear abandoned, void, & empty. [SN 35.197 (CDB SN 35.238)]

And there are entire discourses on emptiness:

MN 121 Cūḷasuññatā Sutta

MN 122 Mahāsuññatā Sutta

MN 122 Mahāsuññatā Sutta & Commentary

SN 35.85 Suñña Sutta

SN 22.95 Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta

And also entire discourses on teaching by the middle (majjhena dhamma):

SN 12.17 Acelakassapa Sutta (Also SN 12.15, SN 12.35, SN 12.48, SN 22.90, etc.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 5:15 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāli dhamma

Content:

And entire commentaries on emptiness. For example, Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññatākathā (excerpts):  
What is emptiness in [relation to] change?

Born, form is empty of self-nature (sabhāvena suñña); disappeared, form is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling is empty of self-nature; disappeared, feeling is both changed and empty.

Born, perception is empty of self-nature; disappeared, perception is both changed and empty.

Born, fabrications are empty of self-nature; disappeared, fabrications are both changed and empty.

Born, consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, consciousness is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye is empty ... the ear is empty ... the nose is empty ... the tongue is empty ... the body is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, forms are empty ... sounds are empty ... odors are empty ... flavors are empty ... tactile sensations are empty of self-nature; disappeared, they are both changed and empty.

Born, visual consciousness is empty ... auditory consciousness is empty ... olfactory consciousness is empty ... gustatory consciousness is empty ... tactile consciousness is empty ... mental consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, eye-contact is empty ... ear-contact is empty ... nose-contact is empty ... tongue-contact is empty ... body-contact is empty ... mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling born of eye-contact is empty ... feeling born of ear-contact is empty ... feeling born of nose-contact is empty ... feeling born of tongue-contact is empty ... feeling born of body-contact is empty ... feeling born of mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, perception of forms is empty ... perception of sounds is empty ... perception of odors is empty ... perception of flavors is empty ... perception of tactile sensations is empty ... perception of mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, volitional intention pertaining to forms is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to sounds is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to odors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to flavors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, craving for forms is empty ... craving for sounds is empty ... craving for odors is empty ... craving for flavors is empty ... craving for tactile sensations is empty ... craving for mental phenomena is

empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, directed thought pertaining to forms is empty ... directed thought pertaining to sounds is empty ... directed thought pertaining to odors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to flavors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... directed thought pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, examination pertaining to forms is empty ... examination pertaining to sounds is empty ... examination pertaining to odors is empty ... examination pertaining to flavors is empty ... examination pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... examination pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye sensory sphere is empty ... the form sensory sphere is empty ... the ear sensory sphere is empty ... the sound sensory sphere is empty ... the nose sensory sphere is empty ... the odor sensory sphere is empty ... the tongue sensory sphere is empty ... the flavor sensory sphere is empty ... the body sensory sphere is empty ... the tactile sensation sensory sphere is empty ... the mind sensory sphere is empty ... the mental phenomena sensory sphere is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the visual consciousness element is empty ... the ear element is empty ... the sound element is empty ... the auditory consciousness element is empty ... the nose element is empty ... the odor element is empty ... the olfactory consciousness element is empty ... the tongue element is empty ... the flavor element is empty ... the gustatory consciousness element is empty ... the body element is empty ... the tactile sensation element is empty ... the tactile consciousness element is empty ... the mind element is empty ... the mental phenomena element is empty ... the mental consciousness element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the sensual desire element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the formless element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, ignorance is empty ... fabrications are empty ... consciousness is empty ... name and form are empty ... the sixfold sensory spheres are empty ... contact is empty ... feeling is empty ... craving is empty ... grasping is empty ... becoming is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

What is supreme emptiness?

This dhamma is supreme, this dhamma is superior, this dhamma is excellent: the calming of all fabrications, the release of all acquisitions, the exhaustion of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna. This is supreme emptiness.

What is internal emptiness?

Internally the eye is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and

everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is internal emptiness.

What is external emptiness?

Externally form is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally sound is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally odor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally flavor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally tactile sensation is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally mental phenomena are empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is external emptiness.

What is emptiness both ways?

Internally the eye and externally form are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear and externally sound are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose and externally odor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue and externally flavor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body and externally tactile sensation are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.



Internally the mind and externally mental phenomena are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is emptiness both ways.

What is the ultimate meaning (paramattha) of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware?

Here, through renunciation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of sensual desire; through nonaggression one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of aggression; through perception of light one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of dullness and drowsiness; through nondistraction one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of agitation; through understanding phenomena one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of doubt; through knowledge one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of ignorance; through gladness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of boredom.

Through the first jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the hindrances; through the second jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of directed thought and examination; through the third jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of rapture; through the fourth jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of pleasure; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite space one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perceptions of form, perceptions of resistance, and perceptions of diversity; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite space; through the attainment of the sphere of nothingness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite consciousness; through the attainment of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-nonperception one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of nothingness.

Through the contemplation of impermanence one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of permanence; through the contemplation of unsatisfactoriness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of satisfactoriness; through the contemplation of not-self one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of self; through the contemplation of dispassion one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of delight; through the contemplation of fading away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of greed; through the contemplation of cessation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of arising; through the contemplation of relinquishment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of grasping; through the contemplation of decay one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of compactness; through the contemplation of fall one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of accumulation; through the contemplation of change one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of everlastingness; through the contemplation of signlessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of signs; through the contemplation of desirelessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of desire; through the contemplation of emptiness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation; through the clear seeing of phenomena that is higher discernment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to grasping at a core; through gnosis and seeing one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to delusion; through the contemplation of [the] danger [of fabrications] one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to reliance [on fabrications]; through the contemplation of reflection one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of non-reflection; through the contemplation of turning away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to bondage.

Through the stream-entry path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of defilements associated with wrong view; through the once-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of gross defilements; through the non-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of secondary defilements; through the arahant path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of all defilements [i.e. ignorance].

Or through the nibbāna element (nibbānadhātu) without any grasping remaining for one who is fully aware this occurrence of eye ends and no further occurrence of eye arises; this occurrence of ear ends and no further occurrence of ear arises; this occurrence of nose ends and no further occurrence of nose arises; this occurrence of tongue ends and no further occurrence of tongue arises; this occurrence of body ends and no further occurrence of body arises; this occurrence of mind ends and no further occurrence of mind arises.

This is the ultimate meaning of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware.

Paṭisambhidāmagga Vimokkhakathā (excerpts):

Monks, there are these three liberations (vimokkha). What three? Emptiness liberation, signlessness liberation, and desirelessness liberation. These, monks, are three liberations.

What is emptiness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no misinterpretation [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through emptiness. This is emptiness liberation.

What is signlessness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no signs [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through signlessness. This is signlessness liberation.

What is desirelessness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no desire [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through desirelessness. This is desirelessness liberation.

Knowledge from contemplation of the impermanence of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being permanent.

Knowledge from contemplation of the unsatisfactoriness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being satisfactory.

Knowledge from contemplation of the selflessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being a self.

Knowledge from contemplation of the signlessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as having signs.

Knowledge from contemplation of the desirelessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being desirable.

Knowledge from contemplation of the emptiness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from all misinterpretation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 5:21 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

This view is also found in the Sanskrit Āgamas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 5:54 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

No playing involved. This thread is about suññatā as taught in the Pāḷi dhamma. And suññatā is an important teaching according to the Pāḷi dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 6:13 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

My mistake for not framing the quote from Peter more explicitly. The intent wasn't and isn't to "call out" Peter. The intent was to point to what is and is not suññatā according to the Pāḷi dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 6:29 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

You feel insulted Peter?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 6:44 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

Ah. Nevertheless I'm interested to hear what strategy Peter feels I was trying to employ?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 28, 2010 8:42 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

You're no shrinking violet Peter. And your quote wasn't taken out of context. I didn't give any context for your quote at all. And seeing that that has caused some confusion, I apologize.

Now, to be clear: This thread is about discussing suññatā according to the teachings of the Pāḷi dhamma. It's not about Peter or Geoff or Eric Berne or Ven. Thích Nhất Hạnh.

All the best,

Geoff

Edit: I've edited the OP to better give accurate context to this thread.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 29, 2010 12:44 am

Title: Re: Thich Nhat Hanh: Dependant Co-arising & Inter-Being

Content:

Hi Christopher & all,

Paticcasamuppāda, a.k.a. pratītyasamutpāda, a.k.a. 緣起, a.k.a. rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba is not a "Theravāda" teaching. It's a teaching common to all Buddhist schools that have any meaningful connection to the Indian traditions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 29, 2010 2:19 am

Title: Re: Thich Nhat Hanh: Dependant Co-arising & Inter-Being

Content:

Interpenetration in action!... No impenetrable boundaries ... evah!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 29, 2010 11:50 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness (suññatā) in the Pāḷi dhamma

Content:

Hi Peter,

I've always considered your style to be appropriate. And I've always appreciated your contributions to discussions.

IMO (and I'm sure you're aware of this too) this type of internet forum conversation -- where bits of each participants contribution are frozen in time, and there is no possibility of fully ascertaining the tone or the body language or the general disposition, etc., of the other participants comments in real time and in person -- imposes some limitations on accurate interpretation and understanding which would not be present in person to person conversation. Thus, for myself it seems important to generally give other posters the benefit of assuming that they are not trying to cause dissonance; and informed disagreement is always an opportunity for me to learn and to try to improve my own communication skills. On that note, this thread has demonstrated my lack of accurately considering your perspective when I carelessly added your post to the OP without clarification of why your post stimulated me to create this thread in the first place.

Anyway, I wish you'd continue here, as Dhamma Wheel is richer with you than without you. But as you feel that it's time to take leave, I respect that too. It's my hope that you'll at least keep open the possibility of returning at some point.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 30, 2010 1:37 am

Title: Re: Thich Nhat Hanh: Dependant Co-arising & Inter-Being

Content:

Hi dhamma follower,

Why should Ven. Hānḥ's teachings need to conform to the sutta-s of the Pāḷi Canon? His tradition isn't based on the Pāḷi Canon and the bodhisattvayāna isn't explicitly taught in the Pāḷi Canon at all. (Hence Ven. Dhammapāla's use of the Bodhisattvabhūmi from the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra when composing his commentary on the Pāramī-s for Theravāda practitioners who wish to engage in the perfections and practice the mahābodhiyāna of bodhisatta-s.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 30, 2010 2:28 am

Title: Re: Thich Nhat Hanh: Dependant Co-arising & Inter-Being

Content:

Yes, certainly.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 31, 2010 8:48 pm

Title: Re: Regarding the absence of "JCSuperstar"

Content:

May James and his loved ones find some comfort in the dhamma during this difficult time.

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 03, 2010 3:36 am

Title: Re: Latest from "hardcore dharma"

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 03, 2010 9:24 pm

Title: Re: Breath this... Breath that...

Content:

Hi Mettafuture,

I practice earth kasiṇa and/or air kasiṇa meditation every day and find it very useful for developing deep calm (samatha). The aim of the practice is the attunement of apperception to the totality of whichever kasiṇa one is working with, but for developing calm I've found that it's best to start with the commentarial method of using a circular disk. I use potting soil leveled flat in a large shallow bowl for an earth kasiṇa disk, and also have a few color kasiṇas cut out of colored cloth. Anyway, a few sources on kasiṇa practice to get started:

The Meaning of Kasiṇa by Dmytro Ivakhnenko.

Colour-Kasiṇa Meditation.

Meditation of Divine Dwelling in Elements and Colours.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 07, 2010 3:20 am

Title: Re: Latest from "hardcore dharma"

Content:

As the "hardcore dharma" people are every bit as marginal as the above self-proclaimed "teachers" there is no significant "deep division within the Western Buddhist community." Sure there are people deluded enough to encourage such nonsense, but that's their problem.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 08, 2010 11:59 pm

Title: Re: basic teachings

Content:

Hi Mike & all,

There is no reification of dhammas in the Abhidhammapiṭaka. The classical and medieval ābhidhammika commentaries are another matter. There is a gap in abhidhamma studies between correlating the discourses with the main texts of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, as well as the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Peṭakopadesa, and the Nettippakaraṇa, on the one hand, and the classical and medieval interpretations of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, etc., on the other. The realist and ontological propositions in Professor Karunadasa's paper which are based on classical and medieval interpretation are not sustainable with reference to the canonical and para-canonical Pāḷi texts themselves.

One of the few studies which even begins to take into consideration the historical development of ābhidhammika ideas in a meaningful way is Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition by Noa Ronkin.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 09, 2010 5:01 am

Title: Re: Basic Abhidhamma teachings

Content:

Hi Mike,

I think you probably understand this already, but I'll add it as a further qualification of my previous comment....

The dhamma is a way, a path coursing away from dissatisfaction and toward authentic liberation. Thus there's always a question of the skillfulness of a presentation, which is informed by the speaker's and the listener's view, and offers the possibility of further informing the listener's view. When we move away from the noble eightfold path embedded in the canon in search of understanding, the possibility arises of encountering self-limiting interpretations either rooted in a desire to set boundaries of orthodox definition not evident in the canon itself, or the opposite desire to discard much if not everything that's not explicitly stated in the suttas (or beyond this, discarding whatever we deem unacceptable in the suttas as well). Either of these moves, if accepted uncritically, can impose conceptual filters upon what we acknowledge as the possible interpretation of our own experience (i.e. view) as well as the path components to be implemented in our practice.

We only need to look at the widespread contemporary emphasis on a path of training and development which doesn't fully embrace the integration of non-carnal joy and pleasure (nirāmisā pīti and sukha), which the discourses tell us are integral sweet fruits of the ascetic life, or alternatively, the uncritical rejection of everything not supposedly uttered by the Buddha, to begin to recognize some of the consequences of accepting self-limiting interpretations of what the noble path "should be."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 09, 2010 12:31 pm

Title: Re: Basic Abhidhamma teachings

Content:

Yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 10, 2010 4:36 pm

Title: Re: Pali Term: Dhamma-vicaya

Content:

Please continue to keep up the good work Dmytro. This post is particularly clear and well said.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 11, 2010 3:09 am



Title: Re: Buddho

Content:

Hi all,

Here is a little gāthā that I once came up with on the practice of buddho.

Araham

Buddho is to be individually known (paccatta veditabba).

Buddho is great compassion (mahākaruṇā).

Buddho is non-indicative (anidassana).

Buddho is objectless (anārammaṇa).

Buddho is unestablished (appatiṭṭha).

Buddho is measureless (appamāṇa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 14, 2010 10:57 am

Title: Re: Richard Gombrich

Content:

Hi Suan & all,

For anyone who is interested there are a number of Bronkhorst's papers and such available on the Université de Lausanne Unisciences site.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 14, 2010 7:12 pm

Title: Re: Endless hours talking about nothing.

Content:

From reading the title of this thread I thought it was going to be about Tilt's summation of the hardcore dharma thread....

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 15, 2010 4:14 pm

Title: Re: Know and Let Go

Content:

Thanks Steve, a very good dhamma talk.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 20, 2010 1:19 am

Title: Re: Bardo?

Content:

Hi Dan & all,

The Tibetan term bardo corresponds to the Sanskrit antarābhava. The notion of an intermediate state isn't a Tibetan innovation. It goes all the way back to various early Nikāya sects. And it certainly informs Chinese Buddhism, and I would suspect Korean Buddhism also.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 27, 2010 1:13 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

However, this description of blissed-out "ambulance jhāna" doesn't find any support in the discourses. According to the discourses there is full mindfulness and clear comprehension in all four jhānas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 27, 2010 9:40 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

Then it seems to me that my post addresses this point. There are ancient Thera texts much older than the Visuddhimagga that offer commentary on jhāna which is far more in keeping with the suttas than the classical model presented in the Vsm. Kester's notion of a "usual interpretation" is limited due to source bias. Therefore, his rhetoric about an "unusual, modern interpretation" of jhāna is both inaccurate and tired -- it really should be put to bed. There was and still is a whole vibrant world of Pāli dhamma beyond the supposed confines of the Mahāvihāra.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 27, 2010 11:29 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

Historically the Visuddhimagga occupies a rather marginal place in the history of Indian Buddhism. The Vimuttimagma on the other hand, was twice translated in part into Tibetan and fully translated into Chinese.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 27, 2010 11:55 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

Then what is the subject here?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:32 am

Title: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi all,

Here is some of the Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas paper. The focus is on what the Pāḷi suttas have to tell us regarding the role of jhāna in the noble eightfold path. I also examine passages which define and detail the phenomena experienced in each of the four jhānas. Emphasis is placed on the investigation of the first jhāna, as well as the noble eightfold path resulting in liberation through discernment (paññāvimutti). Liberation through discernment is considered the complete liberation of an arahant, which doesn't require the attainment of any other five higher gnoses (abhiññā), formless attainments, or the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling.

I'm well aware that this subject matter may not be of interest to some people. It's posted here for those who are interested. For anyone who doesn't find the contents of this thread informative or helpful, I respectfully and wholeheartedly agree that they would be better served to follow whatever interpretation of the dhammavinaya that they have faith in and find helpful. It runs counter to the intent of the dhamma for anyone who isn't fully awakened to maintain definite conclusions that "Only this is true; anything else is worthless" (MN 95).

All the best,

Geoff

## The Importance of Jhāna in the Development of the Noble Eightfold Path

According to the discourses the four jhānas play an essential role in the development of the noble eightfold path. All four main Nikāyas define right concentration (sammāsamādhi) as jhāna. The four jhānas are also given as the training of heightened mind (adhicittasikkhā), as well as the faculty of concentration (samādhindriya) and the strength of concentration (samādhibala) as practiced by a noble disciple (ariya sāvaka). According to the suttas and the earliest strata of canonical commentary and para-canonical commentary, all of these factors have to be engaged and developed for full awakening to occur.

This means that liberation through discernment (paññā-vimutti) cannot happen without mastery of at least the first jhāna. This integral relationship between jhāna and discernment (paññā) is explicit in the description of the noble eightfold path, where jhāna is given as the definition of right concentration, and is also explicitly stated in other discourses as well. An unequivocal example of this integral relationship is clearly expressed in Dhammapada 371-372:

Practice jhāna monk; do not be heedless.

Do not let your mind roam in strands of sensual pleasure.

Do not swallow a red-hot iron ball, heedless.

Do not burn and cry, "This is pain."

There is no jhāna for one without discernment,  
No discernment for one without jhāna.  
But for one with both jhāna and discernment,  
He is close to nibbāna.

And also AN 9.36 Jhāna Sutta:

I say, monks, the elimination of the mental outflows depends on the first jhāna.

DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta tells us that the elimination of the mental outflows (āsavas) can occur while remaining in the fourth jhāna:

With his mind thus concentrated, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the elimination of the mental outflows. He understands as it really is that, 'This is unsatisfactoriness... This is the origination of unsatisfactoriness... This is the cessation of unsatisfactoriness... This is the way leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness....'

Thus knowing, thus seeing, his mind is liberated from the mental outflow of sensuality, the mental outflow of becoming, the mental outflow of ignorance. With liberation there is the gnosis, 'liberated.' He understands that, 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here.'

Now if the elimination of the mental outflows requires the development of concentration regarding the rise and fall of the five aggregates of clinging — and AN 4.41 Samādhi Sutta tells us that it does — then one is necessarily developing concentration regarding the rise and fall of the aggregates of clinging here, specifically in the context of the four noble truths, by engaging the mind thus concentrated, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities, pliant, malleable, and steady in the fourth jhāna.

Again, AN 9.36 states that the elimination of the mental outflows depends on attaining at least the first jhāna. If one can end the āsavas through the fourth jhāna as stated in DN 2, then there is no

reason to maintain that one must emerge from the first jhāna to do the same.

This understanding of liberation through discernment requiring mastery of at least the first jhāna is also implied in discourses which state that one liberated through discernment doesn't abide in any of the formless attainments (MN 70) or have any of the five mundane higher gnoses (SN 12.70). It is also implicit in the description of the "white lotus ascetic" (samaṇapuṇḍarīka) offered in AN 4.87 Samaṇamacala Putta Sutta, where it is said that this type of arahant doesn't abide personally experiencing the eight deliverances (aṭṭha vimokkha), yet has both liberation of mind (cetovimutti) and liberation through discernment. Liberation of mind requires mastery of at least the first jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:33 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The Pāḷi Jhāna Formula

The standard jhāna formula is as follows:

Idha bhikkhave vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja vihāreti. (DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta)

Here monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, a monk enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

We can examine the jhāna formula by comparing the various terms mentioned in it with other occurrences of those and related terms found throughout the suttas.

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures (vivicceva kāmehi)

The first relevant sutta passage is one that occurs in various suttas. For example, AN 6.63 Nibbedhika Sutta states:

Monks, there are these five strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā). Forms cognizable by the eye: desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, tantalizing. Sounds cognizable by the ear... odors cognizable by the nose... flavors cognizable by the tongue... tactual objects cognizable by the body: desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, tantalizing.

It is clear that the sensual pleasures referred to in the jhāna formula that are to be withdrawn from prior to entering jhāna, include these five types of external objects referred to as strands of sensual pleasure which are desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, and tantalizing.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning here. Firstly, these five strands of sensual pleasure are all external sensory objects. As such, they correspond to objects within the five external sensory spheres (bāhirāyatana). Thus, these five sensory objects do not include in-and-out breathing, which is considered internal, nor the internal felt-sense of the body. The strands of sensual pleasure also do not include the apperception of foulness with regard to the thirty-one parts of the body and the nine stages of corpse decomposition. Apperception of foulness is a mental phenomenon.

Secondly, these five strands of sensual pleasure are those external sensory objects that are considered to be desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, and tantalizing. And so it

isn't all sensory objects whatsoever that the meditator need to withdraw from. The meditator needs to withdraw from those external sensory objects which are sensually enticing and tantalizing, as stated here. This withdrawal is facilitated by removing oneself from inappropriate environments for meditation and by abandoning the hindrance of desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda). Both are necessary prerequisites for entering the first jhāna.

As for the relationship between the withdrawal from inappropriate environments and external sensory objects MN 150 Nagaravindeyya Sutta informs us that one practicing for the removal of passion resorts to a remote location:

[T]hose venerable ones resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest. For there are no forms cognizable by the eye there of a kind that they could look at and delight in. There are no sounds cognizable by the ear there of a kind that they could listen to and delight in. There are no odors cognizable by the nose there of a kind that they could smell and delight in. There are no flavors cognizable by the tongue there of a kind that they could taste and delight in. There are no tactual objects cognizable by the body there of a kind that they could touch and delight in.

Continuing with AN 6.63, we can see that a clear distinction is made between sensual pleasures (kāma) and the five strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā). After defining the five strands of sensual pleasure in the previous passage, the Buddha states:

But monks, these are not sensual pleasures (kāma). They are called strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā) in the discipline of the noble ones.

The resolve of passion is a man's sensual pleasure.  
The world's beautiful things are not sensual pleasures.  
The resolve of passion is a man's sensual pleasure.  
The beauties remain as they are in the world,  
While the wise remove desire for them.

Here the Buddha is differentiating sensual pleasures (kāma) which are the resolve of passion (saṅkapparāga), from the beautiful external sensory objects of that passion, pertaining to which the wise remove desire. The removal of this passionate desire is a major theme of the dhammavinaya. This removal begins with practicing sense restraint (indriya saṃvara), developing the thought of renunciation (nekkhamma vitakka), and is progressively accomplished through the integration of the three path aggregations of ethical conduct (sīla), meditation (samādhi), and discernment (paññā). This eventually culminates in the fruition of the path which includes the complete elimination of the mental outflow of sensuality (kāmasava).

What these discourses imply is that sensory objects are not inherently "kāma" in and of themselves. MN 13 Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta tells us that the strands of sensual pleasure are the allure of kāma. SN 3.12 Pañcarāja Sutta confirms that the very forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects which are agreeable to one person, are disagreeable to another.

Thus external sensory objects are only strands of sensual pleasure if they are agreeable, sensually enticing and tantalizing. And Itivuttaka 72 informs us that renunciation is the escape from sensual pleasures.

In SN 36.19 Pañcakaṅga Sutta the Buddha tells Ven. Ānanda that whatever pleasure or happiness arises in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure is called sensual pleasure. And MN 86 Laṭukikopama Sutta states that this sensual pleasure is:

[A] filthy pleasure, a worldly pleasure, an ignoble pleasure. And I say that this pleasure is not to be cultivated, not to be developed, not to be pursued, that it is to be feared.

Based on these statements it follows that any visible objects of the nine stages of corpse decomposition (DN 22, MN 10) associated with the apperception of foulness, or the visible sphere consisting of “the ridges and hollows, the rivers and ravines, the tracts of stumps and thorns, the mountains and irregular places” associated with the apperception of forest (MN 121), which are engaged for developing calm (samatha) in the course of attaining jhāna, cannot be strands of sensual pleasure. If they were, any concomitant pleasure and happiness which would arise in dependence upon these sensory objects would be inappropriate and not worth development (bhāvanā).

This distinction between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the appropriate objects to be employed for mental development is indicated in SN 47.6 Sakuṇagghi Sutta, which clearly differentiates between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the four applications of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhānā). In this discourse one is instructed to avoid wandering into the range of the five strands of sensual pleasure and instead remain in one’s own proper range of the four satipaṭṭhānas: Do not stray, monks, into what is not your own range and is the domain of others. Māra will gain access to those who stray into what is not their own range and is the domain of others. Māra will get a hold on them.

And what, for a monk, is not his own range and is the domain of others? The five strands of sensual pleasure.... These, for a monk, are not his own range and are the domain of others.

Move, monks, in what is your own range, your own ancestral domain. Māra will not gain access to those who move in their own range, their own ancestral domain. Māra will not get a hold on them.

And what, for a monk, is his own range, his own ancestral domain? The four applications of mindfulness. Which four? Here monks, a monk remains contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and unhappiness with regard to the world. He remains contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... phenomena in phenomena, ardent, fully aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and unhappiness with regard to the world. This, for a monk, is his own range, his own ancestral domain.

With the four applications of mindfulness as the cause for entering and remaining in jhāna, one doesn’t attend to, or partake in any of the five external strands of sensual pleasure. MN 26 Pāsārāsī Sutta states that this allegorically blinds Māra. And as SN 35.115 Dutiyamārapāsa Sutta tells us, if one doesn’t seek delight or grasp onto any sensually enticing phenomenon, then one is said to have escaped from Māra’s snare.

Secluded from unskillful phenomena (vivicca akusalehi dhammehi)

Returning to the jhāna formula, we can next investigate the withdrawal from unskillful phenomena (akusala dhammas). MN 13 Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta states that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct (kāyena duccharita, vācāya duccharita, manasā duccharita) have sensuality as their cause and source. MN 9 Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta elaborates on these three types of misconduct by giving the standard tenfold list of misconduct:

Taking life is unskillful, taking what is not given is unskillful, sexual misconduct is unskillful, lying is unskillful, abusive speech is unskillful, harsh speech is unskillful, gossip is unskillful, covetousness is unskillful, aversion is unskillful, wrong view is unskillful.

AN 3.102 Paṃsudhovaka Sutta tells us that this level of bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct are coarse defilements. This sutta goes on to state that thoughts of sensual pleasure, thoughts of aversion, and thoughts of harmfulness are considered middling defilements. And thoughts of one’s

friends and relatives, thoughts of one's homeland, and thoughts of not wanting to be disliked are considered subtle defilements. With the abandoning of all of these types of defilement there remain only thoughts related to the dhamma. But one still has to develop one's mind so that it grows steady inwardly, settles down, and grows unified and concentrated.

And in SN 45.22 Akusaladhamma Sutta, we read that wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration are unskillful phenomena. Conversely, the same discourse states that skillful phenomena are right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. And as we have already seen, right concentration (sammāsamādhi) is defined as jhāna.

And so it's evident that the unskillful phenomena that are to be withdrawn from prior to entering jhāna and while remaining in jhāna are all coarse, middling, and subtle defilements which are unskillful dhammas of body, speech, and mind. And this is accomplished by developing the noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:34 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

The Hindrances: Five Things Abandoned in the First Jhāna

Before we investigate the jhāna formula any further, we can take a look at what specifically is abandoned in order to enter and remain in the first jhāna, namely, the five hindrances (pañcanīvaraṇā). MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta, tells us:

Five factors are abandoned in the first jhāna.... Here, when a monk has entered the first jhāna, desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda) is abandoned, aversion (byāpāda) is abandoned, lethargy and drowsiness (thīnamiddha) is abandoned, restlessness and anxiety (uddhaccakukkucca) is abandoned, doubt (vicikicchā) is abandoned.

MN 39 Mahāssapura Sutta elaborates:

Here monks, a monk resorts to a secluded dwelling: a forest, the shade of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, an open space, a heap of straw. After his meal, returning from his alms round, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body upright, and brings mindfulness to the fore.

Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world [a synonym for the first hindrance], he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness. Abandoning aversion and anger, he dwells with a mind devoid of aversion, sympathetic to the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of aversion and anger. Abandoning lethargy and drowsiness, he dwells with a mind devoid of lethargy and drowsiness, mindful, fully aware, clearly percipient. He cleanses his mind of lethargy and drowsiness. Abandoning restlessness and anxiety, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and anxiety. Abandoning doubt, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to skillful phenomena. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

The abandoning of the five hindrances are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the attainment of the first jhāna. The arising of the five factors of the first jhāna are also necessary. With both of these conditions satisfied — the abandoning of the five hindrances and the arising of the five jhāna



factors — the meditator has fulfilled the necessary and sufficient conditions of the first jhāna.

#### The Jhāna Factors: Five Phenomena the First Jhāna Is Endowed With

Returning to the jhāna formula, we can take a look at the phenomena which are present in the first jhāna. MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta tells us that the first jhāna is endowed with five factors: The first jhāna has five factors. Here, when a monk has entered the first jhāna, there occurs directed thought (vitakka), evaluation (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and singleness of mind (cittakaggatā). That is how the first jhāna has five factors.

With directed thought and evaluation (savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ)

In the thought-world of the Pāli discourses, directed thought (vitakka) is closely related to resolve (saṅkappa). MN 78 Samaṇamuṇḍika Sutta tells us that unskillful resolves cease in the first jhāna and that skillful resolves (kusalā saṅkappā) consisting of the resolve of renunciation (nekkhamma-saṅkappa), the resolve of non-aversion (abyāpādasāṅkappa), and the resolve of harmlessness (avihiṃsāsāṅkappa) don't cease until the second jhāna. This provides some context as to the meaning and significance of directed thought and evaluation (vicāra) in the standard jhāna formula. The Samaṇamuṇḍika Sutta states:

And what are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation, on non-aversion, on harmlessness. These are called skillful resolves. What is the cause of skillful resolves? Their cause, too, has been stated, and they are said to be apperception-caused. Which apperception? — for apperception has many modes and permutations. Any renunciation-apperception, non-aversion-apperception or harmlessness-apperception: That is the cause of skillful resolves.

Now where do skillful resolves cease without trace? Their stopping, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thought and evaluation, enters and remains in the second jhāna, which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of concentration. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace.

Of course, any experienced meditator with proficiency in attention training knows that adventitious discursive thinking inhibits the calming of the mind. And so the directed thought and evaluation of the first jhāna is more refined than adventitious discursiveness. It's the skillful application of the cognitive faculty to a particular theme of focus, without lapsing from that focus. To be effective, directed thought and evaluation must necessarily work in concert with the concomitant application of mindfulness and sustained attention. In this way, directed thought and evaluation help to serve as causal factors for the abandoning of the hindrances, the arising of the other jhāna factors, as well as aiding in the maintenance of the jhāna factors once the first jhāna has been successfully entered.

This understanding of directed thought and evaluation finds support in the early para-canonical Peṭakopadesa, which in its analysis of the jhāna factors is closer to the suttas than are the definitions given in the Abhidhammapiṭaka. Regarding directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna formula, Peṭakopadesa 7.72 offers the following word-commentary:

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he thinks the thought of renunciation. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression he thinks the thought of non-aversion. Here, for fulfilling non-delusion he thinks the thought of harmlessness.

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he is secluded from sensual pleasures. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression and fulfilling non-delusion he is secluded from unskillful phenomena. And so he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and

pleasure born of seclusion.

Directed thought: There are three kinds of directed thought, namely the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-aversion, and the thought of harmlessness.

Here, directed thought is the first instance while evaluation is the evaluation of what is thereby received.

Just as when a man sees someone approaching in the distance he does not yet know whether it is a woman or a man, but when he has received [the apperception] that “it is a woman” or “it is a man” or that “it is of such color” or that “it is one of such shape,” then when he has thought this he further scrutinizes, “How then, is he ethical or unethical, rich or poor?” This is examination. With directed thought he fixes. With examination he moves about and turns over [what has been thought].

And just as a winged bird first accumulates [speed] and then accumulates no more [speed when gliding], so too, directed thought is like the accumulation, and evaluation is like the outstretched wings which keeps preserving the directed thought and evaluation....

Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it.

And so, in light of the above sutta and early commentarial passages we can see that narrowly interpreting vitakka and vicāra as “initial and sustained attention” or “initial and sustained intention” represents a later semantic shift in the meaning of these terms in the context of jhāna which isn’t supported by their occurrence in the suttas and early commentarial sources such as the Peṭakopadesa. Moreover, in the list of mental factors given in MN 111, which the meditator can discern individually as they occur by employing clear seeing (anupadadhammavipassanā) while abiding in jhāna, we find vitakka as well as attention (manasikāra) and intention (cetanā) listed. If any of these three terms were synonyms for the same mental referent then there would be no way to differentiate between them, and it would have been pointless for this discourse to mention all three phenomena.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:35 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

Joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ)

The discourses differentiate between carnal joy and pleasure (sāmisā pīti and sukha) and non-carnal joy and pleasure (nirāmisā pīti and sukha). SN 36.31 Nirāmisā Sutta tells us that carnal joy and pleasure arise in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure, while non-carnal joy arises in the first two jhānas and non-carnal pleasure arises in the first three jhānas.

SN 48.40 Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta states that the pain faculty (dukkhindriya) ceases completely in the first jhāna, the unhappiness faculty (domanassindriya) ceases completely in the second jhāna, the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases completely in the third jhāna, and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases completely in the fourth jhāna.

SN 48.37 Dutiyavibhaṅga Sutta informs us that the pleasure and pain faculties are born of body contact (kāyasamphassa), whereas the happiness and unhappiness faculties are born of mind

contact (manasamphassaja).

Taking all of the above passages into consideration we can deduce that the non-carnal joy of the first jhāna is mental pleasure (cetasika sukha, i.e. somanassa) born of mind contact, and the non-carnal pleasure of the first jhāna is bodily pleasure (kāyika sukha) born of body contact.

This reading of these sutta sources accords with Peṭakopadesa 7.72:

The twofold bodily and mental pain does not arise in one steadied in directed thought and evaluation, and the twofold bodily and mental pleasure does arise. The mental pleasure thus produced from directed thought is joy, while the bodily pleasure is bodily feeling.

This understanding is also supported by the Vimuttimaggā. The author of the Vimuttimaggā was knowledgeable of and quotes from the Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Vibhaṅga, and the Peṭakopadesa. And when commenting on the bathman simile for the first jhāna (e.g. DN 2, MN 119, etc.) he explains:

Just as the bath powder is moistened thoroughly and just as it, through adhering, does not scatter, so the yogin in the first jhāna is filled with joy from head to foot and from foot to skull, skin, and hair, and dwells without falling....

[Q.] Joy and pleasure are called formless phenomena. How then can they fill the body?

[A.] Name (nāma) depends on form (rūpa). Form depends on name. Therefore, if name is filled with joy, form is also filled with joy. If name is filled with pleasure, form is also filled with pleasure.

To this we can add a couple of more points. First, due to the presence of directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna, intermittent occurrences of mental unhappiness can still arise, as indicated in SN 48.40. Thus the singleness of mind of the first jhāna isn't necessarily as unified as in the higher jhānas. Secondly, when the meditator is steadied in the first jhāna, all of the jhāna factors work together to maintain what DN 9 calls an actual refined apperception of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā). Thus, while the singleness of mind of the first jhāna may not be as unified as in the higher jhānas, it is still a very refined samādhi. It takes considerable mental development in order to be able to successfully induce and maintain this level of heightened mind (adhicitta).

Singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)

Although singleness of mind isn't mentioned in the standard formula of the first jhāna, likely because it isn't as prominent here as in the second jhāna, nevertheless, MN 43 lists it as one of the five jhāna factors. Moreover, MN 44 Culavedalla Sutta, defines concentration (samādhi) as singleness of mind: Singleness of mind (cittassa ekaggatā) is concentration, friend Visakha; the four applications of mindfulness are its causes (nimitta); the four right exertions are its requisites; and any cultivation, development, and pursuit of these qualities is its development.

It's also worth noting that the nimittas of concentration are given as the four applications of mindfulness.

Similarly, the faculty of concentration (samādhindriya) is defined as the attainment of singleness of mind by a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka) who has attained the path. SN 48.10 Indriyavibhaṅga Sutta: And what is the faculty of concentration? Here monks, a noble disciple, making letting go his object, gains concentration, gains singleness of mind. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, he enters and remains in the first jhāna....

And this definition of the faculty of concentration naturally includes jhāna as the eighth component of the noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:36 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The Second Jhāna

DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the second jhāna as follows:  
With the stilling of directed thought and evaluation he enters and remains in the second jhāna, which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of concentration.

With the elimination of directed thought and evaluation in the second jhāna, the two factors of serene-clarity (sampasādana) and mental unification (cetaso ekodibhāva) become prominent enough to be experientially distinguished. Just as the joy and pleasure born of seclusion and the concomitant expansive mind (mahaggatā citta) of the first jhāna opens up a whole new vista of experience not previously available, and display the limitations of any previously held conceptual views based on conventional rationality or normative empiricism, now the serene-clarity and mental unification experienced by the silent mind in the second jhāna reveal another completely new level of samādhi.

Here the experience of the silent mind can be likened to the surface of a completely tranquil lake. This is serene-clarity and mental unification. With this experience there is a definite sense of confidence in the quality of this internally composed level of samādhi, along with the subtle joy and pleasure thereby experienced, which DN 9 designates as an actual refined apperception of joy and pleasure born of concentration (samādhijapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

SN 48.40 states that any adventitious occurrence of unhappiness which may arise in the first jhāna due to the presence of directed thought and evaluation, ceases completely here in the second jhāna. What remains is the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya), which in light of SN 48.37, in the second jhāna refers to bodily pleasure (kāyika sukha) and mental happiness (cetasika sukha, i.e. somanassa).

This reading of the relevant sutta passages is also supported by the word-commentary for the second jhāna given in Peṭakopadesa 7.72:

With the constant cultivation of this same directed thought and evaluation his mind becomes inclined there. Then the directed thought and evaluation seem gross to him, as well as the joy and pleasure born of renunciation, and so joy and delight born of concentration arise instead.

His mind, [which] had evaluation as an object-support, becomes internally serenely-clarified with the stilling of these [two factors of the first jhāna]. The two phenomena, directed thought and evaluation, no longer need to be recollected, and what now can be served due to their stilling is the presently arisen unification which is singleness of mind. It is through unification that joy comes to fulfillment. The joy is the happiness faculty, while the pleasure is the pleasure faculty. The singleness of mind is concentration. So the second jhāna possesses four factors.

The Third Jhāna

DN 22 Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the third jhāna as follows:  
With the fading away of joy he remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences pleasure with the body; he enters and remains in the third jhāna of which the noble ones say, 'Equanimous and mindful, he abides pleasantly.'

AN 9.42 tells us that the pleasure commonly referred to in the descriptions of the third jhāna is actually the pleasure of equanimity (upekkhāsukha). This accords well with SN 48.40, when it states that the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases in the third jhāna. What remains is the equanimity faculty (upekkhindriya) and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya), which in light of SN 48.37, in the third jhāna refers to bodily equanimity (kāyika upekkhā) and mental pleasure (cetasika sukha). DN 9 refers to the apperception of this experience as an actual refined apperception of equanimity (upekkhāsukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

Again, this conforms to the word-commentary offered in Peṭakopadesa 7.72:  
With the fading away of joy he has abandoned what is comprised of wetness (i.e. joy). But happiness of mind still arises there, and when he investigates that, he gives attention only to equanimity. With the fading away of joy he remains equanimous, and as he still feels with the body the pleasure [of equanimity] induced by joy, he remains fully aware. Mindful and fully aware, equanimity comes to fulfillment.

It is also worth noting that mindfulness and full awareness are given as dominant jhāna factors here in the third jhāna. This reveals the integral progression from the four applications of mindfulness as right mindfulness continuing through to the third and fourth jhānas as right concentration.

#### The Fourth Jhāna

DN 22 Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the fourth jhāna as follows:  
With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness.

SN 48.40 states that the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases in the fourth jhāna. What remains is both bodily and mental equanimity (kāyika and cetasika upekkhā) as stated in SN 48.37, which DN 9 calls an actual refined apperception of neither pleasure nor pain (adukkhamasukhasukhumasacca saññā).

Again, this agrees with Peṭakopadesa 7.72:  
In the first jhāna the pain faculty ceases and in the second jhāna the unhappiness faculty ceases, so with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness.

Here [previously] equanimity was still not clarified due to the presence of the four faculties, namely the pain faculty, the unhappiness faculty, the pleasure faculty, and the happiness faculty. With the cessation of these there is equanimity and full awareness.

Here, it was due to the pleasure faculty and the happiness faculty that there was a lack of mindfulness, and with their cessation he becomes possessed of mindfulness. And it was due to the pain faculty and the unhappiness faculty that there was a lack of full awareness, and with their cessation he becomes fully aware. So with the clarification of equanimity, [which is accompanied by

neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling,] he becomes mindful and fully aware, and there is singleness of mind. This is called the fourth jhāna.

### The Nimitta of Jhāna

Depending upon the context in which the term is used, nimitta can refer to either (i) a cause, or (ii) a cognitive sign which is a mental representation, closely related to apperception. MN 44 tells us that one of the four applications of mindfulness is the nimitta which serves as the cause for the eventual elimination of the five hindrances and, beyond that, the arising of the five concomitant mental factors of the first jhāna. And according to AN 9.35, the nimitta as the cognitive sign of the first jhāna is the presence of these same five concomitant jhāna factors. AN 9.35 states that this nimitta is to be developed, pursued, and established. And when properly engaged, these five factors work in consort to refine and maintain what DN 9 calls an actual refined apperception of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (*vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā*).

Therefore, according to the earliest strata of the Pāli dhamma there is no need to establish a jhāna nimitta (or samathanimitta or cittanimitta) apart from the jhāna factors. The various practices categorized under the four applications of mindfulness are the samādhinimittas which serve as the cause of jhāna. The concomitant jhāna factors themselves are the nimitta which is the cognitive sign of having attained the first jhāna.

That said, some contemporary teachers and commentators have suggested that the sign of light (*obhāsanimitta*) and/or the sign of form (*rūpanimitta*) mentioned in MN 128 Upakkilesa Sutta are canonical references to what later came to be designated as the counterpart sign (*pañibhāganimitta*) in the commentaries, and thus establishes that these nimittas were considered an essential aspect of the development of jhāna even in the early tradition.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning in this regard. Firstly, MN 128 is the only discourse where the term nimitta is used in this context. None of the other canonical occurrences of nimitta as either samādhinimitta, samatha nimitta, or cittanimitta refer to any of these nimittas being an *obhāsanimitta* or *rūpanimitta* as explained in the Upakkilesa Sutta.

Secondly, nowhere in the Upakkilesa Sutta does it state that either the *obhāsanimitta* or the *rūpanimitta* are essential prerequisites for attaining the first jhāna. Nor does this sutta maintain that the complete elimination of any experience of the five sensory spheres is essential for the arising of either of these two cognitive signs. Therefore, while these apperceptions of light and visions of form can occur during the course of meditational development, there is no explicit statement here, or elsewhere in the suttas, that such apperceptions must arise for one to enter jhāna. Indeed, even the commentarial tradition doesn't maintain that either of these types of nimittas are essential for the first jhāna.

For example, the *Vimuttimagga* takes the instructions offered in the Upakkilesa Sutta to refer to the development of the divine eye. This is understandable, as Anuruddhā, the main interlocutor in this discourse with the Buddha, was later designated as the foremost disciple endowed with the divine eye.

And not even the *Visuddhimagga* limits counterpart signs to apperceptions of light or forms. According to the *Visuddhimagga* analysis, of the thirty meditations which lead to jhāna, twenty-two have counterpart signs as object. And of these, only nineteen require any sort of counterpart sign which is apprehended based solely on sight, and can therefore give rise to a mental image resulting from that nimitta (the ten stages of corpse decomposition and nine *kasiṇas*, excluding the air *kasiṇa*

which can be apprehended by way of either sight or tactile sensation).

And so taking all of the above into consideration, according to the early Pāḷi dhamma there is no need to establish a jhāna nimitta (or samathanimitta or cittanimitta) apart from the jhāna factors. And even according to the Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā — where the presentation of the method using a counterpart sign is explicitly developed — there is no suggestion that a counterpart sign necessarily must be a sign of light (obhāsanimitta) and/or a sign of form (rūpanimitta). Indeed, according to the Vimuttimaggā, when employing mindfulness of breathing in order to attain jhāna, the counterpart sign should be concomitant with the pleasant feeling which arises as one attends to the breath at the nostril area or the area of the upper lip, which is likened to the pleasant feeling produced by a breeze. The text says that this counterpart sign doesn't depend on color or form, and any adventitious mental images which arise in the course of practice should not be attended to.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:37 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The Formless Attainments: Not Experiencing the Five Sensory Spheres (Āyatanas)

MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta and AN 9.37 Ānanda Sutta state that it is only when abiding in the fully purified formless attainments that the mind is isolated from the five sense faculties and doesn't experience any of the five external sensory spheres.

Both discourses speak directly in terms of the faculties (indriyas) and sense spheres (āyatanas). AN 9.37 is very explicit. Here Venerable Ānanda states that when not experiencing the form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactual object āyatanas, one can be percipient of one of the three formless apperception attainments, or aññāphala samādhi.

If it were the case that one cannot experience any of these āyatanas while abiding in the four jhānas, then this discourse — which specifically lists meditative states in this regard — would have included the four jhānas along with the three formless apperception attainments and aññāphala samādhi.

Add to this that AN 5.113 Sammāsamādhi Sutta states that one has to be able to tolerate sensory phenomena in order to both enter and remain in right concentration. There is no right concentration without this tolerance:

A monk endowed with these five qualities is not capable of entering and remaining in right concentration. Which five? He cannot tolerate visible forms, he cannot tolerate sounds... odors... flavors... tactual objects. A monk endowed with these five qualities is not capable of entering and remaining in right concentration.

A monk endowed with these five qualities is capable of entering and remaining in right concentration. Which five? He can tolerate visible forms, he can tolerate sounds... odors... flavors... tactual objects. A monk endowed with these five qualities is capable of entering and remaining in right concentration.

And again, the suttas define right concentration and the faculty of concentration as jhāna. If the meditator were in a state of fixed absorption where s/he wasn't able to experience the external sensory spheres in jhāna then there would be no reason to maintain that one needs to be able to tolerate them while abiding in jhāna.

In fact, in MN 152 Indriyabhāvanā Sutta, the Buddha criticizes the methods of contemplative development (bhāvanā) of the faculties (indriyani) taught by the brahmin Parāsariya whereby “one does not see forms with the eye, nor hear sounds with the ear.” Regarding such methods the Buddha replies:

If that were the case, Uttara, then a blind man would have developed faculties and a deaf man would have developed faculties, according to the words of the brahmin Parāsariya. For a blind man does not see forms with the eye, and a deaf man does not hear sounds with the ear.

Later in this same discourse the Buddha exhorts Ven. Ānanda and the other monks to go practice meditation (jhāyatha):

Over there are the roots of trees; over there, empty dwellings. Meditate Ānanda. Do not be heedless. Do not later fall into regret. This is our instruction to you.

In no explicit version of the jhāna formula, nor in any of the descriptions of jhāna factors found in the suttas, nor in any similes or graphic illustrations used to describe jhāna in the suttas is there any reference to the cessation of the experience of the five sensory spheres. If such cessation were a necessary and defining characteristic of the experience of jhāna, then the discourses would say so.

This understanding that the five external sensory spheres are only eliminated in the formless attainments also accords with the Vimuttimaggā:

This is according to the teaching of the Buddha which says that owing to the non-removal of these (apperceptions of resistance) in that (concentration) sound is a thorn to one entering the first jhāna, Thus disliking form, he goes further. He eliminates them here (by attaining the sphere of infinite space). Therefore, he attains to the imperturbability of the formless attainment and the peacefulness of liberation. Aḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta when they entered the formless attainment, did not see nor hear those five hundred carts passing and repassing.

And later in the same text:

When the yogin enters into concentration, he hears sounds, but he does not speak because the faculty of hearing and that of speech are not united. To a man who enters form concentration, sound is disturbing. Hence the Buddha taught: “To a man who enters jhāna, sound is a thorn.”

#### Jhāna and Clear Seeing (Vipassanā)

According to the discourses clear seeing should be conjoined with calm (samatha) while abiding in jhāna. MN 111 Anupada Sutta informs us that the clear seeing of phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā) is to be engaged in while remaining in jhāna:

Whatever phenomena there are in the first jhāna: directed thought, evaluation, joy, pleasure, singleness of mind, contact, feeling, apperception, intention, mind, desire, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention; he defined them one by one as they occurred. Known to him they arose, known to him they remained, known to him they subsided. He understood, ‘So this is how these phenomena, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.’

Regarding those phenomena, he remained unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers.

And AN 9.36 Jhāna Sutta instructs the meditator to see (samanupassati) the three characteristics of the five aggregates:

He sees whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, apperception, fabrications, and consciousness, as impermanent, as unsatisfactory, as a disease, as a cancer, as a dart, as painful, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as emptiness, as not-self.



In both of these discourses the same instruction is given for each of the remaining three jhānas as well. Therefore, according to the discourses one is to engage in clear seeing while abiding in jhāna.

### An Integrated Eightfold Path

The noble eightfold path presented in the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka and early para-canonical sources such as the Peṭakopadesa and the Nettippakaraṇa always include the coupling of calm (samatha) and clear seeing (vipassanā) at some stage of the noble path. These two mental factors are mutually conditioning, each serving to strengthen the other when skillfully employed within jhāna.

Nowhere in the Pāḷi Nikāyas is there any suggestion of an alternate path of gradual training which doesn't include the mastery of jhāna as a requisite for full liberation. The Buddha, through trial and error, realized for himself that the noble eightfold path must fully integrate ethical conduct (sīla), meditation (samādhi), and discernment (paññā) for it to be optimally efficacious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:43 am

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

The majority of the Pāḷi Canon was constructed in India.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 12:47 am

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

Hi Sobeh,

Here is one investigation of the textual subject matter: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 1:44 am

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

BTW, I quite liked the Śiva avatar (if it was Śiva) that you were sporting the other day.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 2:20 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Well, we are fortunate enough to have the suttas themselves. Here are some other resources which I've found useful (some practical, a few regarding textual analysis):

The Experience of Samādhi: An In-depth Exploration of Buddhist Meditation by Richard Shankman. He contrasts the teaching methods of a diverse number of contemporary teachers with what is presented in the suttas.

Instruction for Entering Jhana by Leigh Brasington.

The Jhanas in Theravadan Buddhist Meditation by Leigh Brasington.

Jhanas at the Forest Refuge by Leigh Brasington.

Lists of things to do that are helpful for entering the Jhanas by Leigh Brasington.

The Path of Concentration & Mindfulness by Ajahn Ṭhānissaro.

Jhana Not by the Numbers by Ajahn Ṭhānissaro.

Clarification On Feelings In Buddhist Dhyāna/Jhāna Meditation by Tse-fu Kuan.

The Two Traditions of Meditation In Ancient India by Johannes Bronkhorst.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 3:59 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

Piya Tan is a fan of Ajahn Brahm's "ambulance jhāna." As such, his presentation doesn't take into consideration a sufficient survey of Pāḷi source materials which comment upon and clarify the meanings of terms. The so-called "technical analysis" in his survey is quite unconvincing -- amounting to nothing more than wordplay. His appeal to personal experience is also without merit. Numerous meditators have experienced the absorptive states Ajahn Brahm teaches as "jhāna," complete with light nimittas etc., etc. Moreover, if I remember correctly Ajahn Brahm has a few other idiosyncratic interpretations of the dhamma, for example, that nibbāna is equivalent to the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling.

That said, anyone who has confidence in Ajahn Brahm's teaching style should certainly follow his instructions and find out for themselves if it's helpful.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 4:54 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 6:41 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:

Sure. Nevertheless, I was referring to the re-invigoration and dissemination of the Pāḷi textual tradition beyond the Burmese scholar monks. This happened in the 19th century initially as a reaction to colonial interference, and continued well into the period where the first Europeans were showing interest in the Pāḷi texts. The Pāḷi texts -- including the Vism. -- were actively printed and disseminated throughout parts of SE Asia during this time.

And from a different angle the 19th century Thai Thammayut movement was in part informed by the King's interest in Western style textual criticism. He also re-invigorated interest in the Pāḷi Canon in Thailand which later made its way into Cambodia.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 7:06 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:  
Not likely.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 7:25 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:

My opinions on the Vism. are quite irrelevant to the topic at hand. But for the record, one of my first introductions to Theravāda was the Vism. IMO every serious practitioner should read it.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 8:40 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 8:46 am  
Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas  
Content:  
Yes it is okay. Glad we can agree on that. Now you can continue with your trivial wordplay....

All the best with that,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 28, 2010 4:30 pm  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:  
I can see nothing in Ian's posts which would disagree with the presentation of jhāna in the Vimuttimagga. The Vimuttimagga is older than the Visuddhimagga. By all accounts the Vimuttimagga was well known both in Sri Lanka and India. The interpretation of jhāna presented in the Vimuttimagga is neither "unusual" nor "modern." Therefore yours and Kester's rhetoric about an "unusual, modern interpretation" of jhāna is historically inaccurate and quite tired -- it really should be put to bed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 8:20 am  
Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .  
Content:  
This isn't 19th century SE Asia. There is no excuse for failing to acknowledge all of the relevant source materials that we presently have available.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 8:29 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The reality is that in our previous conversations you've repeatedly insisted that the discourses in question do not mean what they say. But there is nothing esoteric about these discourses. They aren't employing some sort of twilight language which relies on a hidden code to draw out some meaning obscured by the terminology being used. This is why the Buddha is recorded as stating that the discourses should be taught using the language of the people being addressed. They don't require a highly specialized technical vocabulary. Nor do they require a priestly or scholarly elite to decode obscured meanings. Your entire argument throughout has amounted to nothing more than an attempt to draw out conclusions to support your preconceived thesis regarding feeling as it pertains to jhāna. Not only does your hermeneutic have little to recommend for it – I would suggest that you're grasping the wrong end of the snake. And for what purpose? In support of an interpretation of jhāna which refuses to accept the explicit teachings of a vast number of discourses, as well as the majority of early ābhidhammika commentaries? An interpretation of mental factors in the context of jhāna which refuses to survey and acknowledge the full register of how these terms are designated, defined, and differentiated throughout the canon?

During our entire conversation you never once produced a single source from the discourses to support your interpretation of SN 36.6 Salla Sutta that bodily feeling as it is used in this sutta is meant to include feeling born of mind contact. In fact, your entire premise in this case is just one example of your stretching the meaning of two terms to the point where there is no meaningful differentiation between them. Moreover, in your zeal to sustain your thesis your interpretation fails to recognize the soteriological import of this discourse: the distinction between how a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka) experiences bodily pain in comparison to a common person.

Piya Tan would be well advised to study MN 111 more closely, as well as the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā in order to understand that the mental factors mentioned in MN 111 are fully accounted for as being present and known through the mental factor of vipassanā while one is correctly abiding in jhāna as the proper training of heightened mind (adhicittasikkhā).

There are basically three approaches to mental development in the context of meditation:

(i) attention training where one absorbs into a single object and thereby stills all mental factors to the point where, as Ajahn Brahmavamso explains, "Consciousness is so focused on the one thing that the faculty of comprehension is suspended ... there is no comprehension of what is going on."

(ii) attention training where one attends to a single object and thereby calms and unifies all mental factors to the point where, as Leigh Brasington explains, "It is possible to examine the experience because the state is so stable and self sustaining on its own."

(iii) attention training where one attends to whatever occurs in the present moment (either with the aid of a support object such as abdominal movement, or choiceless awareness without the aid of a support object).

It is only in the first of these three approaches that the five senses must necessarily be shut down and ceased for that resultant state to be entered and sustained. However, the lack of comprehension in this state makes it impossible for vipassanā to occur while abiding therein.

The resultant state of the second approach allows for the mind to be internally unified while still fully comprehending the mental factors present. Thus vipassanā can be fully present and functional while abiding therein. Ajahn Chah describes the resultant state of this second approach as follows: In appana samadhi the mind calms down and is stilled to a level where it is at its most subtle and skilful. Even if you experience sense impingement from the outside, such as sounds and physical sensations, it remains external and is unable to disturb the mind. You might hear a sound, but it won't distract your concentration. There is the hearing of the sound, but the experience is as if you don't hear anything. There is awareness of the impingement but it's as if you are not aware. This is because you let go. The mind lets go automatically. Concentration is so deep and firm that you let go of attachment to sense impingement quite naturally. The mind can absorb into this state for long periods. Having stayed inside for an appropriate amount of time, it then withdraws. Ajahn Thanissaro describes what Ajahn Fuang considered to be wrong concentration as follows: The best state of concentration for the sake of developing all-around insight is one that encompasses a whole-body awareness. There were two exceptions to Ajaan Fuang's usual practice of not identifying the state you had attained in your practice, and both involved states of wrong concentration. The first was the state that comes when the breath gets so comfortable that your focus drifts from the breath to the sense of comfort itself, your mindfulness begins to blur, and your sense of the body and your surroundings gets lost in a pleasant haze. When you emerge, you find it hard to identify where exactly you were focused. Ajaan Fuang called this moha-samadhi, or delusion-concentration.

The second state was one I happened to hit one night when my concentration was extremely one-pointed, and so refined that it refused settle on or label even the most fleeting mental objects. I dropped into a state in which I lost all sense of the body, of any internal/external sounds, or of any thoughts or perceptions at all — although there was just enough tiny awareness to let me know, when I emerged, that I hadn't been asleep. I found that I could stay there for many hours, and yet time would pass very quickly. Two hours would seem like two minutes. I could also "program" myself to come out at a particular time.

After hitting this state several nights in a row, I told Ajaan Fuang about it, and his first question was, "Do you like it?" My answer was "No," because I felt a little groggy the first time I came out. "Good," he said. "As long as you don't like it, you're safe. Some people really like it and think it's nibbana or cessation. Actually, it's the state of non-perception (*asaññi-bhava*). It's not even right concentration, because there's no way you can investigate anything in there to gain any sort of discernment. But it does have other uses." He then told me of the time he had undergone kidney surgery and, not trusting the anesthesiologist, had put himself in that state for the duration of the operation.

In both these states of wrong concentration, the limited range of awareness was what made them wrong. If whole areas of your awareness are blocked off, how can you gain all-around insight? And as I've noticed in years since, people adept at blotting out large areas of awareness through powerful one-pointedness also tend to be psychologically adept at dissociation and denial. This is why Ajaan Fuang, following Ajaan Lee, taught a form of breath meditation that aimed at an all-around awareness of the breath energy throughout the body, playing with it to gain a sense of ease, and then calming it so that it wouldn't interfere with a clear vision of the subtle movements of the mind. This all-around awareness helped to eliminate the blind spots where ignorance likes to lurk.

The third of the three approaches outlined above can eventually lead to the resultant state of the second approach, but it isn't a direct pathway to that state of mental unification.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:32 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I think you failed to comprehend this post Sylvester.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:54 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I've already addressed your feeble hermeneutic strategy ad nauseum. I don't play games -- word games or any other -- as a rule. And I've already given your interpretations more time than they warrant without even going into your interpretation of terms such as vitakka, etc..

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:57 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

And I have already suggested that you, good man, are grasping the wrong end of the snake.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 11:53 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

That's somewhat accurate. I'm here at DW to share information, not debate everyone who disagrees with me. As for Sylvester, I played quite nice for a number of weeks on that previous thread. And I didn't start that previous thread. In fact I had never posted or replied to anything on DW until that thread was posted and someone told me that it was here. And I never sought out Sylvester's 2 cents.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 12:22 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I tried to make it as explicit as language would allow in the OP that I was not starting this thread to argue with anybody:

I'm well aware that this subject matter may not be of interest to some people. It's posted here for those who are interested. For anyone who doesn't find the contents of this thread informative or helpful, I respectfully and wholeheartedly agree that they would be better served to follow whatever interpretation of the dhammavinaya that they have faith in and find helpful. It runs counter to the intent of the dhamma for anyone who isn't fully awakened to maintain definite conclusions that "Only this is true; anything else is worthless" (MN 95).

I read all sorts of threads and posts on DW that I don't necessarily agree with. But I try my best not to reply to threads unless I feel that I have something constructive to add to the discussion. It would be senseless for me or anyone else to chime in on a thread discussing the Burmese vipassanā method, for example, and derail the conversation by insisting that the Burmese vipassanā method is somehow wrong (which I don't believe to be the case BTW).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 12:37 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Yep, it's an open forum. And Sylvester has given me his 2 cents on numerous occasions. I have already replied in detail to each of his opinions in turn, giving him far more time than should have ever been required. Especially since during the course of those conversations his agenda became quite obvious.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 12:43 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I'm more than happy to let every individual follow whatever meditation instructions they find helpful and have faith in. In fact, I think it's outstanding whenever anyone decides to take up any sitting practice.



All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 4:02 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

No worries Legolas, after being called a "jhana-wallah" by Tilt I was forcibly silenced for somehow taking this thread, which was supposed to be about jhana, off topic. Good to see that Tilt deems fit to designate everyone's practice marginal but his own.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:12 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

This: "And for me jhana practice, while interesting, was more of a distraction. Certainly not an absolute necessity for practice or awakening, unless one is talking about something such as the vipassana jhanas, but then we are still within the framework of vipassana."

There is really no longer any need to debate what is taught as the gradual path of training in the suttas. It's much like the climate change issue though, the global warming deniers continue presenting the illusion of a debate when in point of fact that debate is long over.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:39 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

Oh please. One only need to survey the literature from Burma to see that there was plenty of debate over this vipassanā issue during the course of the past 100 years. And in the recent past I seem to recall some quite lengthy threads positioning one Burmese vipassanā camp against one Thai vipassanā camp.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 9:48 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

No -- you're the one who told me I had somehow taken this thread off topic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 29, 2010 10:00 pm

Title: Re: Not Everything Is Written In Stone. . .

Content:

I don't really care what you or anyone else believes Tilt. Believe whatever you want. It isn't my concern, nor should it be. As I tried to outline on another thread, we can remove all the potentially loaded terms (although they need not be considered loaded at all) and recognize that there are basically three approaches to mental development in the context of meditation:

(i) attention training where one absorbs into a single object and thereby stills all mental factors to the point where, as Ajahn Brahmavamso explains, "Consciousness is so focused on the one thing that the faculty of comprehension is suspended ... there is no comprehension of what is going on."

(ii) attention training where one attends to a single object and thereby calms and unifies all mental factors to the point where, as Leigh Brasington explains, "It is possible to examine the experience because the state is so stable and self sustaining on its own."

(iii) attention training where one attends to whatever occurs in the present moment (either with the aid of a support object such as abdominal movement, or choiceless awareness without the aid of a support object).

Obviously, everyone is free to practice whichever approach they deem helpful. It should really be more about skillfully developing one's own practice than about dividing into cliques like a bunch of adolescents. But human beings have a great penchant for dividing into cliques. Hence all the Buddhist "vādas" and "yānas" which have emerged over the past 2400 years.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 30, 2010 9:24 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi all,

I would like to thank the DW members for the PMs and e-mails yesterday.

And thanks Chris, for posting the excerpt from Ven. Bodhi and the link.

Also thanks go out to Retro and Vepacitta for suggesting that it would be good to discuss some of the practical aspects of the teachings. There is a traditional standard of Buddhist etiquette -- common to all Buddhist traditions -- of not publicly discussing in detail what are considered to be personal matters regarding practice better kept between one's teacher and oneself. This traditional etiquette is actually grounded in quite pragmatic concerns. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to have a more open discussion about sitting practice. I look forward to reading all replies, and will try to share what I've found helpful (and also not so helpful) for my own practice over the years.

It might be worth mentioning again that there are basically three approaches to mental development in the context of meditation:

(i) attention training where one absorbs into a single object and thereby stills all mental factors to the point where, as Ajahn Brahmavamso explains, "Consciousness is so focused on the one thing that the faculty of comprehension is suspended ... there is no comprehension of what is going on."

(ii) attention training where one attends to a single object and thereby calms and unifies all mental factors to the point where, as Leigh Brasington explains, "It is possible to examine the experience because the state is so stable and self sustaining on its own."

(iii) attention training where one attends to whatever occurs in the present moment (either with the aid of a support object such as abdominal movement, or choiceless awareness without the aid of a support object).

With this in mind, it's really a matter of what each of us has tried and found helpful for our own practice. All three of these approaches can be developed to the point of attaining the resultant state of that approach if one has the time and commitment to follow their chosen path of practice in a sustained, dedicated way.

It is only with the first of these three approaches that the five senses must necessarily be shut down and ceased for that resultant state to be entered and sustained. However, the lack of comprehension in this state makes it impossible for vipassanā to occur while abiding therein.

The resultant state of the second approach allows for the mind to be internally unified while still fully comprehending the mental factors present. Thus vipassanā can be fully present and functional while abiding therein. I consider the resultant meditative state of this second approach to represent an accurate assessment of jhāna as it's presented in the suttas. Other people consider the resultant state of the first approach to be necessary. It's not my intention to debate this issue here. Obviously, everyone is free to make up their own mind regarding what they feel is necessary for their practice.

The third approach can eventually lead to the resultant state of the second approach, but it isn't a direct pathway to that state of mental unification. The level of concentration employed in this third approach is often designated as "momentary concentration." This approach can be applied as somewhat of a conjoined calm (samatha) and vipassanā method. By using the instruction to follow the movement of the abdomen as one breathes and to come back to that as the support object after any distractions, this approach enables many practitioners to develop deep samatha in the course of their practice. Thus this approach can certainly lead to jhāna. This is entirely in keeping with what is outlined in the suttas.

I look forward to hearing what other members have to contribute to this discussion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 30, 2010 8:40 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi V & all,

I think that we each have to identify and map our mental terrain based on our own first hand investigation and experience. If we can take the time to attend to our mind when we're sitting with our body somewhat relaxed, mindfully breathing, we can begin to investigate how our mind works: Can I differentiate between a thought and the recognition (saññā) of a thought? This is a good start. Right here we can begin to see that there's no separate observer independent of that simple recognition of the thought. Can I reflect upon the drawbacks of discursive thinking? Can I begin to just release thoughts as they arise? If I just release my indulgence with thinking can I experience a gap between the end of one thought and the arising of another?

It doesn't really matter if our mind settles and relaxes when we investigate how it works, or if we can experience much of a gap between thoughts, or if the mind just continues to chatter on. The important thing is that we really want to learn how our mind works. And one thing that can be pretty obvious right away is that we aren't really in full control of our mind. The mind operates according to causes and conditions. There's no one running the show. Seeing this we can learn to create the suitable causes and conditions which allow us to investigate our mind again and again. We can investigate how our body and our breath affect the movements of the mind, and so on.

No one can do this inner work for us. We each have to take the time to begin to investigate our inner mental terrain. It can be a rewarding experience which begins to yield some insights into how the mind works. And I think that this was part of the Buddha's genius. He was interested in how things work. He realized that understanding how the mind works is essential if we are going to untangle the tangle that we may currently find ourselves in.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 30, 2010 9:06 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I think it's possible that some people don't spend more time on the fifth step because they may not think that they've "attained jhāna" or can "experience rapture." But we don't necessarily have to have "attained" anything in order to experience pīti. In this case, the translation of pīti as rapture probably doesn't help. What the heck is rapture?...

But pīti doesn't just mean rapture. It's the mental joy which is present whenever we experience any skillful feeling of pleasure or well-being. And so we don't have to be drenched in bliss in order to practice the fifth step of mindful breathing. If we are sitting in meditation and our body is relaxed

and we are feeling at ease and our mind is clear and aware, we can certainly begin to investigate what pīti means in that situation: Can we recognize if the mind is happy? Can there be some degree of mental joy when we sit relaxed and breathe mindfully?

This is the important affective quality of the path which is to be developed and used to aid us in letting go; not always searching for something outside of ourselves for fulfillment. I think that we all need to empower ourselves and give ourselves permission to sit and just enjoy the very simple act of breathing mindfully.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 30, 2010 10:26 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Good stuff:

"Simply taking notice of the skillful happiness that the dhamma provides can itself be a tool, and I mention it because it seems to be a very efficient one." — Kenshou

That right there is quote-worthy!

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 7:07 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Retro & all,

Yeah, I sometimes forget that many people have busy lives with work and family and various activities that need to be attended to. Being a good spouse, a good parent, a good employee, a good supervisor, a good citizen and so on, all obviously require attention, and dhamma has to be integrated into all of those aspects of our lives for it to have any meaningful effect.

But is it possible to practice, say, steps 1 to 4, then 5, and 13? I think that's possible.

Or alternatively, as I've reflected upon the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā, I've come to see that although the steps are set out sequentially in the sutta, it's also possible to practice two or more steps concurrently at the same time. For example, once step three (whole body) is established, that whole body awareness can serve as the basis and support for the remaining steps to be experienced along with that whole body awareness.

And so when step four is being practiced, is it possible to begin just noticing if there is any concomitant gladness arising? Is the mind happy? Is there enthusiasm in my practice right now? These are all either similar to pīti or synonyms for pīti. There is a progression of the practice here, but it's not like we're leaving step three or four behind us when we practice step five or six or thirteen.

Again, we all have to work with the practice gently, and from time to time make small, skillful adjustments to find out if these steps can open up further appreciation and understanding of our inner mental terrain. But not by overexerting. It's a question of appropriate balance which is unique to each of us. Striving too forcefully isn't going to create the optimal causes and conditions for the path to develop, nor is blankly spacing out. We each have to find that balance of calm and insight that works for us and allows the practice to open up and unfold.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 7:31 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Sobeh,

It's nothing to get hung up on.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 9:54 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Ian & all,

Leigh's teachings are very good and certainly experiential, and your above descriptions of pīti and sukha are excellent too. But... I so much dislike having to ever add a but after a compliment. It's often understood as a negation of what was just said prior to the but. And I don't want to negate your description or Leigh's teachings at all. Nevertheless... there's another word like but....

Okay, continuing on: From a purely technical perspective, with reference to the earliest commentaries the two terms are actually understood to be the other way around. Pīti is defined as a mental quality of joy or enthusiasm or delight, etc., and sukha, in the context of jhāna is defined as bodily pleasure.

Now this is all kinda academic, I know, because both pīti and sukha are formless mental dhammas. But that is how these phenomena are understood in the traditional texts. This doesn't mean that Leigh is wrong at all, because we all have to map our own inner mental terrain. And these two phenomena are related mental aspects of that terrain.

It reminds me of when I was first learning to play guitar as a kid. I learned a few chords from a local guitar teacher and then my uncle, who was a very good country music guitarist and singer, wanted me to show him what I'd learned. So I got my guitar and played him some chords sequences and

when I got to the three main chords in the key of C major, and played them, I was having a bit of a problem playing the F chord (which is a bar chord on guitar). And so when he went to show me an easier way to finger the F chord (as a partial bar instead of a full bar) he called it "C." And I said, "No that's F." And he said, "Oh yeah, it's F, right." Then he explained to me that because he learned to play solely by ear he had somehow learned to call the C chord F and the F chord C. Now he's an excellent musician who's entertained countless numbers of people for over half a century, and not knowing the proper technical names of these two chords never diminished his skill as a musician or the enjoyment of the audiences he's played for.

So it's always a good reminder, that while we have the traditional maps charting our inner mental terrain -- those maps are not the same as the terrain itself. They are descriptions on paper of how to learn to skillfully navigate and develop our inner mental terrain. But they are just that, nothing less, nothing more.

Anyway, there's my but....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 9:40 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Sobeh,

Of course sammāsati is not the same as sammāsamādhi. Sammāsati is the cause for sammāsamādhi to occur (MN 44). The commentary adds that it is the requisite condition. This fully accords with what Dmytro was indicating above.

It's worth noting just how closely related mindfulness of the body (kāyānupassanā, kāyagatāsati) and the mental factors of mindfulness and full awareness (sati and sampajañña) are to the development of the four jhānas. This can be seen from the following sutta excerpts:

You should train yourself thus: 'I will remain focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture... not accompanied by rapture... endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity. [AN 8.63]

Monks, those monks who are trainees, who have not attained their mind's ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage — they too dwell contemplating the body in the body, ardent, alert, unified, with limpid mind, concentrated, with one-pointed mind, in order to fully understand the body as it really is. [SN 47.4]

When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed (kāya passambhati), the mind is calmed (citta passambhati), thinking & evaluating are stilled (vitakkavicārā vūpasama), and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing?

Mindfulness immersed in the body (kāyagatāsati). [AN 1.227]

As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact.... As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness (satisampajañña). [SN 47.8]

This is just a partial survey. Many more examples could be provided.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 9:46 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

And ānāpānassati also gives rise to ānāpānassatisamādhi. SN 54.8 Padīpopama Sutta:

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, enter and remain in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion," this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, with the stilling of directed thought and evaluation enter and remain in the second jhāna, which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of concentration," this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, with the fading away of joy, remain equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experience pleasure with the body; may I enter and remain in the third jhāna of which the noble ones say, 'Equanimous and mindful, he abides pleasantly,'" this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, enter and remain in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness," this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 10:00 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Vimuttimagga Chapter on Mindfulness of Breathing:

Of these sixteen [steps of ānāpānassati], the first twelve fulfill samatha and vipassanā, and are



discerned as impermanence. The last four fulfill only vipassanā. Thus should samatha and vipassanā be understood....

And again, practice means attaining to a state (of jhāna) through mindfulness of breathing. This is practice. Through this mind-fulness of breathing, one attains to the state which is with initial application of thought. That is the state which is with initial and sustained application of thought, and the state of sustained application of thought. The experiencing of joy is the state of the second jhāna. The experiencing of pleasure is the state of the third jhāna. The experiencing of the mind is the state of the fourth jhāna.

Thus you're not disproving anything.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 10:16 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

That's already been addressed in this reply and this reply.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 10:24 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The canon says so. Ānāpānassati gives rise to ānāpānassatisamādhi. Closely attending to ānāpānassatisamādhi gives rise to the four jhānas. SN 54.8 Padīpopama Sutta:

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, enter and remain in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion," this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, with the stilling of directed thought and evaluation enter and remain in the second jhāna, which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of concentration," this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, "May I, with the fading away of joy, remain equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experience pleasure with the body; may I enter and remain in the third jhāna of which the noble ones say, 'Equanimous and mindful, he abides pleasantly,'" this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Therefore, monks, if a monk wishes, “May I, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, enter and remain in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness,” this same concentration through mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to.

Nothing to get hung up on Tilt.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 10:40 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Ben,

I agree. This accords with the second and third approaches which I outlined previously:

(ii) attention training where one attends to a single object and thereby calms and unifies all mental factors to the point where, as Leigh Brasington explains, “It is possible to examine the experience because the state is so stable and self sustaining on its own.”

(iii) attention training where one attends to whatever occurs in the present moment (either with the aid of a support object such as abdominal movement, or choiceless awareness without the aid of a support object).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 01, 2010 11:10 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I agree. When I refer to "object" in the second approach above I mean "support-object" which is my current working translation of ārammaṇa. With jhāna the ārammaṇa is indeed one totality (kasiṇa) being attended to.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 02, 2010 12:01 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Retro,

Awakening, just like the full development of ānāpānassati in the second and third tetrads, requires both samatha and vipassanā conjoined as "one taste" (cf. Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā). This is also designated in terms of the full development of both the training of heightened mind and heightened discernment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 02, 2010 12:23 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I don't see anything in the second tetrad of the sutta instructions which would restrict these trainings to only those who have attained jhāna. With practice it's possible in formal sitting meditation to discern some degree of both joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) arising together with any pleasurable skillful mind (cf. Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādakaṇḍa). And with the later commentarial designation of access concentration there will certainly be joy and pleasure present therein.

I'm basing what I've just said on a full spectrum developmental model where practitioners are encouraged to attend and reflect in terms of dynamic conditioned processes, i.e. how to generate optimal causes and conditions for skillful processes to be developed and sustained and unskillful processes to be reduced and eventually abandoned. It's still a hierarchic model, but a dynamic one which confronts and challenges a practitioner's habitual referencing in terms of "things" and rigid, independent levels of mental development.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 02, 2010 12:33 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I've never said that right mindfulness is the same as right concentration. Neither has anyone else here as far as I can see. Dmytro, for example, specifically referenced the Vimuttimagga in what he said. It seems to me that you are raising a non-issue.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 02, 2010 1:02 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Okay. I agree completely. Which is why I mentioned earlier in this post that translating pīti solely as "rapture" isn't a very helpful translation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 04, 2010 12:03 am

Title: Re: Pali Term: Nibbedha-bhāgiyā

Content:

Another excellent post.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Oct 06, 2010 10:53 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Hi Legolas,

I'd suggest that it's really just a question of the designation (i.e. labeling) of what is being experienced.

Anyway, DN 2 states:

Tassime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pītimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.

Seeing that the five hindrances have been abandoned within him, gladness is born. Gladdened, joy is born. With a joyful mind, his body becomes tranquil. His body tranquil, he experiences pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated.

This implies that pīti is a heightened mental quality related to and arising from gladness (pāmojja). With the onset of pīti the body becomes tranquil (kāyo passambhati), and when the body is tranquil one experiences pleasure (passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti).

And SN 47.10:

Tenānanda, bhikkhunā kismiñcīdeva pasādanīye nimitte cittaṃ paṇidahitabbaṃ. Tassa kismiñcīdeva pasādanīye nimitte cittaṃ paṇidahato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati.

Then Ānanda, the monk should direct his mind to some inspiring representation. When he directs his mind to some inspiring representation, gladness is born. Gladdened, joy is born.

Pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati. Passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedayati. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati. So iti paṭisañcikkhati – ‘yassa khvāhaṃ atthāya cittaṃ paṇidahiṃ, so me attho abhinipphanno. Handa, dāni paṭisaṃharāmi’ti. So paṭisaṃharati ceva na ca vitakketi na ca vicāreti. ‘Avitakkomhi avicāro, ajjhataṃ satimā sukhamasmī’ti pajānāti.’

With a joyful mind, his body becomes tranquil. His body tranquil, he experiences pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated. He reflects thus: ‘The purpose for which I directed my mind has been achieved. Let me now withdraw it.’ So he withdraws his mind and does not think or evaluate. He understands: ‘Without directed thought and evaluation, internally mindful, I am [experiencing] pleasure.’

Also, the Paṭisambhidāmagga (and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī) offers the following register of near-synonyms and synonyms for pīti: gladness (pāmojja), delight (āmodanā), joyfulness (pamodanā), shining mirth (bhāsa pabhāsa), felicity (vitti), elation (odagya), satisfaction (attamantā), and mental uplift (cittassa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 07, 2010 12:36 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

I'd add that labels are always inadequate and incomplete with regard to lived experience.... Poets sometimes come close to capturing meaning, even in translation:

She seems to hide all looks that have ever fallen  
into her, so that, like an audience,  
she can look them over, menacing and sullen,  
and curl to sleep with them. But all at once

as if awakened, she turns her face to yours;  
and with a shock, you see yourself, tiny,  
inside the golden amber of her eyeballs  
suspended, like a prehistoric fly.

--from "Black Cat" by Rainer Maria Rilke

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 12, 2010 12:54 pm

Title: Re: "Monks!"

Content:

Chan belly shouts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 12, 2010 1:02 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Thanks for sharing your thoughts Shonin.

And thanks to everyone else who replied. There were many, many thoughtful posts (too many names to mention each member individually).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 12, 2010 11:28 pm

Title: Re: Bad resources

Content:

Hi V,

Maybe Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna aren't your cup of tea, and that's fine, but there's simply no good reason to call someone down -- especially an ordained monastic -- whom you obviously know nothing about. Ven. Chödrön is a strong, clear minded, articulate bhikṣuṇī.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Oct 13, 2010 1:41 am

Title: Re: Bad resources

Content:

Whatever Trungpa Rinpoche may or may not have done is his responsibility. It's presumptuous to say that Ani Pema "can barely tell the difference between right and wrong."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Oct 13, 2010 11:02 am  
Title: Re: Bad resources  
Content:  
Hi V,

I'm not denying you your opinion or your right of expression. I just don't think that in this case your opinion is all that accurate. That's my opinion. And the basis for my opinion is this: After Trungpa's death Ani Pema worked for many years to try to build up a practical foundation of personal responsibility in a pretty chaotic community. It was a thankless situation to put it mildly. Other people may very well have thrown their hands in the air and walked away from the whole thing. She didn't. And in time other people began to benefit from what she herself had learned along the way. Her message isn't perfect. Fortunately it doesn't have to be. In fact, a big part of her teaching has been about learning to face the "imperfections" of this messy thing we call our life. And face them with an open heart and a courageous mind -- not as a naïve abstraction -- but as a real, living, human heart and mind. This is where development happens. Right here. There's really no other way.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Oct 14, 2010 8:08 am  
Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?  
Content:  
Hi Sylvester & all,

Thanks for posting the link to the interview. Would you (or anyone else) happen to know of the status of the English versions of Nibbāna Sermons 26-33? The English versions of Sermons 1-25 have been available online for a few years now, but after #25 appeared on Beyond the Net they seem to have stopped....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Oct 14, 2010 4:16 pm  
Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?  
Content:  
Hi Gabe & Beeblebrox,

The English talks are by Ven. Ñāṇananda. And I think he did most, if not all, of the translation of the Sermons from Sinhala into English himself as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 15, 2010 5:06 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Alex & all,

An arahant cannot be measured or classified in terms of the five aggregates. For example, SN 22.36: Bhikkhu Sutta:

If one doesn't stay obsessed with form, lord, that's not what one is measured (anumīyati) by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified (saṅkha).

If one doesn't stay obsessed with feeling... apperception... fabrications...

If one doesn't stay obsessed with consciousness, that's not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn't measured by, that's not how one is classified.

MN 72: Aggivaccha Sutta:

Vaccha, any physical form by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form (rūpasāṅkhayavimutto), Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom (gambhīro, appameyyo, duppariyogāḷho), like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

Any feeling... Any perception... Any mental fabrication...

Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness (viññāṇasaṅkhayavimutto), Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom (gambhīro, appameyyo, duppariyogāḷho), like the sea. 'Reappears' doesn't apply. 'Does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Both does & does not reappear' doesn't apply. 'Neither reappears nor does not reappear' doesn't apply.

MN 22: Alagaddūpama Sutta:

Monks, when the gods with Indra, with Brahmā and with Pajāpati seek a monk who is thus liberated in mind, they do not find anything of which they could say: "The tathāgata's consciousness is dependent (nissita) on this." Why? A tathāgata, I declare, is untraceable (anānuvejja) here and now (diṭṭheva).

Dhammapada, v. 93:

Effluents ended, independent of nutriment, their pasture – emptiness and freedom without sign: their trail, like that of birds through space, can't be traced.



SN 35.188 (CDB 35.229): Dutiyasamudda Sutta:

For whomever passion, aggression, and ignorance have faded away—  
He has crossed over this ocean which is hard to cross  
With its dangerous sharks, demons, and waves.

He has overcome attachment, conquered death, and is without acquisitions;  
Has abandoned suffering, for the sake of no further existence.  
“Gone out,” he cannot be measured (na pamāṇameti),  
I say that he has bewildered the king of death.

In a number of sutta-s (e.g. S iv 119, S iv 186, S iv 189, S iv 199, & M i 270) an arahant’s mind is designated as a “measureless mind” (appamāṇacetasa → being free from any sort of measuring → pamāṇa). Elsewhere it is designated as “unestablished consciousness” (appatiṭṭha viññāṇa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 15, 2010 2:07 pm

Title: Re: Questions about the first jhana

Content:

Hi Individual & all,

These teachings by Ven. Gunaratana may also be helpful.

What is samatha-vipassanā? (Pt 1):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What is samatha-vipassanā? (Pt 2):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

Why do some teachers warn against practicing jhāna-s?

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What are the benefits of practicing jhāna-s? (Pt 1):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What are the benefits of practicing jhāna-s? (Pt 2):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 10:29 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

The passages cited clearly state that an arahant cannot be measured or classified in terms of the five aggregates. An arahant's consciousness cannot be traced whilst alive. Thus it is quite pointless and completely counterproductive to hold views regarding the existence or non-existence of said consciousness post-mortem. MN 72:

The position that 'after death a Tathagata exists' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding.

The position that 'after death a Tathagata does not exist' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding.

The position that 'after death a Tathagata both exists & does not exist' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding.

The position that 'after death a Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist' is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by suffering, distress, despair, & fever, and it does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation; to calm, direct knowledge, full Awakening, Unbinding.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 3:25 pm

Title: Re: Questions about the first jhana

Content:

All of the mental factors of any jhāna occur concurrently (i.e. saḥajāta). These mental factors don't pass away as long as one remains in that particular jhāna. This doesn't mean that these mental factors are not subject to alteration while persisting (ṭhitassa aññathatta). Alteration while persisting is common to all fabrications (saṅkhāra-s).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 4:53 pm

Title: Re: Tathata/Tathagata misinterpretation Vs Mahayana Nirvana?

Content:

Hi Starter,

It seems that you don't have a very good understanding of Mahāyāna, but that's fine. As for the Pāli dhamma, craving (taṇhā) is abandoned and ceases wherever there is anything endearing and alluring in terms of the world: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, forms, sounds, odors, flavors, tactual objects, mental phenomena, etc. This cessation of craving is also the cessation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhanirodha). That is, it is nibbāna. For example, DN 22:

"And what is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

"And where, when being abandoned, is this craving abandoned? And where, when ceasing, does it cease? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"And what is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"The ear... The nose... The tongue... The body... The intellect...

"Forms... Sounds... Smells... Tastes... Tactile sensations... Ideas...

"Eye-consciousness... Ear-consciousness... Nose-consciousness... Tongue-consciousness... Body-consciousness... Intellect-consciousness...

"Eye-contact... Ear-contact... Nose-contact... Tongue-contact... Body-contact... Intellect-contact...

"Feeling born of eye-contact... Feeling born of ear-contact... Feeling born of nose-contact... Feeling born of tongue-contact... Feeling born of body-contact... Feeling born of intellect-contact...

"Perception of forms... Perception of sounds... Perception of smells... Perception of tastes... Perception of tactile sensations... Perception of ideas...

"Intention for forms... Intention for sounds... Intention for smells... Intention for tastes... Intention for tactile sensations... Intention for ideas...

"Craving for forms... Craving for sounds... Craving for smells... Craving for tastes... Craving for tactile sensations... Craving for ideas...

"Thought directed at forms... Thought directed at sounds... Thought directed at smells... Thought directed at tastes... Thought directed at tactile sensations... Thought directed at ideas...

"Evaluation of forms... Evaluation of sounds... Evaluation of smells... Evaluation of tastes... Evaluation of tactile sensations... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

"This is called the noble truth of the cessation of stress."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 5:26 pm

Title: Re: Tathata/Tathagata misinterpretation Vs Mahayana Nirvana?

Content:

There is never any need to fight. And for the record, both historically as well as presently there have been and are there-s who are also mahāyānika-s.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 6:31 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

I'm not arguing for the existence or non-existence of anything.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 17, 2010 11:37 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

And some people find the groundlessness right here, right now, threatening.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 18, 2010 12:58 am

Title: Re: Tathata/Tathagata misinterpretation Vs Mahayana Nirvana?

Content:

Indeed. Goldstein's book One Dharma offers some insights from a seasoned teacher who's practiced on both sides of the fence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 18, 2010 2:03 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Alex,

There is a world of difference between saying "It is" (atthi as found in SN 22.94) and maintaining that "It has true, inherent existence" (sabhāvasiddhi).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 18, 2010 7:53 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Sheaps,

Where are "particles" ever mentioned in the Pāli suttas? And even more to the point: What bearing does speculating about the existence of particles have on liberation?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Oct 18, 2010 8:02 pm  
Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?  
Content:  
Hi Alex,

That is all that needs stating.

Sn 3.12 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta:  
Entrenched in name and form,  
They conceive that "This is true."

In whatever way (worldlings) conceive it,  
It turns out other than that.  
For that is what is false about it.  
Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

But nibbāna does not have a false nature.  
That the noble ones truly know.  
Through fully comprehending the truth,  
They are without hunger, quenched.

Ud 3.10 (Ud 32) Loka Sutta:  
This anguished world,  
Afflicted by contact,  
Speaks of a disease as self.  
By whatever terms it conceives of (anything),  
It turns out other than that.  
Although becoming otherwise, the world is held by existence,  
Afflicted by existence, yet delights in that very existence.  
Where there is delight, there is fear.  
What it fears is unsatisfactory.  
This holy life is lived for the abandoning of that existence.

Whatever ascetics or brahmans say that emancipation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not liberated from existence, I say.

And whatever ascetics or brahmans say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Oct 19, 2010 1:16 am  
Title: Re: Snp 5.2 Tissa-metteyya-manava-puccha  
Content:  
Hi Mike & all,

I took a look at what Ven. Ñāṇananda has to say about this sutta. In Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation he offers the following:

So actually what we have here is just a bit of bare experience. That too comes about by giving recognition to the two ends - the internal base and the external base. By recognizing them, by separating them, by discriminating between them, there arises a certain measuring. So the concept of two things striking together also follows as a matter of course. Given two things, there is a possibility of a contact between them. And this is 'contact' as the world understands it. Given this contact, there arise dependent on it, feeling, perception and all the rest of it. It goes as far as thinking and logic.

Now, this is the delusion. This is the ignorance. What, then, is the insight that helps one to unravel this state of affairs? It is the understanding of the conditioned nature of consciousness - that consciousness arises dependent on conditions. Even that insight emerges through a refined way of attending. That is, by accelerating the mental noting in such a way as not to get caught in the net of perception or saññā. In other words, to stop short at bare awareness. It is by such a technique that one can get an insight into the back stage workings of consciousness. For instance, the insight that the eye consciousness arises dependent on eye and forms and that the very discrimination between the two ends is eye-consciousness, which is the middle. This story of the two ends and the middle is beautifully presented in the Pārāyaṇa Sutta found in the Section of the Sixes in the Aṅguttara Nikāya. What forms the nucleus of that sutta is the following verse quoted from the Pārāyaṇa Vagga of the Sutta Nipāta:

'Yo ubhante viditvāna - majjhe mantā na lippati,  
Taṃ brūmi mahāpurisoti - so'dha sibbanimaccagā'

This verse preached by the Buddha in reply to a question put by Brahmin Tissa Metteyya, is quoted here for comment. In a sort of a 'seminar' on the significance of this verse, six monks put forward their individual opinions thereby drawing out the deeper implications of the verse in question. The meaning of the verse, as it stands, would be something like this:

'Yo ubhante viditvāna' - He who having understood both ends  
'Majjhe mantā na lippati' - Does not get attached to the middle through wisdom  
'Taṃ brūmi mahāpurisoti' - Him I call a great man  
'So idha sibbanim accagā' - It is he who has bypassed or escaped the seamstress in this world.

'Sibbanī' or 'seamstress' is a term for craving. The function of craving is conceived here as a process of stitching or weaving. The underlying idea is the accumulation of knots. It is craving that is responsible for the knotty nature of this existence. The two ends and the middle referred to in this verse are just the things necessary for making a knot. The significance of the two ends and the middle has been variously interpreted in this sutta. According to one interpretation that came up at this symposium, the one-end means the six internal bases and the second end means the six external bases and the middle is consciousness.

By consciousness is meant the six kinds of sense-consciousness. So according to this interpretation too, we find at consciousness becomes the middle as a result of reckoning the sense and its object as two ends. It is as if two pegs have been driven as eye and forms for the measuring that is implicit in sense-perception.

The arising of this basic discrimination is called the arising of the sense-bases- 'āyatanuppāda'. And the insight into this basic discrimination is called the seeing of the arising of sense-bases. In the Soṇa

Sutta, among the Sixes of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, we find the following significant verse:

'Taṇhakkhayādhimuttassa  
Asammohaṇica cetaso  
Disvā āyatanuppādaṃ  
Sammā cittaṃ vimuccati'

'In one who is intent upon the destruction of craving  
and the non-delusion of the mind,  
on seeing the arising of sense-bases,  
the mind is well released.'

One may well infer from this verse that it is by the not-seeing of the arising of the bases that one remains bound - that the mind remains bound to saṃsāra. As we mentioned above, so long as there is no proper understanding of the two-ends, a middle creeps in. So long as one grasps eye and forms as the two ends, eye-consciousness comes in. That is because what is called eye-consciousness is the very discrimination of eye and form as two things. Now, in the case of the mirage, the deer thinks: 'I am here, the water is out there.' It is with this presumption that the deer runs towards the mirage. But from the very outset, this discrimination, this consciousness of water, is wrong. Therefore the deer keeps on running after the mirage. It is a vain pursuit. The more it approaches the more its object recedes. This is the nature of a mirage. But what impels the deer in its pursuit is its eye-consciousness. This consciousness acts like two pegs. So the deer thinks: 'Here is my eye and there is that water. If only I can go there, I can see that real water and drink it.'

Similarly, when we grasp eye and forms as the two ends, we have driven the two pegs down to the earth, as it were. We have taken eye and forms as real. That very discrimination is eye-consciousness.

The best revelation of this state of affairs comes when one has accelerated one's speed of mental-noting to such an extent that when a thought comes to one's mind, one summarily dismisses it as a mere thinking without being carried away by it. Thereby one does not allow that thought to crystallize itself as an object. Normally, an object is something that one clings to or hangs on to. The mind which has been in the habit of clinging throughout saṃsāra, always seeks to hang on to something or the other, however frail it may be. That is because of the craving for existence. Just as a man falling down a precipice would hang on even to the frail straw for fear of the fall, the ever-new regenerator, craving - 'taṇhā ponobhavikā' - prompts one to hang on to this that or the other. But the crux of the problem lies where the mind meets its object.

Mind has the habit of hanging on to its object. Even when the five external senses do not grasp their respective objects, mind would grasp the thought as its object. One tends to think: 'Here am I, the thinker, and this is my mind-object.' So long as this bifurcation, this duality, is there, there will also be a place for mind-consciousness. In the magic-show of consciousness, mind-consciousness is the subtlest trick of all. Now in the verse quoted above, it is said that the mind is well released on seeing the arising of bases. How does this come about? When the meditator attends to the objects of the six senses rapidly and in a more refined way, without clinging to them, summarily dismissing them, in the course of his meditative attention - all of a sudden - he discovers the mind-object as soon as it strikes the mind. The relativity involved in the process of sense-contact is thereby understood and the delusion regarding the magic-show of consciousness is dispelled. Strange as it may appear, this very insight into the dependent arising of sense bases has dismantled those very sense-bases-as it were.

Of course, the process of cessation was going on all the time. But due to the regenerator, - craving -



which had a partiality for the arising aspect, the fact of cessation was not seen. As it is said in Dvayatānupassanā Sutta of the Sutta Nipāta:

'Ye ca rūpūpagā sattā  
Ye ca arūpaṭṭhāyino  
Nirodhaṃ appajānantā  
Āgantāro punabbhavaṃ'

'Those beings who approach realms of form  
and those that are in formless realms,  
not understanding well the fact of cessation,  
come again and again to existence.'

What is meant is that impelled by craving, beings are always keen on ever- new arisings to the neglect of the fact of cessation. As soon as a thing breaks up, craving prompts: "Don't worry about this thing that is lost. Take hold of that thing out there." This renewing process goes on so rapidly in the mind, that the process of mental-noting is something like a battle with Māra. One has to speed up the process of mental-noting in such a way as to eliminate the possibilities of attachment and clinging. In fact, it would be at a totally unexpected moment that the releasing insight breaks forth. But once that insight dawns, one understands for the first time the delusion one has been in, all this time. Consciousness arises dependent on conditions. There is no 'I' in it. This way, one sees the law of Paṭiccasamuppāda with the help of the six sense-bases. This is the significance of the phrase: 'Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ' quoted above.

Eye-consciousness arises dependent on eye and forms. And likewise, mind- consciousness arises dependent on mind and mind-objects. So long as this fact is not seen, there is a tendency to imagine three things in this situation - 'tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso', 'the concurrence of the three is contact.' This concurrence or the going-together is actually a going-together of the delusion of the three. So this insight may be called the understanding of contact or the understanding of consciousness or the understanding of perception.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Oct 19, 2010 2:39 am  
Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?  
Content:  
This answer is sublime.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 4:23 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Mike & all,

The main problem with the classical interpretation is that it defines nibbāna as an existent thing (atthi dhamma) that ultimately exists (paramatthata atthibhāva). Thus the inability to see through this whole atthi/natthi and bhāva/abhāva bifurcation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 4:25 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Sheeps,

Will do. Gladly.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 4:38 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Tilt & all,

Indeed. There is no need to accept the theory of radical momentariness to clearly see for oneself the alteration while persisting (ṭhitassa aññathatta) of mental fabrications.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 5:43 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Sheeps,

This is nonsense. What school posits that persons (puggala) are sabbāva or possess sabbāva? Theravāda certainly doesn't make such claims.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 8:42 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi 5heaps,

Firstly, a puggala or a satta isn't a dhamma. Therefore, no Theravādin would ever even remotely suggest that a person possess sabhāva. (Nor would any Sarvāstivādin if there were actually any living Sarvāstivādins left in this world.)

Secondly, the Indian mādhyamikas thoroughly refuted the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika notions of svabhāva. If you're going to base your study and practice on the Indian schools, then it's a good idea to understand Indian Mādhyamaka (i.e. not Je Tsongkhapa's hybrid system which isn't accepted by the vast majority of non-Gelugpa lamas).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 5:05 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Beeblebrox & all,

Again, there is no need to accept the theory of radical momentariness to clearly see for oneself the alteration while persisting (ṭhitassa aññathatta) of fabrications.

And by extension, specifically regarding physical processes, if there is no alteration in the circulatory system or the central nervous system of the body (for example) then you are very likely either (i) dead, or (ii) soon to be dead. And even a dead body undergoes a process of decomposition.

Alteration or change or flux is common to all physical things on both micro and macro levels.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 23, 2010 5:49 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I agree, there is no need to bring the idea of flux too far. The penetration of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda) in both forward and reverse sequence will eliminate adherence to any views of existence and non-existence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 3:57 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

There is no need to establish functional things as anything more than mere nominal designations (paññattimatta).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 5:02 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Blackbird & all,

I would suspect that Ven. Ñāṇavīra was probably taking issue with the classical Theravāda theory of radical momentariness. But this theory doesn't negate true, inherent existence (sabhāvasiddhi). Thus, classical Theravāda is a realist school.

It's also worth mentioning that mahāyānikas refute realist positions regarding inherent existence (sabhāva) either by negating the apprehender, apprehended, and apprehension (grāhaka, grāhya, & grahaṇa) in the case of Yogācāra, or by thorough penetration of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda, pratītyasamutpāda) in the case of Mādhyamaka. Neither of these schools rely on reasonings involving impermanence or momentary change in order to negate realist positions regarding inherent existence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 5:20 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I mean that the entire notion of inherently existent things is rooted in ignorance. This is why one has to penetrate conditioned arising in reverse sequence in order to eliminate the view that things have inherent existence. And an arahant has done just that. Therefore an arahant can use conventional language without forgetting that s/he is merely employing nominal designations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 6:02 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

The entire path is just the skillful employment of practice injunctions in order to eliminate craving and ignorance. There is no ontology to be established. In fact, conceiving in terms of existence and non-existence is a significant part of the problem, and not the solution.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 6:47 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Conze's and Streng's translations aren't very clear. For the first, here is a version of the line embedded within a Pāla era Indian commentary by Praśāstrasena, translated by Donald Lopez: He was asked how [one should practice]. Therefore, he says one should view the aggregates to be empty of intrinsic existence. The five aggregates are form, feeling, discrimination, conditioning factors, and consciousness.

Empty of intrinsic existence: there are five types of emptiness: the emptiness of what did not exist before, the emptiness of what does not exist after being destroyed, the emptiness of the utterly nonexistent, the emptiness of one not existing in the other, and the emptiness of intrinsic entity. The absence of yogurt in milk is the emptiness of what did not exist before, the absence of milk in yogurt is the emptiness of what does not exist after being destroyed, the absence of horns on the lower part of a rabbit's head is the emptiness of the utterly nonexistent, the absence of an ox in a horse is the emptiness of one not existing in the other, and the nonintrinsic existence of all phenomena is the emptiness of intrinsic entity. Among the five types of emptiness, the five aggregates are empty in the sense of being without intrinsic entity; they should therefore be analyzed as empty.

As for the second, here's the verse translated by Ari Goldfield with comments by Khenpo Tsultrim Rinpoche:

Dependently arisen entities  
Are called "emptiness,"

[For] that which is dependently arisen  
Is that which has no inherent nature. (22)

All entities that are arisen from causes and conditions are called emptiness; they are of the nature of emptiness. That which is dependently arisen, that which arises due to causes and conditions, has no inherent nature of its own. It has no independent nature. This verse demonstrates that whatever dependently arises is necessarily empty of true existence.

For example, when we have a dream all of the different appearances that we see in a dream arise due to various causes and conditions. All of these appearances are empty. There is not one of these appearances which has any substance or any reality to it. Yet, within this emptiness, all of these appearances arise due to these various causes and conditions. Similarly, all of the appearances of this life, whatever they may be, arise due to the coming together of various causes and conditions. Therefore, all of the appearances of this life are pervaded by emptiness of any inherent or substantial existence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 7:05 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

No, one is trying to end unsatisfactoriness by removing ignorant reification and craving.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 24, 2010 5:07 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Well, then I would suggest that you're attempting to beat a dead horse!

And on a related note, I quit thinking in terms of vādas and yānas a long time ago. I consider everything other than the suttas of the Nikāyas and Āgamas to be a series of endnotes to the teachings of the ascetic Gotama. Some of these endnotes are more informative than others. Many just wander off into thickets of views.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 26, 2010 4:17 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Blackbird & all,

Worldly paṇḍitas, i.e. paṇḍitas in the world (loka paṇḍita-s) are not noble disciples (ariyasāvaka-s). There are wise khattiyas (Skt. kṣatriya-s), wise brāhmaṇas, wise householders, and wise ascetics (cf. S iii 6: khattiyapaṇḍitā, brāhmaṇapaṇḍitā, gahapatipaṇḍitā, samaṇapaṇḍitā) who haven't penetrated conditioned arising in both forward and reverse sequence.

Noble disciples, on the other hand, have penetrated conditioned arising in both forward and reverse sequence. Having discerned conditioned arising in forward sequence they no longer cling to views regarding non-existence (lit. "it is not"). Having discerned conditioned arising in reverse sequence they no longer cling to views regarding existence (lit. "it is"). In this way they let go of adherence to any and all ontological views. SN 12.15 (S ii 16):

By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one.

Sn 4.5 Paramatṭhaka Sutta:

[A] bhikkhu should not depend on what is seen, heard or cognized, nor upon ritual observances. He should not present himself as equal to, nor imagine himself to be inferior, nor better than, another. Abandoning (the views) he had (previously) held and not taking up (another), he does not seek a support even in knowledge. Among those who dispute he is certainly not one to take sides. He does not [have] recourse to a view at all. In whom there is no inclination to either extreme, for becoming or non-becoming, here or in another existence, for him there does not exist a fixed viewpoint on investigating the doctrines assumed (by others). Concerning the seen, the heard and the cognized he does not form the least notion. That brahmana who does not grasp at a view, with what could he be identified in the world? They do not speculate nor pursue (any notion); doctrines are not accepted by them. A (true) brahmana is beyond, does not fall back on views.

Thoughts are just thoughts. Designations help to show the way leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness. But there is no need to create any sort of "world" out of these designations. Creating a "world" is part of the problem, not the solution.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 26, 2010 6:11 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I would suggest that Ven. Ñāṇavīra was indeed "building up a world." And this is completely relevant to the discussion at hand. IMO he didn't fully understand paṭiccasamuppāda. Nor did he understand the Theravāda commentarial view that he was trying to criticize (e.g. see this post).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 26, 2010 6:56 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Sobeh,

Ven. Ñāṇavīra was one of the first people in a very long time to question the authority and validity of the received commentarial tradition. IMO this was intellectually honest and necessary. He offered much in order to begin to clear the path. But it was just a beginning. He wasn't always 100% correct and his approach and writing style are not straightforward. A diligent, disinterested practitioner can accept Ven. Ñāṇavīra's pioneering contributions while also seeing that it's now possible to approach the dhamma even more directly.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 26, 2010 11:01 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

It's a subjective evaluation being conveyed as a subjective evaluation.

Moreover, it's a subjective evaluation which considers the dhamma interpreted through western philosophy and symbolic logic to be far less direct, less practical, and less skillful than the dhamma unencumbered by such unnecessary intellectual head trips.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Oct 27, 2010 11:02 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

There is no need to suggest that feelings, perceptions, or thoughts "endure unchanged for at least a certain interval." AN 3.47:

Monks, these three are fabricated characteristics of what is fabricated. Which three? Arising is discernible, passing away is discernible, alteration (literally, other-ness) while staying is discernible.



SN 35.93:

In dependence on the eye & forms there arises eye-consciousness. The eye is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Forms are inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Thus this pair is both wavering & fluctuating — inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise.

Eye-consciousness is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Whatever is the cause, the requisite condition, for the arising of eye-consciousness, that is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Having arisen in dependence on an inconstant factor, how could eye-consciousness be constant?

The coming together, the meeting, the convergence of these three phenomena is eye-contact. Whatever is the cause, the requisite condition, for the arising of eye-contact, that is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Having arisen in dependence on an inconstant factor, how could eye-contact be constant?

Contacted, one feels. Contacted, one intends. Contacted, one perceives. These phenomena are both wavering & fluctuating — inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. This is how it's in dependence on a pair that eye-consciousness comes into play.

In dependence on the ear & sounds there arises ear-consciousness...

In dependence on the nose & aromas there arises nose-consciousness...

In dependence on the tongue & flavors there arises tongue-consciousness...

In dependence on the body & tactile sensations there arises body-consciousness...

In dependence on the intellect & ideas there arises intellect-consciousness. The intellect is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Ideas are inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Thus this pair is both wavering & fluctuating — inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise.

Intellect-consciousness is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Whatever is the cause, the requisite condition, for the arising of intellect-consciousness, that is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Having arisen in dependence on an inconstant factor, how could intellect-consciousness be constant?

The coming together, the meeting, the convergence of these three phenomena is intellect-contact. Whatever is the cause, the requisite condition, for the arising of intellect-contact, that is inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. Having arisen in dependence on an inconstant factor, how could intellect-contact be constant?

Contacted, one feels. Contacted, one intends. Contacted, one perceives. These phenomena are both wavering & fluctuating — inconstant, changeable, of a nature to become otherwise. This is how it's in dependence on a pair that intellect-consciousness comes into play.

There also is no reason to read the commentarial theory of radical momentariness into these passages either. (On the theory of radical momentariness and the historical development of this theory see this post.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Oct 27, 2010 11:59 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Is it? I'm certainly interested in finding the most appropriate designations for phenomenological description (i.e. the bracketed description of lived experience). In this context, English designations which accurately describe alteration while persisting (ṭhitassa aññathatta). Any suggestions are welcome.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 1:39 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Hi Sherab,

The dhamma is concerned with soteriology not ontology. All of the practice injunctions included in the three aggregations of ethical conduct, meditation, and discernment have the four noble truths as their underlying thematic structure. In MN 28 (M i 184) Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta we find Venerable Sāriputta comparing the four noble truths to an elephants footprint. He says: Friends, just as the footprints of all walking animals can be placed within an elephants footprint, and the elephants footprint is declared as foremost amongst them in terms of its large size; in the same way, all skillful dhamma-s are included within the four noble truths.

Specifically, all practices lead towards and culminate in the full realization of the third noble truth: the cessation of unsatisfactoriness. As SN 45.91 (S v 38) Pācīnaninna Sutta states: Monks, just as the Ganges river flows, slopes, and inclines to the east; in the same way, a monk who develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path flows towards nibbāna, slopes towards nibbāna, inclines towards nibbāna.

Moreover, these noble truths are epistemic. They are the undeceptive knowledge of unmistakable cognitions. They are not ontological realities. There is no need for ontological commitments, i.e. there is no need to establish phenomena as truly existing. All such proofs and refutations are quite irrelevant and are rooted in unskillful adherence to views.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 7:57 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Do you practice satipaṭṭhāna? Specifically, either mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānassati), or observation of feelings (vedanānupassanā), or observation of dhammas (dhammānupassanā) pertaining to the mind sensory sphere and mental phenomena sensory sphere?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 8:07 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I've already addressed the inappropriateness of applying realist ontology to the Buddha's dhamma a number of times on this thread and elsewhere. There is no need whatsoever to impute substantial existence onto phenomena as they are experienced. It's a complete sidetrack; an infatuation with views.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 8:48 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

The individuation of phenomena requires apperceptive memory recognition (saññā) and conceptual designation (paññatti) for differentiation. All such individuation is relational and conventional and therefore phenomena cannot be ultimately established as "truly existing" (sabhāvasiddhi).

Ven. Ñāṇananda, The Magic of the Mind (pp. 62-63):

According to the phenomenalist approach of the Buddha, not only the different types of feelings and mental states but the entire range of doctrinal categories summed up under the last section [of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta] i.e. 'contemplation of mind-objects,' has nothing in it that is worth 'clinging to.' All of them can be subsumed under the term 'concept' and that is to recognize their conditioned nature – the nature of arising and ceasing.

"Friends, when there is the eye and there are forms and there is eye-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact (phassapaññatti). When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling (vedanāpaññatti). When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception (saññāpaññatti). When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a

designation of thought (vitakkapaññatti). When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception (papañcasaññāsāṅkhāsamudācaraṇapaññatti).

“When there is the ear... When there is the nose... When there is the tongue... When there is the body...

“When there is the mind and there are mental phenomena and there is mental-consciousness, it is possible that one will point out a designation of contact. When there is a designation of contact, it is possible that one will point out a designation of feeling. When there is a designation of feeling, it is possible that one will point out a designation of perception. When there is a designation of perception, it is possible that one will point out a designation of thought. When there is a designation of thought, it is possible that one will point out a designation of obsession due to reckonings born of prolific perception.” – M I 112 Madhupiṇḍika Sutta

It would indeed appear strange to us that in Buddhist psychology even contact and feeling – with which we are so intimate – are treated as ‘designations’ (paññatti). We might feel that this is an intrusion of the ‘designation’ into the jealously guarded recesses of the psyche. Yet this is not the case, for, in the very act of apperception contacts and feelings are reckoned, evaluated, defined, and designated on the basis of one’s latencies (i.e. the aggregates). Thus there is hardly any justification for regarding them as ‘the given’, though we are accustomed to take them for granted. In other words, what we are wont to treat as ‘the given,’ turns out to be ‘synthetic’ and ‘composite’ (saṅkhata).

Noa Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition* (pp. 245-247): The Buddha’s insight reveals that the causal foundation for one’s samsaric experience is the operation of one’s cognitive apparatus. One’s experience in its entirety arises from the cognitive process of making sense of the incoming sensory data. Basic to this process is the khandha of conceptualization and apperception, namely, sañña, the activity of which results in the identification and differentiation of the incoming data. This identification process necessarily involves naming. As Hamilton points out, in describing the way identification is part of sorting out incoming experiential data the early Buddhist texts emphasize that naming is equivalent to what is called ‘making manifold’ of those data. ‘One might say’, Hamilton suggests, ‘that the process of making manifold in order to identify is the process of making nameable the aspects of one’s experience’. Indeed the Pali term for making manifold, papañceti, also means ‘verbal differentiation’, or ‘verbal proliferation’. All this verbal differentiation adds up to language, for, as the apperceptive process develops, one is imposing on the sensory influx categories and references that can be indicated by means of language. Language, then, is intrinsic to our experience: it provides the conceptual criteria and framework by which we make sense of our experience, or rather, by which we construct our world.

The Buddha, however, unveils not only the dominance of language and conceptual thought, but also their inherent insufficiency and inadequacy. Although language is a constant feature of our experience, we are normally unaware of the paradox in the cognitive process: to become knowable all the incoming sensory data must be verbally differentiated, but as such they are mere constructions, mental formations; nothing justifies their reliability because they could equally have been constructed otherwise, in accordance with other conventional guidelines. What the Buddha rejects is realism, conceptual and ontological alike: the notion that the encountered world is made up of distinguishable substances, and the linguistic theory that words refer to these substances which they represent; the conviction that our language corresponds to or mirrors a mind-independent reality. He points towards conventionalism in language and undermines the misleading character of nouns as substance-words. Whatever we can know is part of the activity of language,

but language, by its very nature, undermines certified knowledge. The Buddha shows that language is, in principle, faulty: having the power to make manifold and endlessly to proliferate, it makes things appear and disappear; it can construct anything and hence cannot be representational of reality. There can be no innocence of relations between word and world....

Stated otherwise, samsaric experience is rooted in our cognitive apparatus: to rely on our conceptual scheme and language the way we normally do amounts to emotionally and intellectually grasping at and fixing our experience. Having recognized the fiction and imaginative creation inherent in conceptual thought and language, the awakened mind breaks up the apparently solid world that we construct for ourselves. To realize that words and concepts do not name anything, do not represent anything – what could be closer to silence and the eschewal of all views?

Noticeable in this context is the Atthakavagga of the Suttanipata, which promulgates an ascetic discipline of silence and repudiation of our very cognitive apparatus as based on linguistic and conceptual delineation:

“Neither conceptualizing, nor conceptualizing wrongly, nor lacking conceptualization, nor conceptualizing nothing – in one who has achieved this state sensory recognizable experience (rupa) ceases, for what is called ‘verbal proliferation’ (papañca) has its origin in conceptualization.”

What comes to a halt according to this description is but namarupa: nama referring to all that is conceived of, thus providing an abstract, conceptual identity for the person, rupa designating the physically (though not necessarily visibly) recognizable data, that is, all that lends itself to apperception and that is given shape by means of sensory impression. Covering the range of whatever is either conceived or apperceived, namarupa therefore signifies the entirety of what is cognizable. That namarupa is related to papañca is attested by another Suttanipata passage located in the Mahavagga:

“Having understood namarupa as verbal proliferation ( papañca) that is the root of inward and outward disease, one is released from bondage to the root of all disease. Such a one is called in truth ‘one who knows well’.”

Ven. Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought* (p. 87):

The primary significance of the formula of Dependent Arising lies here. Lists of phenomena, both mental and material, are linked together with the term "paccayā" or any of its equivalents, and the fact of their conditionality and non-substantiality is emphasized with the help of analysis and synthesis. Apart from serving the immediate purpose of their specific application, these formulas help us to attune our minds in order to gain paññā. Neither the words in these formulas, nor the formulas as such, are to be regarded as ultimate categories. We have to look not so much at them as through them. We must not miss the wood for the trees by dogmatically clinging to the words in the formulas as being ultimate categories. As concepts, they are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation....

Concept and Reality (pp. 55–56):

Concepts – be they material or spiritual, worldly or transcendental – are not worthy of being grasped dogmatically. They are not to be treated as ultimate categories and are to be discarded in the course of the spiritual endeavour.... That the emancipated sage (muni) no longer clings even to such concepts as "nibbāna" or "detachment" (virāga) is clearly indicated in the following verse of the Sutta Nipāta:

"For the Brahmin (the Muni) who has transcended all bounds, there is nothing that is grasped by

knowing or by seeing. He is neither attached to attachment nor is he attached to detachment. In this world, he has grasped nothing as the highest." [Sn 795]

Sn 3.12: Dvayatānupassanā Sutta:  
Entrenched in name and form,  
They conceive that "This is true."

In whatever way (worldlings) conceive it,  
It turns out other than that.  
For that is what is false about it.  
Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

But nibbāna does not have a false nature.  
That the noble ones truly know.  
Through fully comprehending the truth,  
They are without hunger, quenched.

Ud 3.10 (Ud 32) Loka Sutta:  
This anguished world,  
Afflicted by contact,  
Speaks of a disease as self.  
By whatever terms it conceives of (anything),  
It turns out other than that.  
Although becoming otherwise, the world is held by existence,  
Afflicted by existence, yet delights in that very existence.  
Where there is delight, there is fear.  
What it fears is unsatisfactory.  
This holy life is lived for the abandoning of that existence.

Whatever ascetics or brahmans say that emancipation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not liberated from existence, I say.

And whatever ascetics or brahmans say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

When one relinquishes infatuation with all apperceptions and conceptual designations regarding both existence and non-existence then it is possible to find peace. Also, there is no soteriological necessity for categorizing any dhamma-s as paramattha, except in reference to nibbāna as the highest goal or the highest good. Ven. Ñāṇananda, Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought (pp. 44-45):

[T]he word 'paramattha' in its earlier and non-technical usage, actually meant the Highest Goal as the object of realization, and any words tending towards that goal were called 'paramatthasaṃhita' (connected with the Highest Goal), irrespective of their precision or technicality. However, the Buddha, for his part, was content to treat all of them as 'sammuti'. For him, they were 'merely worldly conventions in common use, which he made use of, without clinging to them' (DN I 202).

Ven. Ñāṇananda, The Mind Stilled, Nibbāna Sermon 13:

[Nibbāna] is not a paramattha in the sense of an absolute. It is a paramattha only in the sense that it is the highest good, parama attha. This is the sense in which the word was used in the discourses, though it has different connotations now. As exemplified by such quotations as āradhaviṛiyo paramatthapattiyā, "with steadfast energy for the attainment of the highest good", the suttas speak

of Nibbāna as the highest good to be attained.

In later Buddhist thought, however, the word paramattha came to acquire absolutist connotations, due to which some important discourses of the Buddha on the question of worldly appellations, worldly expressions and worldly designations fell into disuse. This led to an attitude of dwelling in the scaffolding, improvised just for the purpose of constructing a building....

It is not proper to relegate some sermons as discursive or conventional in style. Always it is a case of using concepts in worldly parlance. In the laboratory one uses a particular set of symbols, but on returning home he uses another. In the same way, it is not possible to earmark a particular bundle of concepts as absolute and unchangeable. As stated in the Poṭṭhapādasutta, already discussed, all these concepts are worldly appellations, worldly expressions, worldly usages, worldly designations, which the Tathāgata makes use of without tenacious grasping. However philosophical or technical the terminology may be, the arahants make use of it without grasping it tenaciously. What is of importance is the function it fulfils. We should make use of the conceptual scaffolding only for the purpose of putting up the building. As the building comes up, the scaffolding has to leave. It has to be dismantled. If one simply clings onto the scaffolding, the building would never come up.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 10:03 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I would suggest that it would be much more beneficial to place all this tenet system nonsense on the shelf and practice satipaṭṭhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 10:49 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Yeah. As I indicated in a previous reply to Sobeh, I think that if we are to draw any comparisons between the dhamma and western philosophy the most appropriate comparison might be with some aspects of first-person phenomenological description. That is, Husserl's method of phenomenological description where one attends to the contents of one's conscious experience while setting aside (i.e. bracketing) the question of the ontological existence of the contents of this experience altogether. Of course, there's no need for any further comparison beyond this general methodological framework. I'm not suggesting that we attempt to read Husserl or Merleau-Ponty into the dhamma....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Oct 28, 2010 11:58 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Impermanence has no soteriological utility except as this concept relates to impermanent phenomena (as phenomena are experienced). Apperception/recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā) involves attending to an appearance of impermanence (aniccākāra). This appearance of impermanence is recognized via a sign/representation (nimitta).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 29, 2010 1:08 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Phenomena arise according to specifically assignable conditionality (idappaccayatā):

When this is, that is.

From the arising of this comes the arising of that.

Therefore, phenomena aren't utterly non-existent.

Phenomena cease according to specifically assignable conditionality (idappaccayatā):

When this isn't, that isn't.

From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.

Therefore, phenomena aren't ultimately existent.

Moreover, the individuation of phenomena requires apperceptive memory recognition (saññā) and conceptual designation (paññatti) for differentiation. All such individuation is fabricated, relational, and conventional, and therefore phenomena cannot be established as ultimately existent. Ven.

Ñāṇananda, *The Magic of the Mind* (p. 63):

It would indeed appear strange to us that in Buddhist psychology even contact and feeling – with which we are so intimate – are treated as ‘designations’ (paññatti). We might feel that this is an intrusion of the ‘designation’ into the jealously guarded recesses of the psyche. Yet this is not the case, for, in the very act of apperception contacts and feelings are reckoned, evaluated, defined, and designated on the basis of one’s latencies (i.e. the aggregates). Thus there is hardly any justification for regarding them as ‘the given’, though we are accustomed to take them for granted. In other words, what we are wont to treat as ‘the given,’ turns out to be ‘synthetic’ and ‘composite’ (saṅkhata).

Noa Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition* (p. 247):



“Neither conceptualizing, nor conceptualizing wrongly, nor lacking conceptualization, nor conceptualizing nothing – in one who has achieved this state sensory recognizable experience (rupa) ceases, for what is called ‘verbal proliferation’ (papañca) has its origin in conceptualization.”

What comes to a halt according to this description is but namarupa: nama referring to all that is conceived of, thus providing an abstract, conceptual identity for the person, rupa designating the physically (though not necessarily visibly) recognizable data, that is, all that lends itself to apperception and that is given shape by means of sensory impression. Covering the range of whatever is either conceived or apperceived, namarupa therefore signifies the entirety of what is cognizable.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 30, 2010 7:54 am

Title: Re: Theravada's Equivalent of Zen's Kensho?

Content:

Hi Bhante,

Pāli sources also mention the stage of vision (dassanabhūmi, compare with darśanamārga) of stream entry followed by the stage of cultivation (bhāvanābhūmi, compare with bhāvanāmārga), but without all of the details found in the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 02, 2010 6:15 am

Title: Re: Looking for a term.

Content:

Buswell mentions the Theravāda idea of ekantakāḷaka from the Abhidhamma Puggalapaññatti and its commentary here.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 07, 2010 5:10 am

Title: Re: What did the Buddha have to say about God?

Content:

Reply moved here to avoid taking this thread off topic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 07, 2010 10:15 am

Title: Re: Are letting go and accepting the same thing?

Content:

Yes, quite a bit more (see above entry by Ven. Anālayo).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 07, 2010 11:03 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Indeed. Reflecting on our own mortality can be a very helpful practice (even if one is still inclined to not accept post-mortem becoming).

There are these five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. Which five?

'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' This is the first fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.' This is the second fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.' This is the third fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.' This is the fourth fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

'I am the owner of my actions (kamma), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.' This is the fifth fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

These are the five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. [AN 5.57]

When this was said, the Blessed One addressed the monks. "Whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, 'O, that I might live for a day & night... for a day... for the interval that it takes to eat a meal... for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up four morsels of food, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal' — they are said to dwell heedlessly. They develop mindfulness of death slowly for the sake of ending the effluents.

"But whoever develops mindfulness of death, thinking, 'O, that I might live for the interval that it takes to swallow having chewed up one morsel of food... for the interval that it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, that I might attend to the Blessed One's instructions. I would have accomplished a great deal' — they are said to dwell heedfully. They develop mindfulness of death acutely for the sake of ending the effluents. [AN 6.19]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 07, 2010 2:45 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

And how are you going to establish the objective validity your momentary thing "that maintains its characteristic nature as it is undergoing subtlest change"? If you rely on any criterion or measurement (pamāṇa) based on deluded worldly cognitions, then all you will ever "prove" is that deluded worldly cognitions are deluded. Not a valid source for establishing the unerring validity of any supposed objective truth-claims. Sn 3.12 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta:  
Entrenched in name and form,  
They conceive that "This is true."

In whatever way (worldlings) conceive it,  
It turns out other than that.  
For that is what is false about it.  
Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

If, on the other hand, you attempt to employ any criterion or measurement (pamāṇa) in order to try to establish liberated cognitions, then you will also be at a loss because there are no means of measurement which can be used as reference points to validate a measureless cognition (appamāṇacetasa). SN 6.7 (S i 148) Kokālika Sutta:  
What wise man here would seek to define  
A measureless one by taking his measure?  
He who would measure a measureless one  
Must be, I think, an obstructed worldling.

Better to practice satipaṭṭhāna and begin to relinquish notions of objective truth-claims about theories of radical momentariness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 08, 2010 11:53 am

Title: Re: Are letting go and accepting the same thing?

Content:

Hi Bhante & all,

The way leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness is to be developed (dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā bhāvetabba). In a path context, phrases indicate practice injunctions which are to be applied. In a more fruitional context, phrases indicate gnosis which is to be realized

by the application of the path, i.e. gnosis of elimination (khayeññāṇa), gnosis and vision of liberation (vimuttiññāṇadassana), etc.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 09, 2010 10:14 am

Title: Re: Nibbana vs. annihilation?

Content:

Hi Sylvester,

That's good to hear. Thanks.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 14, 2010 8:15 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

From a developmental perspective the real gems of the Tibetan systems are lojong, tonglen, lujong, and the dzogrim of trulkhor, tsalung, etc. Without a foundation in these affective and somatic practices the study of the tenet systems is rather anemic.

The Pāḷi dhamma has its own affective and somatic developmental practices without the esoteric structure of the vajrayāna. The Pāḷi dhamma also has little need for the tenet systems of Tibetan lamrim.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 14, 2010 2:11 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

I think you're reading him accurately. It's not that there is only proliferation (papañca); it's that phenomena (dhamma-s) do not need to be (and indeed cannot be) established as ultimately existent ontological realities.

The individuation of particular dhamma-s requires the concomitant engagement of consciousness (viññāṇa) and name (nāma: vedanā, saññā, phassa, cetanā, manasikāra) specific to whatever

dhamma is being cognitively individuated. Thus, all such individuation of particulars is fabricated, relational, and conventional.

A thorough understanding of this process of individuation exposes the problem of deluded cognition, and when the problem is thoroughly discerned one can then begin to abandon unskillful processes and develop skillful mental factors such as saddhā, pāmojja, pīti, passaddhi, sukha, samādhi. Beyond this, one begins to clearly see the futility of fabricated processes altogether. As this clear seeing (vipassanā) develops, disenchantment (nibbidā) arises. Then dispassion (virāga) arises. Then as these qualities continue to develop, eventually the path results in liberation through discernment (paññāvimutti) and one realizes the gnosis of elimination (khayeññā) of the influxes (āśava-s), also referred to as the elimination of craving (taṇhakkhaya) as a shorthand expression.

All of this is developmental and soteriological. The path doesn't require establishing philosophical theories and proofs of valid cognition (pamāṇa) or ultimately existent objects. From the perspective of the early Pāli dhamma all of this sort of theorizing is just more proliferation (papañca). Nothing needs to be philosophically established beyond the status of mere designation (paññattimatta). This in no way entails nihilism because the dhammavinaya isn't a philosophical head trip; all components of path praxis are to be fully engaged and developed (bhāvanā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 14, 2010 2:19 pm

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Good quote Hanzze. It looks like someone has accurately described the Pāli dhamma understanding of suññatā on that Wikipedia page. Maybe it was Ven. Huifeng (a.k.a. Paññāsikhara)?...

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 15, 2010 4:15 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Perhaps it would be better for you to not read my replies Alan.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 15, 2010 4:25 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

The Pāḷi dhamma is a complete system of gradual training. It doesn't need to be supplemented by Sarvāstivāda, Yogācāra, or Mādhyamaka tenets.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 15, 2010 4:56 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Point taken. But it does depend on whom I'm replying to, and the context of the discussion at hand. When engaging in these types of discussions I don't see much point in breaking things down for people who haven't trained in the stuff that Sheeps (for example) is talking about. If anyone is interested in finding out more, there is Google.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 15, 2010 5:03 am

Title: Re: something endures unchanged for at least a certain interval

Content:

Because the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka is a complete system of gradual training.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 15, 2010 3:37 pm

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

Hi Agmanellium,

It's better to just attend to the practice in the present. These audio mp3 teachings by Ven. Ṭhānissaro are very clear and to the point:

A Recipe For Jhāna by Ven. Ṭhānissaro.

The Four Jhāna-s by Ven. Ṭhānissaro.

At Home In Jhāna by Ven. Ṭhānissaro.

The Safety of Jhāna by Ven. Ṭhānissaro.

These teachings by Ven. Gunaratana may also be helpful. What is samatha-vipassanā? (Pt 1):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What is samatha-vipassanā? (Pt 2):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

Why do some teachers warn against practicing jhāna-s?

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What are the benefits of practicing jhāna-s? (Pt 1):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

What are the benefits of practicing jhāna-s? (Pt 2):

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 12:15 am

Title: Re: Biography of Luang Por Sumetho on Youtube

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 12:42 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

My goodness Alex, where do you get this stuff? I'm glad I'm not stuck in your world!...

Cetanā is volitional intention, the will-to-do, the intentional directing of the mind. It is choice. Just because a particular mind-stream doesn't have all of the optimal requisite causes and conditions in place to always make the most optimally efficacious choice doesn't mean that cetanā isn't volitional intention.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 2:53 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

This passage is refuting the notion that there is a permanent self as the agent controlling the aggregates or within the aggregates which is not subject to old age and death. It does not mean that there is no volitional freedom to choose available to us.

AN 6.38 Attakāra Sutta:

"This, master Gotama, is my my doctrine; this is my view: There is no self-agency/acting (attakāra); there is no other-agency/acting (parakāra)."

"Never, brahman, have I seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view. How indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency/acting; there is no other-agency/acting'? What do you think, brahman, is there such a thing as initiative?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to initiate?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahman, since there is such a thing as initiative and beings are known to initiate, this among beings is self-agency; this is other-agency."

"What do you think, brahmin, is there such a thing as stepping away ... such a thing as stepping forward ... such a thing as stopping ... such a thing as standing still ... such a thing as stepping toward?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to do all these things?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahmin, since there is such a thing as stepping away and stepping forward, and the rest, and beings are known to do these things, this among beings is self-agency/acting; this is other-agency/acting. Never, Brahmin, I have seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view as yours. How



indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency; there is no other-agency'?"

Just because there is no permanent undying self as the agent controlling the aggregates or within the aggregates does not mean that there is no conscious, volitional self-agency operating.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 3:16 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

What Ñāṇa said is completely relevant. It exposes the error of relying on simplistic reductionist ābhidhammika thinking.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 3:28 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

No, stepping forward and stepping backward are conscious, volitional actions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 3:35 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

You're misreading SN 22.59. I have already pointed this out. Thus your entire argument has no basis.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 3:39 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

This straw-man argumentation is nothing but an attempt at misdirecting the discussion. No replies that I have read here are proposing a permanent Self. Please stick to the discussion at hand.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 4:01 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

My thinking isn't reliant upon simplistic ābhidhammika reductionism.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 4:13 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

Your arguments referencing a permanent Self are straw-man arguments because no one here is proposing a permanent Self as the agent of choices or actions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 4:16 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

One can develop calm (samatha) and integral composure (sammāsamādhi). This refines contacts and can certainly alter one's kamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 4:39 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

Desire and attention and volitional choice can all be concomitant causes or effects. Freedom of choice isn't independent of other causes and conditions -- it operates within the same conditioned mind-stream. But it does operate, and it does so in consort with desire and attention, and so on. Hence there is no need for Cartesian notions of free will or Upaniṣadic notions of a permanent, unchanging Self for there to be freedom to choose. In fact, these non-Buddhist systems are not sustainable precisely because of the interdependence of phenomena: i.e. an unchanging agent cannot engage in actions, etc.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 4:42 am

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 1:22 pm

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

I certainly don't see any support for a strict determinism in the suttas. But a qualified determinism compatible with free will may be applicable. For example, see *What Kind Of Free Will Did The Buddha Teach?* by Asaf Federman. If you read it I'd be interested to hear what you think of his conclusions. (Also related: Daniel Dennett, *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 6:54 pm

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

The dynamic complexity which you fail to account for is that at any given moment there are conditional causes as well as other conditions present. Any of these causes or other conditions can introduce change into the conditional processes which can potentially yield numerous different possible results, including possible unexpected results.

Moreover, simplistic reductionism cannot account for dynamic systems such as biological systems or mind-streams or sentient beings. An ordered, functioning system cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. A living cell cannot be reduced to the molecules which comprise it. A complex living organism cannot be reduced to the cells which comprise it. In the context of a mind-stream, a healthy functioning ego cannot simply be reduced to the aggregates which comprise it (or more precisely, from which it emerges). Why? Because there are pathological mind-streams which have all of the same component parts (i.e. feeling, apperception, contact, attention, intention, desire, etc.), yet a healthy, functional ego (which is a dynamic system) doesn't emerge from these component parts. This is why many contemporary insight meditation teachers have recognized that no significant progress can be made by employing the path of gradual training unless the student is in good mental health. Hence the well known phrase: "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody." Holism (from ὅλος holos, a Greek word meaning all, whole, entire, total) is the idea that all the properties of a given system (physical, biological, chemical, social, economic, mental, linguistic, etc.) cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone. Instead, the system as a whole determines in an important way how the parts behave.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 16, 2010 6:58 pm

Title: Re: Meditation, conditionality, and anatta

Content:

Again, context is everything. Lest the dhamma be reduced to a two-dimensional caricature as per Alex and Robert's analysis given above.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 18, 2010 8:35 pm

Title: Re: Uncertainty

Content:

Hi Sanghmitta & all,

From Food for the Heart: "Not Sure!" - The Standard of the Noble Ones:

The Buddha is still alive to this very day, go in and find him. Where is he? At aniccam, go in and find him there, go and bow to him: aniccam, uncertainty. You can stop right there for starters.

If the mind tries to tell you, "I'm a sotāpanna now," go and bow to the sotāpanna. He'll tell you himself, "It's all uncertain." If you meet a sakadāgāmī go and pay respects to him. When he sees you he'll simply say, "Not a sure thing!" If there is an anāgāmī go and bow to him. He'll tell you only one thing... "Uncertain." If you meet even an arahant, go and bow to him, he'll tell you even more firmly, "It's all even more uncertain!" You'll hear the words of the Noble Ones... "Everything is uncertain,

don't cling to anything."

And:

All the teachings in this world can be contained in this one teaching: aniccam. Think about it. I've searched for over forty years as a monk and this is all I could find. That and patient endurance. This is how to approach the Buddha's teaching... aniccam: it's all uncertain.

No matter how sure the mind wants to be, just tell it, "Not sure!" Whenever the mind wants to grab on to something as a sure thing, just say, "It's not sure, it's transient." Just ram it down with this. Using the Dhamma of the Buddha it all comes down to this. It's not that it's merely a momentary phenomenon. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, you see everything in that way. Whether liking arises or dislike arises you see it all in the same way. This is getting close to the Buddha, close to the Dhamma.

Now I feel that this is a more valuable way to practice. All my practice from the early days up to the present time has been like this. I didn't actually rely on the scriptures, but then I didn't disregard them either. I didn't rely on a teacher but then I didn't exactly "go it alone." My practice was all "neither this nor that."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 19, 2010 11:47 am

Title: Re: Did the Buddha teach that we have choice?

Content:

Cetanā is volitional intention, the will-to-do, the intentional directing of the mind. It is functional choice. Just because a particular mind-stream doesn't have all of the optimal requisite causes and conditions in place to always make the most optimally efficacious choice doesn't mean that cetanā isn't functional choice.

Contact is concomitant with volitional intention. The path includes developing fundamental attention (yoniso manasikāra), right effort (sammāvāyāma), and right exertion (sammappadhānā), which condition desire (chanda), volitional intention (cetanā), and so on. Functional choice isn't independent of other causes and conditions -- it operates within the same conditioned mind-stream. But it does operate, and it does so in consort with desire and attention, etc. Hence there is no need for Cartesian notions of free will or Upaniṣadic notions of a permanent, unchanging Self for there to be functional choice. In fact, these non-Buddhist systems are not sustainable precisely because of the interdependence of phenomena: i.e. an unchanging agent cannot engage in actions, etc. There are these four right exertions. Which four? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen...(and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. These are the four right exertions.

Just as the River Ganges flows to the east, slopes to the east, inclines to the east, in the same way when a monk develops & pursues the four right exertions, he flows to Unbinding, slopes to

Unbinding, inclines to Unbinding. [SN.49.1]

There are these four exertions. Which four? The exertion to guard, the exertion to abandon, the exertion to develop, & the exertion to maintain.

And what is the exertion to guard? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or variations by which — if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye — evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. (Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.) This is called the exertion to guard.

And what is the exertion to abandon? There is the case where a monk does not acquiesce to a thought of sensuality that has arisen [in him]. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, wipes it out of existence. He does not acquiesce to a thought of ill will... a thought of violence... any evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen [in him]. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, wipes them out of existence. This is called the exertion to abandon.

And what is the exertion to develop? There is the case where a monk develops the mindfulness factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the investigation of qualities factor for Awakening... the persistence factor for Awakening... the rapture factor for Awakening... the serenity factor for Awakening... the concentration factor for Awakening... the equanimity factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is called the exertion to develop.

And what is the exertion to maintain? There is the case where a monk maintains a favorable theme of concentration — the skeleton perception, the worm-eaten perception, the livid perception, the festering perception, the falling-apart perception, the bloated perception. This is called the exertion to maintain. [AN 4.14]

And how is a person ardent? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. This is what it means to be ardent.

And how is a person concerned? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels concern. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels concern. This is what it means to be concerned. This is how a person ardent & concerned is capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. [SN16.2]

[W]hen an individual with an internal blemish discerns, as it actually is, that 'I have an internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will generate desire, endeavor, & arouse persistence for the abandoning of that blemish. [MN 5]

If, on examination, a monk knows, 'I usually remain covetous, with thoughts of ill will, overcome by sloth & drowsiness, restless, uncertain, angry, with soiled thoughts, with my body aroused, lazy, or unconcentrated,' then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, undivided mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities, just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence,

endeavor, undivided mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head.... [AN 10.51]

Moreover, just because there is no permanent undying self as the agent controlling the aggregates or within the aggregates does not mean that there is no conscious, functional, volitional self-agency operating. AN 6.38 Attakāra Sutta:

"This, master Gotama, is my my doctrine; this is my view: There is no self-agency/acting (attakāra); there is no other-agency/acting (parakāra)."

"Never, brahman, have I seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view. How indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency/acting; there is no other-agency/acting'? What do you think, brahman, is there such a thing as initiative?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to initiate?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahman, since there is such a thing as initiative and beings are known to initiate, this among beings is self-agency; this is other-agency."

"What do you think, brahmin, is there such a thing as stepping away ... such a thing as stepping forward ... such a thing as stopping ... such a thing as standing still ... such a thing as stepping toward?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to do all these things?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahmin, since there is such a thing as stepping away and stepping forward, and the rest, and beings are known to do these things, this among beings is self-agency/acting; this is other-agency/acting. Never, Brahmin, I have seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view as yours. How indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency; there is no other-agency'?"

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 19, 2010 6:51 pm

Title: Re: Did the Buddha teach strict determinism?

Content:

It's important to understand the object of negation. SN 22.59 is negating the notion of a permanent Self which is not subject to affliction/dis-ease. It is not negating functional choice. The Self which is being negated in SN 22.59 is a Self which would be:

1. permanent
2. satisfactory
3. not subject to affliction/dis-ease

This Self is refuted: a permanent, satisfactory Self which is not prone to old age, sickness, and death.

As SN 22.59 states:

Bhikkhus, form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness is not-self. Were form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness self, then this form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness would not lead to affliction/dis-ease.

This criterion of affliction/disease is context for the following statement that:

none can have it of form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness: 'Let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be thus, let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be not thus.'

This in no way negates functional choice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 20, 2010 1:00 am

Title: Re: Did the Buddha teach strict determinism?

Content:

There is a difference between complete, unconditional autonomous control on the one hand, and functional choice on the other. Just because there is no permanent, satisfactory autonomous Self wielding power and unconditional control over the aggregates doesn't mean that there is no functional choice. Volitional intention (*cetanā*), which is functional choice, only ever occurs in the present. It occurs in consort with desire (*chanda*), attention (*manasikāra*), and so on. If there is the presence of fundamental attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), then there is the opportunity for skillful choices to occur, motivated by desire for the development of right effort (*sammāvāyāma*) and right exertion (*sammappadhānā*). All of these path factors occur in consort with functional choice and desire. Cf. the following brief survey of discourses which give clear injunctions for generating desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, the arousal of persistence, the exertion to guard, the exertion to abandon, the exertion to develop, the exertion to maintain, etc.

There are these four right exertions. Which four? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen...(and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen. These are the four right exertions.

Just as the River Ganges flows to the east, slopes to the east, inclines to the east, in the same way when a monk develops & pursues the four right exertions, he flows to Unbinding, slopes to Unbinding, inclines to Unbinding. [SN.49.1]

There are these four exertions. Which four? The exertion to guard, the exertion to abandon, the exertion to develop, & the exertion to maintain.



And what is the exertion to guard? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or variations by which — if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye — evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. (Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body, & intellect.) This is called the exertion to guard.

And what is the exertion to abandon? There is the case where a monk does not acquiesce to a thought of sensuality that has arisen [in him]. He abandons it, destroys it, dispels it, wipes it out of existence. He does not acquiesce to a thought of ill will... a thought of violence... any evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen [in him]. He abandons them, destroys them, dispels them, wipes them out of existence. This is called the exertion to abandon.

And what is the exertion to develop? There is the case where a monk develops the mindfulness factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the investigation of qualities factor for Awakening... the persistence factor for Awakening... the rapture factor for Awakening... the serenity factor for Awakening... the concentration factor for Awakening... the equanimity factor for Awakening dependent on seclusion... dispassion... cessation, resulting in letting go. This is called the exertion to develop.

And what is the exertion to maintain? There is the case where a monk maintains a favorable theme of concentration — the skeleton perception, the worm-eaten perception, the livid perception, the festering perception, the falling-apart perception, the bloated perception. This is called the exertion to maintain. [AN 4.14]

And how is a person ardent? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he arouses ardor. This is what it means to be ardent.

And how is a person concerned? There is the case where a monk thinks, 'The arising of unarisen evil, unskillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels concern. 'The non-abandoning of arisen evil, unskillful qualities... The non-arising of unarisen skillful qualities... The ceasing of arisen skillful qualities would lead to what is unbeneficial,' and he feels concern. This is what it means to be concerned. This is how a person ardent & concerned is capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. [SN16.2]

[W]hen an individual with an internal blemish discerns, as it actually is, that 'I have an internal blemish,' it can be expected of him that he will generate desire, endeavor, & arouse persistence for the abandoning of that blemish. [MN 5]

If, on examination, a monk knows, 'I usually remain covetous, with thoughts of ill will, overcome by sloth & drowsiness, restless, uncertain, angry, with soiled thoughts, with my body aroused, lazy, or unconcentrated,' then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, undivided mindfulness, & alertness for the abandoning of those very same evil, unskillful qualities, just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, undivided mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head.... [AN 10.51]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 10, 2010 6:42 am

Title: Re: Source of a work

Content:

Hi Euclid,

It's the first part of Chapter 8 from the The Way of the Bodhisattva (Bodhicaryavatāra) by Śāntideva. The entire chapter has around 180 verses.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 10, 2010 6:59 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Ñānananda

Content:

Thanks Mike.

Apparently the venerable bhikkhu is a time traveler. According to the Wikipedia page: Ven. Nanananda Thera delivered 33 sermons on the subject of Nibbana, during the period 1998.08.12 – 1991.01.31.

If someone has a Wikipedia account it would be a good idea to correct these dates.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 5:22 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

The Mahāyāna isn't a sect. It's a vehicle for those to aspire to awaken to buddhahood. Thus there are Theravāda bodhisattvas and Mūlasarvāstivāda bodhisattvas and Dharmaguptaka bodhisattvas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 5:59 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

The Theravāda also teaches the bodhisattvayāna. Thus a Theravāda bodhisattva wouldn't necessarily need to learn Mahāyāna sūtras, but it certainly wouldn't hurt since the bodhisattvayāna isn't explicitly taught in the Pāḷi Canon. (Hence Ven. Dhammapāla's use of the Bodhisattvabhūmi from the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra when composing his commentary on the Pāramī-s for Theravāda practitioners who wish to engage in the perfections and practice the mahābodhiyāna of bodhisattas.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 6:05 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Not a very stimulating or informed reply.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 6:09 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

It's a Mahābodhiyāna framework.

There is really no homogeneous "Mahāyāna."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 6:35 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Okay then, Dhammapāla's commentary on the four shackles to giving, and the accomplishments resulting from practicing the pāramī-s, are coincidentally also found in the Bodhisattvabhūmi of the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 6:43 am  
Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?  
Content:  
Glad we can agree.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 3:50 pm  
Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?  
Content:  
Indeed. No harm at all.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 4:15 pm  
Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?  
Content:  
There is a considerable corpus of these Pāli Yogāvacara texts which haven't yet been translated into Western languages. There is also considerable historical evidence of Thera's engaging in the bodhisattva path, and even Indian Buddhist tantra (for example, tantric mantras have been discovered at Abhayagiri Vihāra and Vijayārāma Vihāra in Sri Lanka).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 5:32 pm  
Title: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda  
Content:  
Hi all,

Here are some resources for anyone interested in the historical aspects of the bodhisattva path in Sri Lanka and other Theravāda locations:  
Chandawimala Thero, Rangama. Bodhicitta in Theravāda Buddhism with Special Reference to the Abhayagiri Fraternity in Ancient Sri Lanka. Presentation for Third Korean Conference of Buddhist Studies, 2006.

Chandawimala Thero, Rangama. The Impact of the Abhayagiri Practices on the Development of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Doctoral Dissertation, 2007.

Chandawimala Thero, Rangama. Esoteric Buddhist Practice in Ancient Sri Lanka.

Holt, John Clifford. Buddha In The Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka. Oxford University Press, 1991.

Sundberg, Jeffrey R. The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Japanese Esoteric Buddhism. Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 2004.

And a few papers discussing the Pāli Yogāvacara texts:

Crosby, Kate. History Versus Modern Myth: The Abhayagirivihāra, the Vimuttimagga and Yogāvacara Meditation. Journal of Indian Philosophy 27 (6), 1999.

Crosby, Kate. Studies in the Medieval Pāli Literature of Sri Lanka with Special Reference to the Esoteric Yogāvacara Tradition. Doctoral Dissertation, 2000.

Crosby, Kate. Tantric Theravāda: A Bibliographic Essay on the Writings of François Bizot and others on the Yogāvacara Tradition. Contemporary Buddhism, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2000.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 5:36 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

For anyone interested, here are some informative resources: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 11, 2010 7:30 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Here is a list of Pāli Yogāvacara texts from the Reference Table of Pāli Literature compiled by Ven. Nyanatusita:

Vidarśanā pota, Vidarśanā bhāvanā pota, Dhyāna pota, Samasatalis karmasthānadhyānabhāvanā, Bambaragalē Pota, Vipassanā Niddesa (Pāli–Sinh. C. Compiled by Rambukavāllē Ratanajoti on advice of Siamese theras, 18th c. Different versions? Beg: Okāsa vandāmi bhante... Eng. trans.: Manual of a Mystic. The material of this and the below entries is similar.) N 6601(6; 7; 23; 43 i & ii, 50; 76), LCM 699–702, SH 236.

Parikammabhāvana (C? Pāli. Beg: Upāda uppajjantu...) N 6601(23iii).

Kasinabhāvanāpota, Cattālisakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli–Sinh. Beg: Ahaṃ yācāmi uggahanimmitaṃ...) N 6601(6 & 64).

Kasinabhāvanāpota, Cattālisakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli–Sinh. Beg: Okāsa accayo no bhante accagamā...) N 6601(51).

Ratanaamatākaravaṇṇanā, Amatākaravaṇṇanā, Yogijanakantavimuttimagga (Pāli verse. 18th c.? Beg: Niccaṃ kilesamalavajjitadehadhāriṃ. The title Vimuttimaggauddāna is arbitrary according to Somadasa in N.) N 6601(85i), SH 236, LCM 687, L.

Samathavipassanabhāvanavākkapprakaraṇaṃ, Dvidhāvuttakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli prose. Beg: Vanditvā sirasā buddhaṃ ... Okāsa okāsa bho sabbaññu Gotama sitthakadīpa... The 13 ch. titles are same as in Amatākaravaṇṇanā with which it is found in the same MS bundle. Maybedvi dhā refers to the verse text followed by the prose text. Cf prec. and next entries. N 6601(85ii).

Duvidhakammaṭṭhāna, (C? In same entry as Kammaṭṭhānasaṅgaha in L. Beg: Vanditvā... Okāsa sabbaññu Gotama sitthakadīpa... 4 chapters.) N 6601(23ii), SW, L.

Kammaṭṭhānasaṅgaha (C, Sāriputta, 12th c. Maybe identical with the preceding entry.) SW, Ps, HP 144.

Kammaṭṭhānadīpanī (Sāriputta. Maybe identical with the preceding entry. ) Ps, SW.

Kammaṭṭhānavibhāga (C?) L.

Kammaṭṭhānagahananiddesasannaya, L.

Kammaṭṭhāna, Kammaṭṭhānabhāvanā, Karmaṣṭhāna, Kamaṭahan, Kamaṭahansannaya (C. Different works?) LCM 1067, N 6600 (145), L.

Vimuttisaṅgaha (Pāli.) (C?) L.

Vimuttisaṅghasannaya (C) L.

Vimuktisaṃgrahaya ((Pāli verse + sanna + Sinh. prose.C, Laṅkāsenavirat pirivena adhipatti, late 14th c. Often together with the Skhandhādingē vibhāgaya and Navaarahādībuddhaguṇa vibhāgaya. Beg: Natvā buddhañca...) N 6601(55), CM xxxii, SL 53, L.

Vimuktimargaya (C?) L.

Mūlakammaṭṭhāna, Mahāmūlakammaṭṭhāna (lc.) PCS 2.165, PSA 108, VP 4/120.

Yokappako Ācāriya (La?) PSA 121.

Abbreviations:

B: Burma/Myanmar

CM: Chiang Mai/Lān2 Nā

I: India

Ic: Indochina. (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Siam, Vietnam, i.e., the wider sense given in the Oxford Dictionary.)

Kh: Khmer/Cambodia

La: Laos

S: Siam/Thailand

SI: South-India, Tamil Nadu

C: Ceylon/Sri Lanka

CM: Catalogue of Ceylonese Manuscripts; C.E. Godakumbara, the Royal Library, Copenhagen, 1980.

HP: Handbook of Pāli Literature. Somapala Jayawardhana; Colombo, 1994.

L: Lankāvē Puskola Pot Nāmāvaliya I and II. K.D. Somadasa; Colombo, 1959 and 1964.

LCM: Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in the Library of the Colombo Museum; W.A. de Silva; Colombo 1938.

N: Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library, 7 vols.; K.D. Somadasa, London, 1987 - 95.

PCS: Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam. Peter Skilling & Santi Pakdeekham; Bangkok 2002. (§)

Ps: Pitakat samuin (Burmese History of the Tipiṭaka); Mahasirijeyasū, 19th c.

PSA: Pāli Literature of South-east Asia; Ven. Dr. Hammalawa Saddhātissa, Singapore, 1992, repr. 2004.

SH: Singhalesische Handschriften Teil I; Heinz Bechert and Maria Bidoli, Wiesbaden, 1969.

Singhalesische Handschriften Teil II; Heinz Bechert, Stuttgart, 1997.

SL: Sinhalese Literature; C.E. Godakumbara, Colombo, 1955.

SW: "Sāriputta and his works"; Primoz Pecenko, JPTS XXIII (1997), pp. 159–179.

VP: The Pāli Manuscript Collection kept in the Vat Phra Jetuphon Vimol Mangklaram (Vat Po), Jacqueline Filliozat, Bangkok, 2002–2003. In ED 108. (MS No.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 12:53 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

As for practice, there are right now traditional Theravāda practitioners who practice devotion towards one's teacher and pūja worship and mindfulness and the pāramīs just as much and just as intently as any Mahāyāna practitioner would. And there are right now traditional Mahāyāna practitioners who practice renunciation and mindfulness and samādhi just as much and just as intently as any Theravāda practitioner would.

As for view, saṃsāra is to be let go of, nirvāṇa is to be realized. Period. Everything else is -- at best -- a means towards this end; otherwise it's just a conceptual distraction.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 5:13 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

The topic of this thread pertains to Mahāyāna sūtras. Thus the context of this discussion is the sūtrayāna. The fruitional vehicle (phalayāna, vajrayāna) isn't directly relevant to the topic at hand.

What I said about pūjas was in terms of the frequency and quality of devotion, not the specific object of devotion per se (which need not be the same). I am certainly not saying that the śrāvakayāna and the bodhisattvayāna are the same. And I've already mentioned that there is no homogeneous Mahāyāna.

Moreover, a Mahāyāna practitioner (including a vajrayāna tantrika) who has realized the view will know that pūjas are expedient means and will eventually realize that there is no such thing as "objective sacramental change."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Upāya: expedient means specific to each mind-stream. Until one is either an arahant or a very advanced bodhisattva one is necessarily going to rely on expedient means. The path is all about leaning to employ expedient means.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

I suppose that I should add that I'm not denying that mahāyānikas believe in long living buddhas and very advanced bodhisattvas who abide in pure realms beyond this world system. Nor am I denying that mahāyānikas believe in the causal efficacy of communicating with these buddhas and bodhisattvas.

All Buddhist schools -- including the classical Theravāda -- accept that Nātha (a.k.a. Nāthadeva) bodhisattva is currently residing as a deva in Tuṣita heaven, and that he will be reborn as Ajita and become the next buddha of this world system named Maitreya (Metteyya). It is also accepted that a practitioner who has developed the divine eye (divyacakṣus, dibbacakkhu) and other higher gnoses can perceive and communicate with deities. The Mahāyāna teachings have taken this one step further and accept that a practitioner who has developed the divine eye, etc., can also perceive and communicate with buddhas and advanced bodhisattvas who reside in pure realms beyond this world system. Moreover, by paying homage to them and engaging in pūja and sādhanā one can generate merit, which is conducive to helping the practitioner attain buddhahood him or herself. And beyond this, when the practitioner has developed their higher faculties, they can receive teaching



instructions directly from these buddhas and bodhisattvas. The Mahāyāna teachings on pūja and sādhanā are an extension of recollection of the buddha (buddhānusmṛti), which dates to the earliest strata of the canonical discourses (and buddhānusmṛti as devatāyoga sādhanā can be expanded to include dharmānusmṛti, saṅghānusmṛti, śīlānusmṛti, tyāgānusmṛti, and devatānusmṛti into a unified practice).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 7:09 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

The goal of the śrāvakayāna is to attain arahanthood. The goal of the bodhisattvayāna is to attain buddhahood.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 7:14 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

That's fine. I'm not trying to convince you of anything. Merely attempting to address a few very common misconceptions about Mahāyāna practice. (And these misconceptions are not limited to just non-mahāyānikas.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 7:34 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Well, they are certainly misconceptions whether you accept that they are or not.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 8:15 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Sorry bud, but you're in no position to decide who is a Thera and who isn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 8:42 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

For example, after Amitābha enters parinirvāṇa, Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva will be reborn as the buddha of Sukhāvatī.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 12, 2010 8:51 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

It seems pretty evident that you are not at all interested in a discussion of Mahāyāna teachings.

Be that as it may, there is nothing preventing a Theravāda layperson or monastic from accepting and practicing the Mahāyāna teachings on the bodhisattva path. Just as there is nothing preventing a Mūlasarvāstivāda layperson or monastic or a Dharmaguptaka layperson or monastic from accepting and practicing the Mahāyāna teachings on the bodhisattva path. The Mahāyāna isn't a vāda, it's a yāna, a vehicle open to all who aspire to practice the bodhisattva path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 12:15 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Wrong again. I'm not proselytizing anything. I'm discussing the Mahāyāna teachings. But once again, you're missing the point. There is nothing preventing a Theravāda layperson or monastic from accepting and practicing the Mahāyāna teachings on the bodhisattva path. Just as there is nothing preventing a Mūlasarvāstivāda layperson or monastic or a Dharmaguptaka layperson or monastic from accepting and practicing the Mahāyāna teachings on the bodhisattva path. The Mahāyāna isn't a vāda, it's a yāna, a vehicle open to all who aspire to practice the bodhisattva path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 9:45 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Well, it would probably be nice to engage in an open and constructive discussion of these kinds of ideas without it being either tacitly implied or overtly stated that participants presenting ideas that some other participants might disagree with are "proselytizing." But outside of very precisely demarcated academic settings these types of baseless assumptions are fairly commonplace. Religious sectarian group identity is right up there with ego-centrism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, and so on, as a very powerful and habitual human tendency.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 10:00 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

I have never once suggested otherwise. In fact, I have more than once explicitly said on this board that the Theravāda is a complete path in itself.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 5:19 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

On an internet forum this kind of statement is just a lame cop-out. Intellectual laziness masquerading as witty iconoclasm.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 5:25 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

In your mind you've already excommunicated everyone who doesn't agree with you from the Theravāda community. Guess in your mind there are a lot of "those people." Glad I don't live in your mind.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 7:04 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

I don't see that as a cop-out. It may be quite prudent. This type of discussion can be interpreted as a no-win situation. Or it can be interpreted as a win-win situation. In this pluralistic day and age I opt for the latter interpretation. Communication can be difficult at times, but this doesn't mean that it isn't worthwhile.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 13, 2010 7:19 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Thanks for these constructive words Kevin. I generally agree with part of what Morlock already alluded to. I gave up thinking in terms of vādas and yānas a long time ago. I consider everything which postdates the Nikāyas and Āgamas to be a long series of endnotes offering various interpretations of the commonly shared tradition. They are historical accretions which can be informative, but often wind their way into thickets of views.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 1:01 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Yeah, well, I'd suggest that this sentiment is based upon some quite naïve assumptions. Foremost amongst them the idea of "lineage."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 1:27 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

This is a rather complex discussion in a context like this. This complexity doesn't easily lend itself to simplistic answers. Maybe you would be better served at this point to just be diligent in your own study and practice?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:02 am

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:09 am

Title: Re: Meaning of "sabbakayam", "piti" and "sukha"?

Content:

Hi Starter,

Here are a couple of resources related to pīti & sukha:

Pīti

Pītisukha

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:09 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

So for you the common Nāthadeva/Metteyya stuff is legit but any other devas with bodhisattva or buddha qualities abiding in other world systems is absolutely impossible and therefore illegitimate?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:29 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Are you suggesting that prior to his awakening the Buddha wasn't a bodhisattva and the suttas where he refers to himself prior to his awakening as a bodhisattva are fictions?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:34 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

And how do you know that its merely a literary device?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:47 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

The Metteyya stuff was "smuggled back into Buddhism via the Mahayana"?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 2:54 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

Just wondering why you would want to categorically dismiss everything not found in a Pāli text as fictions with no more soteriological utility than The Lord Of The Rings?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 3:01 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

So are you now suggesting that the meditative practice of the recollection of devas is a "regrettable lapse into the pre Buddhist cosmology of the Indian Subcontinent"?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 3:30 pm

Title: Re: Do you also read Mahayana Sutras?

Content:

I don't see it as having anything to do with diplomacy. Denigrating other expressions of Buddhist faith as being no more soteriologically meaningful than popular fiction is arrogant and self-serving. I don't detect any skillfulness in belittling others as being misguided unfortunates unwilling or unable to rise to your superior level. It's just another version of the hīnayāna polemic: Everyone who doesn't see it your way is by default employing a poor, deficient vehicle.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 11:17 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Of course. The bodhisattva path as a developed vehicle of practice postdates the suttas. No doubt it was developed to meet the needs of different groups of people at different times. And in some of the earliest textual remnants presenting the bodhisattvayāna as a unique vehicle we can clearly see a recurring desire to return to the ascetic path initiated by the śramaṇa Gautama Buddha.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 14, 2010 11:47 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Could be a combination of both. Motivation for monastics as well as householders thinking of going forth to return to the ascetic practices, and also inspirational reminders for laypersons to support ascetic monastics in addition to the established monastic institutions. A few examples....

Samādhirāja Sūtra:

There has been no buddha in the past, nor will there be in the future, who abides in the household and who so established has achieved this supreme, highest enlightenment.

Viśuddhaśraddhādārikāparipṛcchā Sūtra:

[T]here are eight things by which a bodhisattva accomplishes the ascetic disciplines [dhutaṅga] and always takes pleasure dwelling in the wilderness. What are the eight? (1) Having few desires; (2) Knowing satisfaction; (3) Fulfillment of the True Dharma; (4) Supporting oneself with what is meritorious; (5) Always upholding the four traditions of the spiritually ennobled [āryavaṃsa]; (6) Seeing the misery of saṃsāra, his mind is always disgusted and aloof; (7) He constantly observes [things as] impermanent, suffering, empty, and without self; (8) Having a deep faith that is unshakable, he does not fall into heterodox teachings. At that time the Blessed One again spoke these verses:

Having few desires and knowing satisfaction, [the bodhisattva] does not abandon restraint. The manifold benefits of taking pleasure in the Dharma are what he nurtures as his riches. He finds enjoyment in always cultivating the traditions of the spiritually ennobled. When he sees the misery of saṃsāra, he generates thoughts of dread. For this reason he always takes pleasure in practicing the ascetic disciplines, alone, without companions, like the single horn of a rhinoceros. [Seeing all] compounded things as suffering and without self, he possesses gnosis and deep faith, abiding in true exertion.

Seeing the Dharma for himself, he does not fall into heterodoxy. He always dwells in remote areas as praised by the Buddha. Purified, secluded, and without distress, [the bodhisattva] is without contention, cognizant of his own manifold shortcomings. Aloof from associations and divorced from flattery, [the bodhisattva] takes pleasure in dwelling in the wilderness.

Ratnarāśī Sūtra:

The wilderness-dwelling monk, Kāśyapa, should make his bed and seat in a wilderness, an abode in the forest, and a border area. He should dwell in wilderness border regions such as those without thieves, herdsmen or shepherds, without snakes, without wild beasts and flocks of birds, with few flies and stinging insects, with little noise, with few sounds of commotion.

If that [monk] is a dweller in that wilderness abode, he should bring about eight deliberations. What are the eight?

- (1) He should not be concerned about his body.
- (2) He should not be concerned about his life.
- (3) He should not be concerned about wealth or honors.
- (4) He should not be concerned about all garrulous associations with others.
- (5) He should undertake to die in a wilderness like an animal.

- (6) He should dwell in the wilderness making use of the advantages offered by the wilderness.
- (7) He should live with his livelihood in accord with the Teaching; he should not live wrongly.
- (8) He should live in accord with a livelihood free from worldly material possessions and defilements.

He should dwell in a wilderness abode bringing about these eight deliberations.

Ugrapariṣcchā Sūtra:

There has never been a bodhisattva who dwells in the household and who has awakened to unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. They all, moreover, having gone forth from the household, fixed their thoughts on the wilderness with a predilection toward the wilderness. Having gone to the wilderness, they awakened to unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. And [it is there that] they acquired the prerequisites [Skt. saṃbhāra] [for enlightenment; i.e., merit and gnosis].

And also from the same sutra:

I should examine the matter as follows: "I came to the wilderness on account of being afraid of such frightening and terrifying things [as inauspicious rebirths, and so forth, as mentioned in a previous passage]. I cannot be freed from such frightening and terrifying things as these by living in the household, by living in company [with others], or by living without exerting myself, without applying myself diligently to yoga, or by thinking distractedly. All bodhisattvas mahāsattvas who appeared in the past were delivered from every fear by dwelling in the wilderness; in this way they obtained the fearlessness that is unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. All bodhisattvas mahāsattvas who will appear in the future will be delivered from every fear by dwelling in the wilderness; in this way they will obtain the fearlessness that is unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. All bodhisattvas mahāsattvas who appear in the present and who have obtained unexcelled, perfect enlightenment are delivered from every fear by dwelling in the wilderness; in this way they obtained the fearlessness that is unexcelled, perfect enlightenment. Therefore, I too, frightened and terrified here, and desiring to transcend every fear and attain the fearless state, should dwell in the wilderness."

Rāṣṭrapālāpariṣcchā Sūtra:

May you dwell in crags, in the wilderness, and in caves, and abiding there, not exalt yourselves or vilify others. May you exhort yourselves continually, ever mindful that you turned away from millions of former buddhas. Abandon your craving for body and life; indifferent, apply yourself to the Dharma, generating ardent respect.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 6:41 am

Title: Re: The specific differences between Mahayana and Theravada?

Content:

Unfortunately, Virgo is not offering an accurate representation of anything but his own misconceptions of Mahāyāna and Buddhist history.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 7:05 am

Title: Re: The specific differences between Mahayana and Theravada?

Content:

And this is why it is important to set the Mahāyāna in an accurate historical context. In all likelihood the monks who accepted some type of bodhisattvayāna (prior to the 5th or 6th centuries CE at least)



would have been living alongside or in some sort of proximate relationship to their mainstream Nikāya brethren. They would have known the Āgama/Nikāya discourses, and the development of the bodhisattvayāna would have been embedded in this mainstream orthopraxy. Even Śāntideva's two texts on the bodhisattvamārga (~7th-8th century CE) are quite unremarkable and mainstream in terms of ethical conduct, renunciation, meditations on impurity, cemetery contemplations, impermanence, conditioned arising, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 7:20 am

Title: Re: The specific differences between Mahayana and Theravada?

Content:

Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche's translation of The Jewel Ornament of Liberation is a more contemporary, accessible read.

An even better source of Indian Mahāyāna thought would be The Way of the Bodhisattva by Śāntideva.

Or Four Illusions: Candrakīrti's Advice for Travelers on the Bodhisattva Path by Candrakīrti.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 7:40 am

Title: Re: The specific differences between Mahayana and Theravada?

Content:

I've heard that Lozang Jamspal (Columbia University) has made or is in the process of making a new translation. Much needed and long, long overdue.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 9:57 am

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

If we're going to be precise, the Buddha didn't teach the Theravāda either. There have been a number of moves made by the Theravāda regarding such things as momentary supramundane path structure, separation of samatha & vipassanā into completely separate vehicles of development, theory of radical momentariness, buddha qualities, etc., etc., which have no basis in the discourses.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 15, 2010 10:42 am

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Yeah, well, I'm not an advocate of all things Mahāyāna either. And I've witnessed the whole hīnayāna polemic from the inside there too, and the defensive posturing when it was brought to people's attention that I consider the hīnayāna label to be derogatory and unacceptable.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 18, 2010 3:27 am

Title: Re: The specific differences between Mahayana and Theravada?

Content:

The "arguments" you mention were certainly not used by Nāgārjuna or any other Indian Mahāyāna author that I've ever read.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 20, 2010 3:23 pm

Title: Re: Meaning of "sabbakayam", "pīti" and "sukha"?

Content:

Hi Starter,

These phenomena are quite clearly differentiated and defined in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā:

How is it that he trains thus: 'Experiencing pīti, I will breathe in;' he trains thus: 'Experiencing pīti, I will breathe out'?

What is pīti?...

Any joy (pīti), gladness (pāmojja), delight (āmodanā), joyfulness (pamodanā), shining mirth (bhāsa pabhāsa), felicity (vitti), elation (odagya), satisfaction (attamantā), and mental uplift (cittassa), is pīti....

How is it that he trains thus: 'Experiencing sukha, I will breathe in;' he trains thus: 'Experiencing sukha, I will breathe out'?

Pleasure (sukha): there are two kinds of pleasure, bodily pleasure and mental pleasure.

What is bodily pleasure?

Any bodily well-being, bodily pleasure, well-being and pleasure felt as born of body contact, welcome satisfactory feeling born of body contact, is bodily pleasure.

What is mental pleasure?

Any mental well-being, mental pleasure, well-being and pleasure felt as born of mental contact, welcome pleasant feeling born of mental contact, is mental pleasure.

And as jhāna factors, Peṭakopadesa 7.72:

The twofold bodily and mental pain does not arise in one steadied in directed thought and evaluation, and the twofold bodily and mental pleasure does arise. The mental pleasure thus produced from directed thought is pīti, while the bodily pleasure is bodily feeling.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 21, 2010 8:23 pm

Title: Re: Bodhisattva Path: Historical Aspects In Theravāda

Content:

Hi Hoo,

The thread was created in the interest of sharing some resources on the history of the Theravāda interaction with Mahāyāna ideas, as well as the Pāḷi Yogāvacara teachings (which aren't directly related to the bodhisattvayāna or Mahāyāna). If you don't consider history to be important, that's fine. But having some appreciation of the rich history of the greater Pāḷi tradition can certainly be helpful in this pluralistic day and age. Once again, there is no need to suspect anyone of proselytizing, and the "us vs. them" rhetoric isn't helpful or necessary at all.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 22, 2010 8:31 am

Title: Re: Global Warming has decreased in NZ

Content:

On a more serious note: Living in Canada where we used to get winter, global warming is now obvious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 22, 2010 9:52 am

Title: Re: Global Warming has decreased in NZ

Content:

"Liberals" are considered centrists here. Thanks to Tommy Douglas and the CCF/NDP!

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 22, 2010 10:35 am

Title: Re: Global Warming has decreased in NZ

Content:

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep. He has kept his promises and earned his sleep." -- from his son Justin's eulogy at Trudeau's funeral

Or maybe he's been reborn in the same deva realm as John....

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 26, 2010 5:47 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" original nature/home?

Content:

There are numerous instances where the early Thai forest masters sound much like Chan patriarchs. For example, Ajahn Mun:

The mind is something more radiant than anything else can be, but because counterfeits — passing defilements — come and obscure it, it loses its radiance, like the sun when obscured by clouds. Don't go thinking that the sun goes after the clouds. Instead, the clouds come drifting along and obscure the sun.

So meditators, when they know in this manner, should do away with these counterfeits by analyzing them shrewdly, as explained in the strategies of clear insight. When they develop the mind to the stage of the primal mind, this will mean that all counterfeits are destroyed, or rather, counterfeit things won't be able to reach into the primal mind, because the bridge making the connection will have been destroyed. Even though the mind may then still have to come into contact with the preoccupations of the world, its contact will be like that of a bead of water rolling over a lotus leaf.

Ajahn Dune:

Mind is "the knowing". You have to establish mindfulness there.

Mind and "the knowing" are the same. There is no difference. All the differences perceived are due to wrong thinking, not understanding, not knowing — ignorance. Not understanding/misunderstanding (ignorance) leads us to create unending kamma.

When the mind sees the (pure) mind, everything will be destroyed. Defilements (kilesa) and cravings (tanha) will be destroyed, ended.

[Student:] When all defilements and cravings are destroyed, is that the stage of arahants? Is the mind still there?

[Ajahn:] The mind is still there. But there is no more impurity, no more defilements or mental fabrications.

True dhamma (saddhamma) is this (pure) mind. True dhamma has never been created. It will not be destroyed. True dhamma has always been there even when we are ignorant. True dhamma is also not created when ignorance is destroyed, when we are enlightened.

(Pure) mind is true dhamma that has always been, and will simply be like this. It does not change. When there is wisdom (panna), ignorance (avijja) will be destroyed. When the mind sees mind, all kilesa ceases.

Ajahn Chah:

When the mind transcends conditions, it knows the unconditioned. The mind becomes the unconditioned, the state which no longer contains conditioning factors. The mind is no longer conditioned by the concerns of the world, conditions no longer contaminate the mind. Pleasure and pain no longer affect it. Nothing can affect the mind or change it, the mind is assured, it has escaped all constructions. Seeing the true nature of conditions and the determined, the mind becomes free.

This freed mind is called the unconditioned, that which is beyond the power of constructing influences. If the mind doesn't really know conditions and determinations, it is moved by them. Encountering good, bad, pleasure, or pain, it proliferates about them.

And also:

Now, examining the true nature of the mind, you can observe that in its natural state, it has no preoccupations or issues prevailing upon it. It's like a piece of cloth or a flag that has been tied to the end of a pole. As long as it's on its own and undisturbed, nothing will happen to it....

The purpose of the practice, then, is to seek inwardly, searching and investigating until you reach the original mind. The original mind is also known as the pure mind. The pure mind is the mind without attachment. It doesn't get affected by mind-objects. In other words, it doesn't chase after the different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant mind-objects. Rather, the mind is in a state of continuous knowing and wakefulness - thoroughly mindful of all it is experiencing. When the mind is like this, no pleasant or unpleasant mind-objects it experiences will be able to disturb it. The mind doesn't 'become' anything. In other words, nothing can shake it. Why? Because there is awareness. The mind knows itself as pure. It has evolved its own, true independence; it has reached its original state. How is it able to bring this original state into existence? Through the faculty of mindfulness wisely reflecting and seeing that all things are merely conditions arising out of the influence of elements, without any individual being controlling them.

And of course, there is the transcription of a tape recording by Ajahn Dune, which apparently is of him reading a translation of a teaching by Huangbo Xiyun:

All Buddhas and all beings in the world are nothing but the single citta. Outside this single citta nothing at all exists. The single citta, free from the conventional self, is something that was not made and is something, which cannot be destroyed. It is not a thing with color, such as green or yellow and has neither form nor appearance. It is not included in existing things or non-existing things. One cannot have the view that it is something new or old, longer short, large or small because it is beyond all limitations, beyond all measuring, beyond labels, beyond leaving a trace and beyond all comparisons.

This single citta is before our very eyes but when we use reason to conceive of it as a "thing" or "self", try it! We will immediately be mistaken. It is like emptiness that is without limitation and cannot be conceived or measured.

The single citta, this alone is Buddha. There is no difference between Buddha and all worldly beings except that worldly beings cling to the various worldly forms causing them to search for "Buddha Nature" (Buddha Bhava) externally. That very search makes them miss "Buddha Nature". This is like using Buddha to search for Buddha or the citta to search for the citta. Even though they may try as hard as they can for a full eon, they will never achieve "Buddha Bhava".

They do not know that if they stop thinking and conceiving and cease their confusion due to this searching "Buddha" will appear before their eyes because the citta, itself, is Buddha.

Compare with the beginning of Huangbo's Chung-ling Record:

All Buddhas and all sentient beings are no different from the One Mind. In this One Mind there is neither arising nor ceasing, no name or form, no long or short, no large or small, and neither existence nor non-existence. It transcends all limitations of name, word and relativity, and it is as boundless as the great void. Giving rise to thought is erroneous, and any speculation about it with our ordinary faculties is inapplicable, irrelevant and inaccurate. Only Mind is Buddha, and Buddhas

and sentient beings are not different. All sentient beings grasp form and search outside themselves. Using Buddha to seek Buddha, they thus use mind to seek Mind. Practicing in this manner even until the end of the kalpa, they cannot attain the fruit. However, when thinking and discrimination suddenly halt, the Buddhas appear.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 30, 2010 6:51 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

The earliest detailed word commentary on the standard jhāna formula is found in Peṭakopadesa 7.72. It clearly defines vitakka and vicāra:

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he thinks the thought of renunciation. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression he thinks the thought of non-aversion. Here, for fulfilling non-delusion he thinks the thought of harmlessness.

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he is secluded from sensual pleasures. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression and fulfilling non-delusion he is secluded from unskillful phenomena. And so he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

Directed thought: There are three kinds of directed thought, namely the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-aversion, and the thought of harmlessness.

Here, directed thought is the first instance while evaluation is the evaluation of what is thereby received. Just as when a man sees someone approaching in the distance he does not yet know whether it is a woman or a man, but when he has received [the apperception] that “it is a woman” or “it is a man” or that “it is of such color” or that “it is one of such shape,” then when he has thought this he further scrutinizes, “How then, is he ethical or unethical, rich or poor?” This is examination. With directed thought he fixes. With examination he moves about and turns over [what has been thought].

And just as a winged bird first accumulates [speed] and then accumulates no more [speed when gliding], so too, directed thought is like the accumulation, and evaluation is like the outstretched wings which keeps preserving the directed thought and evaluation....

Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it.

This word commentary accords with MN 78 Samaṇamuṇḍika Sutta, which tells us that skillful resolves (kusalā saṅkappā) consisting of the resolve of renunciation (nekkhamma- saṅkappa), the resolve of non-aversion (abyāpādasāṅkappa), and the resolve of harmlessness (avihiṃsāsāṅkappa) don't cease until the second jhāna. This provides some context as to the meaning and significance of directed thought and evaluation in the standard jhāna formula:

And what are skillful resolves? Being resolved on renunciation, on non-aversion, on harmlessness. These are called skillful resolves. What is the cause of skillful resolves? Their cause, too, has been

stated, and they are said to be apperception-caused. Which apperception? — for apperception has many modes and permutations. Any renunciation-apperception, non-aversion-apperception or harmlessness-apperception: That is the cause of skillful resolves.

Now where do skillful resolves cease without trace? Their stopping, too, has been stated: There is the case where a monk, with the stilling of directed thought and evaluation, enters and remains in the second jhāna, which has internal serene-clarity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of concentration. This is where skillful resolves cease without trace.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 30, 2010 12:12 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Reading the entire sutta in context we find that it explicitly states that one must emerge from the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception in order to employ insight regarding that attainment:

Furthermore, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, Sariputta entered & remained in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He emerged mindfully from that attainment. On emerging mindfully from that attainment, he regarded the past qualities that had ceased & changed: 'So this is how these qualities, not having been, come into play. Having been, they vanish.'

This qualification is neither stated nor implied with regard to the seven previous perception attainments (i.e. the four jhānas and the first three formless attainments). Ven. Ṭhānissaro comments on this section of the sutta as follows:

Notice that, with each of the previous levels of attainment, Sariputta was able to ferret out the various mental qualities arising there while he was still in the attainment. With this attainment and the following one, however, he was not able to analyze the mental qualities present and absent there until after he had left the attainment. The difference here is related to the point made in AN IX.36 that all the attainments up through the dimension of nothingness are "perception-attainments." And that, "As far as the perception-attainments go, that is as far as gnosis-penetration goes. As for these two dimensions — the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception & the attainment of the cessation of feeling & perception — I tell you that they are to be rightly explained by those monks who are meditators, skilled in attaining, skilled in attaining & emerging, who have attained & emerged in dependence on them."

This understanding also accords with the pan-Buddhist abhidharma interpretation that vipassanā can and should function in all seven perception attainments, but cannot function in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception or the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 30, 2010 4:54 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

MN 117:

And what is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions?  
Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on harmlessness. This is the right resolve that has effluents, sides with merit, & results in acquisitions.

This passage includes what is classified as rūpāvacarajjhāna in the Abhidhammapiṭaka. A number of academics and translators have noted that MN 117 has ābhidhammika type additions not found in the Āgama version of this discourse.

However, the Peṭakopadesa is actually closer to the treatment of the four jhānas found throughout the suttas than what is found in MN 117 or the Pāḷi Abhidhammapiṭaka.

Moreover, the Peṭakopadesa word commentary on the jhāna factors of all four jhānas is in close agreement with not only the Pāḷi suttas, but also the main non-Pāḷi Abhidharma texts, i.e. the Sarvāstivāda \*Mahāvibhāṣā (Apidamo dapiposha lun), the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, the \*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa (Dazhi du lun), the \*Prakaraṇāryavācāśāstra (Xianyang shengjiao lun), and the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra. Thus, parts of the Peṭakopadesa may preserve very early, possibly even pre-sectarian commentarial material.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 31, 2010 7:12 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Every significant Abhidhamma/Abhidharma treatise that I've consulted, except the Visuddhimagga, mentions vipassanā/vipaśyanā as a mental factor employed in the four jhānas/dhyānas. Most explicitly state that the four jhānas/dhyānas are the optimal samādhis for the development of supramundane vipassanā/vipaśyanā. All of these treatises are basing this understanding on the same Nikāya/Āgama source materials.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 01, 2011 10:52 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:



More nonsense. This thread is about Bhante G's teachings, and your introduction of Piya Tan's critique of Bhante G. I've pointed out a couple of serious flaws in Piya Tan's reading of the suttas, and provided canonical support for Bhante G's teaching on samatha and vipassanā conjoined in jhāna.

There is so little hermeneutic and exegetical support for Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato's interpretation of sammāsamādhi, that I find their teachings on the subject completely unconvincing and quite misguided. If you find their interpretation and teachings helpful, that's fine by me.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 01, 2011 2:12 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

My quote doesn't posit anything of the sort. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādayakāṇḍa offers lists of phenomena present (meaning mental factors concomitantly engaged) in a skillful, unskillful, etc, cognition. Thus, its concern is phenomenological. The section on Rūpāvacarakusala lists the mental factors engaged in an optimally skillful rūpāvacarajjhānacitta. This list includes sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsati, sampajañña, samatha, and vipassanā. Taking the canonical Pāli treatises into consideration, as well as the numerous major non-Pāli Abhidharma treatises, there is nothing whatsoever unusual about the inclusion of vipassanā here. In all of our discussions you have yet to offer any canonical support for the premise that vipassanā cannot be engaged while abiding in jhāna.

Again: This thread is about Bhante G's teachings, and your introduction of Piya Tan's critique of Bhante G. I've pointed out a couple of serious flaws in Piya Tan's reading of the suttas, and provided canonical support for Bhante G's teaching on samatha and vipassanā conjoined in jhāna. You've offered no canonical support for Piya Tan's critique of Bhante G's teachings. And you've offered no canonical support for the notion that vipassanā cannot be conjoined with samatha in jhāna.

Moreover, you seem unwilling or unable to acknowledge the consequence of Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato's interpretation of sammāsamādhi: To accept Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato's interpretation, one has to accept that every single treatise and every single commentator in the history of Buddhist exegesis was wrong regarding sammāsamādhi. Do you accept Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato's interpretation of sammāsamādhi or not? If so, do you accept this consequence or not?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 01, 2011 6:02 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

I gave the source when I posted the excerpt from the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādayakāṇḍa: Khine, U

Kyaw. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications. 1999.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 01, 2011 6:55 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Paragraph 1 of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādaṅga is a list of numerous phenomena that arise concomitantly on a specific occasion, which are then defined in paragraphs 2 to 57. Paragraph 1 includes the arising of both samatha and vipassanā, specifically, at that time. These are then defined in paragraphs 54 and 55:

What at that time is samatha? That which at that time is stability of mind, steadfastness of mind, thorough steadfastness of mind, unshakableness, non-distraction, imperturbability, calmness of mind, faculty of concentration, strength of concentration, right concentration. This at that time is samatha.

What at that time is vipassanā? That which at that time is discernment (paññā), thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, investigation of phenomena, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination.... This at that time is vipassanā.

Are you seriously suggesting that this passage be interpreted to preclude the concomitant occurrence of samatha and vipassanā?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:44 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Then my question is: What is your concern with Ven. Gunaratana's teachings on jhāna?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:55 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

The inclusion of this statement is merely meant to indicate that the preceding enumeration isn't

meant to be a closed system.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 02, 2011 2:32 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

This qualm has already been addressed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 03, 2011 3:46 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

It's quite obvious to me by now that anything which doesn't agree with Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna theory will be interpreted as a "wild leap" by you. Interesting sidebar is that the teachings of Ajahn Chah don't accord with Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna theory.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 03, 2011 6:45 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

You simply failed to notice my reference to paragraphs 146 to 159.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 03, 2011 1:07 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

These 56 factors are not "common to each and every citta." They are common to skillful kāmāvacara

cittas accompanied by somanassasa and associated with ñāṇa and skillful rūpāvacarajjhāna cittas. (There are altogether eight categories of skillful kāmāvacara cittas. The section in question only pertains to the first.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 04, 2011 6:26 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

The phrase anupadadhammavipassanāya hoti (vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occurred) which is found at the start of the sutta, connects vipassanā with the passage common to the first seven attainments:

tyāssa dhammā anupadavavatthitā honti; tyāssa dhammā veditā uppajjanti, veditā upaṭṭhahanti, veditā abbattham gacchanti.

these phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him these phenomena arose, known they were present, known they disappeared.

Therefore this passage pertains to vipassanā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 04, 2011 6:46 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Hmmm... I don't think that the text has ever been interpreted that way. But I'm tired and have to catch a nap. I'll look at it closer in the morning.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 05, 2011 1:35 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Anyway, MN 111, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī are all canonical authorities which support Bhante G's teachings on developing vipassanā within jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 05, 2011 2:25 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Of course you will. I will go with vipassanā pertaining to both (i.e. within jhāna and post-jhāna). This is the intention of the discourse, and supported by the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Mahāvibhāṣā, and the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (i.e. all major Indian Sthaviravāda texts).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 05, 2011 11:46 am

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Read the Psm in toto. The Psm allows for the development of vipassanā pre-jhāna, within jhāna, and post-jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 05, 2011 12:37 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

MN 111 informs us that in the first seven attainments phenomena are differentiated and known as they occur:

these phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him these phenomena arose, known they were present, known they disappeared.

This is a description of vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occurred

(anupadadhammavipassanāya hoti). But according to Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna, there can be no comprehension within jhāna. In The Jhānas Ven. Brahmavamso states:

When perspective is removed, so is comprehension. Thus in jhāna, not only is there no sense of time, but also there is no comprehension of what is going on.

This lack of comprehension precludes any differentiation and knowing of phenomena one by one as they occur in jhāna. For Ven. Brahmavamso this differentiation and knowing of mental factors is impossible within jhāna. He continues:

Furthermore, the ultra-stillness of mindfulness in jhāna freezes the activity of mind called comprehension to the extent that, while in jhāna, one can hardly make sense of one's experience.

The landmarks of jhāna are only recognized later, after emerging and reviewing.

Therefore, according to Ven. Brahmavamso, the MN 111 statement that "these phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred," would be impossible. This passage would have to be discarded for all of the first seven attainments and replaced by the passage: "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the phenomena that had passed, ceased and changed, thus: 'So indeed, these phenomena, not having been, come into being; having been they vanished.'"

But in the sutta this passage only pertains to the final two attainments because in the final two attainments phenomena cannot be differentiated and known as they occur.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 06, 2011 1:01 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

Again, it is saññā which identifies, individuates, differentiates unique particulars, not vitakka or vicāra.

Also, I have included the post quoting Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna teachings, not in an attempt at personal attack, but because Tan's PDF which you posted is, in part, an attempt to establish the canonical authority of Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna teachings, and in the process presents a critique of Bhante G's jhāna teachings. Therefore, Ven. Brahmavamso's influence here should be considered.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 06, 2011 5:23 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

These mental factors are all concomitant with one object-support (ārammaṇa). Thus there is no difficulty whatsoever.

Something which really needs to be addressed is that anyone who relies on the jhāna theory of Ven. Brahmavamso (as well as many people who rely on the Visuddhimagga jhāna without a careful study of all relevant older material) is going to have a very different understanding of what jhāna is, than someone who relies on the Tipiṭaka as canonical authority and has also studied other early para-canonical Pāḷi and other Sthaviravāda treatises.

For example, in The Jhānas Ven. Brahmavamso describes singleness of mind as follows:

One-pointedness describes the mindfulness that is so sharply focused on a minute area of existence. It is one-pointed in space because it only sees the point source of bliss, together with a small area

surrounding the bliss caused by the first jhāna wobble.

But the canon offers a much different understanding of singleness of mind (*citta ekagga*, *cittekaggatā*). For example, AN 4.12 *Sīla Sutta*:

If while he is walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, a monk is free from greed and ill will, from sloth and torpor, from restlessness and worry, and has discarded doubt, then his will has become strong and impregnable; his mindfulness is alert and unclouded; his body is calm and unexcited; his mind is concentrated and collected (*samāhitam cittaṃ ekaggaṃ*).

And also, differing from Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna, the canon describes the mind in jhāna as vast and expansive. MN 127 describes the expansive liberation of mind (*mahaggatā cetovimutti*), which is a synonym for the mastery of jhāna, as follows:

And what, householder, is the expansive liberation of mind? Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the root of one tree, pervading it as expansive: this is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the roots of two or three trees, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of one village, pervading it as expansive ... an area the size of two or three villages... an area the size of one major kingdom... an area the size of two or three major kingdoms... an area the size of the earth bounded by the ocean, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind.

As happens in every case, these canonical references are completely incompatible with Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna theory.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 07, 2011 2:58 am

Title: Re: Goodbye for now.

Content:

Good for you Individual. There is a wide world of Dhamma/Dharma out there. May you find a path that leads to trackless freedom.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 07, 2011 1:12 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

This is getting very old. There is far more to hermeneutic interpretation and translation than grammatical considerations. Every time one of your interpretive moves is shown to be unsustainable, you just create another pseudo-problem, and so on and so on. Your interpretation of MN 111 isn't supported by the text itself. And this is evident in every case. Neither the suttas, the

Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Mahāvibhāṣā, nor the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (i.e. all major Indian Sthaviravāda texts), support the jhāna theory you are trying to establish. Of course, you're free to perform all the hermeneutic cartwheels and somersaults you wish in your attempt to force your jhāna theory into these texts. Personally, I can find nothing redeeming in such an enterprise. None of my teachers, Theravāda or Mahāyāna, agree with your jhāna theory. None of the Indian texts, Sthaviravāda or Yogācāra, agree with your jhāna theory. Period.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 07, 2011 7:14 pm

Title: Re: Bhante G vs. Bhante G

Content:

The bottom line is this: I can find nothing at all compelling or redeeming in your enterprise. I have access to very good teachers. I have access to all relevant source texts in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan. None of my teachers, Theravāda or Mahāyāna, agree with your jhāna theory. None of the Indian texts, Theravāda/Sthaviravāda or Yogācāra, agree with your jhāna theory. You may not find this significant or compelling. You may continue to employ hermeneutic gymnastics to force your jhāna theory into the Pāli texts. That's fine by me. I wish you well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 10:09 am

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

The Buddha wasn't interested in substance metaphysics.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 10:27 am

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

There are plenty of contemporary practitioners who do not consider mind to be a sub-entity with discrete existence.

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 10:30 am

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

Less "us" will result in less passion, aggression, delusion, and therefore much less dukkha.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 11:37 am

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

I agree. And I agree that "psychological" is not the same as "mental" (cetasika). I think you have pointed out something quite relevant here. It's best to be as precise and accurate as possible when talking about dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 4:38 pm

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

From the above it is saṅkhāradukkhatā -- the unsatisfactoriness of fabrications -- which is dukkha in an all pervasive sense. All fabrications are unsatisfactory because they are impermanent. They are always becoming "otherwise." Dukkhadukkhatā and vipariṇāmadukkhatā, on the other hand, are only experienced on certain occasions.

I'm not implying that you don't understand this Peter, but your post gives context for bringing out these different meanings of dukkha.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 09, 2011 4:52 pm

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

It's the place to discuss the strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā). MN 150 Nagaravindeyya Sutta informs us that one practicing for the removal of passion resorts to a remote location where there are none of the five strands of sensual pleasure to contact and delight in:

[T]hose venerable ones resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest. For there are no forms cognizable by the eye there of a kind that they could look at and delight in. There are no sounds cognizable by the ear there of a kind that they could listen to and delight in. There are no odors cognizable by the nose there of a kind that they could smell and delight in. There are no flavors cognizable by the tongue there of a kind that they could taste and delight in. There are no tactual objects cognizable by the body there of a kind that they could touch and delight in.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:15 pm

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

The passage from MN 150 includes anyone who is practicing for the removal of passion, aggression, and delusion, not just arahants who are already free from passion, aggression, and delusion, and are free of the three types of craving.

Moreover, if the forms, etc., of the wilderness were strands of sensual pleasure, then it would be completely inappropriate for Mahākassapa (Thag 18) to find this scenery delightful (manorama), enjoyable (ramma), and beautiful (rucira). It would also be inappropriate and inadvisable for MN 121 to state that the practitioner's "mind enters into that apperception of forest and acquires confidence, steadiness, and decision," as this apperception and other concomitant mental factors arise in dependence upon the visible sensory sphere consisting of "the ridges and hollows, the rivers and ravines, the tracts of stumps and thorns, the mountains and irregular places." As an object-support for developing calm (samatha) in the course of attaining jhāna, these forms cannot be strands of sensual pleasure. If they were, any concomitant pleasure and happiness which would arise in dependence upon these sensory objects would be inappropriate and not worth development (bhāvanā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:23 pm

Title: Re: Is dukkha just psychological?

Content:

If the origin of dukkha is abandoned, then the cessation of dukkha is realized. The origin of dukkha is craving sensual pleasure (kāmatanḥā), craving existence (bhavatanḥā), craving non-existence (vibhavanḥā). When you abandon these you will have your answer.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:31 pm

Title: Re: A Meta-discussion about mettā during discussions?

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 13, 2011 12:25 am

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

SN 3.12 Pañcarāja Sutta confirms that the very forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects which are agreeable to one person, are disagreeable to another.

In SN 36.19 Pañcakaṅga Sutta the Buddha tells Ven. Ānanda that whatever pleasure or happiness arises in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure is called sensual pleasure. MN 66 Laṭukikopama Sutta states that this sensual pleasure is a "filthy pleasure, a worldly pleasure, an ignoble pleasure. And I say that this pleasure is not to be cultivated, not to be developed, not to be pursued, that it is to be feared."

Itivuttaka 72 informs us that renunciation is the escape from sensual pleasures.

The distinction between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the appropriate objects to be employed for mental development is indicated in SN 47.6 Sakuṇagghi Sutta, which clearly differentiates between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the four applications of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhānā). In this discourse one is instructed to avoid wandering into the range of the five strands of sensual pleasure and instead remain in one's own proper range of the four satipaṭṭhānas: Do not stray, monks, into what is not your own range and is the domain of others. Māra will gain access to those who stray into what is not their own range and is the domain of others. Māra will get a hold on them.

And what, for a monk, is not his own range and is the domain of others? The five strands of sensual pleasure.... These, for a monk, are not his own range and are the domain of others.

Move, monks, in what is your own range, your own ancestral domain. Māra will not gain access to those who move in their own range, their own ancestral domain. Māra will not get a hold on them.

And what, for a monk, is his own range, his own ancestral domain? The four applications of mindfulness. Which four? Here monks, a monk remains contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and unhappiness with regard to the world. He remains contemplating feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... phenomena in phenomena, ardent, fully aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and unhappiness with regard to the world. This, for a monk, is his own range, his own ancestral domain.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 13, 2011 7:10 am

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

As per usual, your qualms have nothing to do with what I posted. I have never once conflated "strands of sensual pleasure" with "sensual pleasure."

The Mahāniddeśa clearly qualifies vatthukāmā with manāpika:

Katame vatthukāmā? Manāpikā rūpā manāpikā saddā manāpikā gandhā manāpikā rasā manāpikā phoṭṭhabbā; attharaṇā pāvuraṇā dāsīdāsā ajeḷakā kukkuṭasūkarā hatthigavāssavaḷavā khettaṃ vatthu hiraññaṃ suvaṇṇaṃ gāmaṇigamarājadhāniyo raṭṭhañca janapado ca koso ca koṭṭhāgārañca, yaṃ kiñci rājanīyaṃ vatthu – vatthukāmā.

For your interpretation to be correct, there would be no need to qualify rūpa, etc., with manāpika. But if you want to think all forms, etc., are strands of sensual pleasure, then that's fine by me.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 13, 2011 2:27 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana: conceptual or non-conceptual?

Content:

The individuation of particular dhammas is also dependent upon apperception (saññā). As are the recognition of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness (i.e. anicca-saññā, dukkha-saññā, anatta-saññā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 13, 2011 3:12 pm

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

That passage is also qualified by "taṇhāvatthukā taṇhārammaṇā kāmaṇīyaṭṭhena rājanīyaṭṭhena madanīyaṭṭhena kāmā ime vuccanti vatthukāmā."

The problem with universals is that they are abstractions. An individual mind-stream only ever experiences unique clusters of phenomena at any given time. And even within the same mental

continuum, no two experiences are exactly the same.

And quite specifically, it is entirely contingent upon a cognition being accompanied by lobha (kāma, raga, abhijjhā, tanhā) that its particular object can meaningfully be designated as vatthukāma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 14, 2011 6:13 am

Title: Re: Kāma (sensual pleasures)

Content:

Chanda can be either skillful or unskillful. Kāma is never regarded as skillful.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 15, 2011 5:49 pm

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda, Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation:

The Buddha has compared the aggregate of perception to a mirage. Now if perception is mirage, what is 'rūpa saññā' or a visual percept? That also must be a mirage. What about 'sadda saññā'? What about the auditory percept or what strikes the ear? That too must be a mirage. Though it is not something that one sees with the eye, it has the nature of a mirage. To take as real what is of a mirage-nature, is a delusion. It is something that leads to a delusion. It is an illusion that leads to a delusion. In order to understand deeply this mirage-nature in sensory perception, there is a need for a more refined way of mental attending.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 15, 2011 6:06 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana: conceptual or non-conceptual?

Content:

It's important to be precise as to what exactly is meant by mental-noting. The following excerpt from Ven. Ñāṇananda's, Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation, clearly explains the refining process of vipassanābhāvanā:

Directing these two factors is what is called meditative attention, mental-noting or noticing

(manasikāra). Though the same term 'mental-noting' or 'manasikāra' is used throughout the instructions on insight meditation, there is a need to redefine the term as one progresses in one's meditation. At the outset this mental noting is rather gross. One has to start from where one stands. So, the usual instructions in Insight Meditation would imply a mode of attending that goes slightly deeper than the way of attending in the world. As implied by the basic instruction on sense-restraint, 'na nimittaggāhī nānubyañjanaggāhī', one does not grasp at a sign or its details in what is seen, heard and so forth. Instead, one summarily dismisses the visual object after mentally noting it as 'form', 'form'. Also, in the case of sound, one just notes it as 'sound', 'sound', without going into details. This is the mode of mental-noting recommended at the very outset.

But in this mode of mental noting there are certain gross elements. One becomes aware of these as one progresses in insight meditation. One becomes aware that in this type of mental-noting as 'form', 'form' or 'sound', 'sound', one presupposes an object. That is to say, these things get object-status by the very fact of mental-attention. Of course, in order to attend, there has to be an object. But as one goes deeper in insight meditation, one realizes that an object by definition is what one grasps (ārammaṇa) - what one hangs on to (ālambana).

Whenever there is grasping, there is ignorance present. Grasping is something that leads to the perpetuation of ignorance. But as the phrase 'anupubba sikkhā, anupubba kiriya, anupubba paṭipadā' implies, there is a gradual training, a gradual mode of action, a gradual path in this meditative attention as well. So it is by stages that one arrives at this realization. At the preliminary stage, one avoids the usual mode of attention in the world such as 'woman', 'woman', 'man', 'man' in the case of a visual object, thus dispensing with those details which lead to various unskillful states of mind and attends to those visual objects in such a way as not to encourage those unskillful mental states. So one is content with attending to those visual or auditory objects as 'form' or 'sound'.

However as one proceeds in Insight Meditation, one comes to reflect that in this mode of attention, there is present a certain illusion - a wrong notion one has been cherishing throughout 'saṃsāra'. That is, the concept of two ends and a middle. When one notes a visual object as 'a form' and an auditory object as 'a sound', there is a kind of bifurcation between the eye and form, the ear and the sound. So thereby one is perpetuating the illusion, the wrong notion, of two ends. Whenever there are the two ends, there is also the middle. In short, this way of mental noting leaves room for a subject-object relationship. There is the meditator on one side, whoever it may be, and there is the object that comes to his mind; and he attends to it as an object, even though he may not go into its details. Now the meditator has to break through this barrier as well. He has to break this bondage. Why?

In the case of 'saññā' or perception, there are the six kinds of percepts - rūpa saññā, sadda saññā, gandha saññā, rasa saññā, phoṭṭhabba saññā, dhamma saññā (i.e., the percepts of form, sound, smell, taste, touch and idea). These are the six objects of the senses. The Buddha has compared the aggregate of perception to a mirage. Now if perception is mirage, what is 'rūpa saññā' or a visual percept? That also must be a mirage. What about 'sadda saññā'? What about the auditory percept or what strikes the ear? That too must be a mirage. Though it is not something that one sees with the eye, it has the nature of a mirage.

To take as real what is of a mirage-nature, is a delusion. It is something that leads to a delusion. It is an illusion that leads to a delusion. In order to understand deeply this mirage-nature in sensory perception, there is a need for a more refined way of mental attending. So the meditator, instead of attending to these objects as 'form', 'form' or 'sound', 'sound', moves a step further and notes them as 'seeing' or 'hearing'. Now he attends to these sense-percepts even more briefly, not allowing the mind to go far - as 'seeing- seeing', 'hearing- hearing', 'feeling-feeling', 'thinking-thinking'.

In short, the attempt here, is to escape the net of 'saññā' or perception and to limit oneself to the bare awareness. To stop short just at the bare awareness. This is an attempt to escape the net of language, the net of logic and also to be free from the duality of two ends which involves a middle. Everywhere one is confronted with a subject-object relationship. There is one who grasps and something to be grasped. There is a seer and an object seen. But this way of attending leaves room for delusion.

Now, if perception is a mirage, in order to get at this mirage nature, one has to be content with attending simply as 'seeing, seeing'. One way or the other it is just a seeing or just a hearing. Thereby he stops short at the bare awareness. He stops short at the bare seeing, bare hearing, bare feeling and bare thinking. He does not grant it an object status. He does not cognize it as an object existing in the world. He does not give it a name.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 16, 2011 9:13 am

Title: Re: Zen and Advaita masters: all putthujana?

Content:

There is a quite well known transcription of a tape recording by Ajahn Dune, which apparently is of him reading a translation of Huangbo Xiyun (Huangbo's teachings were translated into Thai by Ajahn Buddhadasa, not directly from the Chinese but from the English translation of John Blofeld):

All Buddhas and all beings in the world are nothing but the single citta. Outside this single citta nothing at all exists. The single citta, free from the conventional self, is something that was not made and is something, which cannot be destroyed. It is not a thing with color, such as green or yellow and has neither form nor appearance. It is not included in existing things or non-existing things. One cannot have the view that it is something new or old, longer short, large or small because it is beyond all limitations, beyond all measuring, beyond labels, beyond leaving a trace and beyond all comparisons.

This single citta is before our very eyes but when we use reason to conceive of it as a "thing" or "self", try it! We will immediately be mistaken. It is like emptiness that is without limitation and cannot be conceived or measured.

The single citta, this alone is Buddha. There is no difference between Buddha and all worldly beings except that worldly beings cling to the various worldly forms causing them to search for "Buddha Nature" (Buddha Bhava) externally. That very search makes them miss "Buddha Nature". This is like using Buddha to search for Buddha or the citta to search for the citta. Even though they may try as hard as they can for a full eon, they will never achieve "Buddha Bhava".

They do not know that if they stop thinking and conceiving and cease their confusion due to this searching "Buddha" will appear before their eyes because the citta, itself, is Buddha.

Compare with another talk by Ajahn Dune:

Mind is "the knowing". You have to establish mindfulness there.

Mind and “the knowing” are the same. There is no difference. All the differences perceived are due to wrong thinking, not understanding, not knowing – ignorance. Not understanding/misunderstanding (ignorance) leads us to create unending kamma.

When the mind sees the (pure) mind, everything will be destroyed. Defilements (kilesa) and cravings (tanha) will be destroyed, ended.

[Student:] When all defilements and cravings are destroyed, is that the stage of arahants? Is the mind still there?

[Ajahn:] The mind is still there. But there is no more impurity, no more defilements or mental fabrications.

True dhamma (saddhamma) is this (pure) mind. True dhamma has never been created. It will not be destroyed. True dhamma has always been there even when we are ignorant. True dhamma is also not created when ignorance is destroyed, when we are enlightened.

(Pure) mind is true dhamma that has always been, and will simply be like this. It does not change. When there is wisdom (panna), ignorance (avijja) will be destroyed. When the mind sees mind, all kilesa ceases.

Also Ajahn Mun:

The mind is something more radiant than anything else can be, but because counterfeits — passing defilements — come and obscure it, it loses its radiance, like the sun when obscured by clouds. Don't go thinking that the sun goes after the clouds. Instead, the clouds come drifting along and obscure the sun.

So meditators, when they know in this manner, should do away with these counterfeits by analyzing them shrewdly, as explained in the strategies of clear insight. When they develop the mind to the stage of the primal mind, this will mean that all counterfeits are destroyed, or rather, counterfeit things won't be able to reach into the primal mind, because the bridge making the connection will have been destroyed. Even though the mind may then still have to come into contact with the preoccupations of the world, its contact will be like that of a bead of water rolling over a lotus leaf.

And Ajahn Chah:

When the mind transcends conditions, it knows the unconditioned. The mind becomes the unconditioned, the state which no longer contains conditioning factors. The mind is no longer conditioned by the concerns of the world, conditions no longer contaminate the mind. Pleasure and pain no longer affect it. Nothing can affect the mind or change it, the mind is assured, it has escaped all constructions. Seeing the true nature of conditions and the determined, the mind becomes free.

This freed mind is called the unconditioned, that which is beyond the power of constructing influences. If the mind doesn't really know conditions and determinations, it is moved by them. Encountering good, bad, pleasure, or pain, it proliferates about them.

And also:

Now, examining the true nature of the mind, you can observe that in its natural state, it has no preoccupations or issues prevailing upon it. It's like a piece of cloth or a flag that has been tied to the end of a pole. As long as it's on its own and undisturbed, nothing will happen to it....

The purpose of the practice, then, is to seek inwardly, searching and investigating until you reach the



original mind. The original mind is also known as the pure mind. The pure mind is the mind without attachment. It doesn't get affected by mind-objects. In other words, it doesn't chase after the different kinds of pleasant and unpleasant mind-objects. Rather, the mind is in a state of continuous knowing and wakefulness - thoroughly mindful of all it is experiencing. When the mind is like this, no pleasant or unpleasant mind-objects it experiences will be able to disturb it. The mind doesn't 'become' anything. In other words, nothing can shake it. Why? Because there is awareness. The mind knows itself as pure. It has evolved its own, true independence; it has reached its original state. How is it able to bring this original state into existence? Through the faculty of mindfulness wisely reflecting and seeing that all things are merely conditions arising out of the influence of elements, without any individual being controlling them.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 16, 2011 9:55 am

Title: Re: Zen and Advaita masters: all putthujana?

Content:

One man's "awakened sage" is another man's "heretic."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 17, 2011 10:31 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

Ven. Ṭhānissaro is stating the obvious: Most people approach the dhamma through a variety of personal and cultural filters. The interpretive filters will vary depending upon the time and place of the individual, but human beings are born embedded in historical, social, and cultural situations, and relate to the dhamma with these learned frameworks. Moreover, no matter what society one investigates -- East or West -- the majority of people who consider themselves to be "Buddhist," aren't willing or able to see through the consensual norms of their social peers and then go the extra step and actually begin to renounce worldly views. I'd also add that in the West, Rationalism has had just as much influence on how the dhamma is interpreted as Romanticism has (FTR, I'm not implying that the two are unrelated). Rationalism and scientific materialism is generally still the sanctioned worldview taught in secondary and post-secondary education. In academic circles Charles Darwin and Adam Smith exert much more influence than Goethe or Emerson do.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 17, 2011 10:58 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

Sure. Plus he lives in California (where retro-romanticism and new age love-and-light-trips are still quite common).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 17, 2011 11:42 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

This relates to whether the term *āsavā* should be interpreted and translated as "influxes" or "outflows." Interpreted as influxes would include the influx of social and cultural views that any person -- regardless of time or place -- is embedded in. These need to eventually be confronted, challenged, and eliminated. This process undermines consensual worldviews, and they will eventually cease to "flow out" as conceptual proliferations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 18, 2011 12:25 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

Indeed. Anyone who understands the forward sequence of dependent arising to be a diagnosis of deluded cognition, and how such delusion manifests, will no longer be able to ascribe to the notion that conditioned phenomena are "ultimate realities." A few more passages from the *Nibbāna Sermons* may help illustrate the difference with regard to view:  
*Nibbāna Sermon 08*

An insight meditator, too, goes through a similar experience when he contemplates on name-and-form, seeing the four elements as empty and void of essence, which will give him at least an iota of the conviction that this drama of existence is empty and insubstantial. He will realize that, as in the case of the dumb show, he is involved with things that do not really exist. This amounts to an understanding that the factors of the name group are dependent on the form group, and vice versa.

Seeing the reciprocal relationship between name-and-form, he is disinclined to dabble in concepts or gulp down a dose of prescriptions. If form is dependent on name, and name is dependent on form, both are void of essence. What is essential here, is the very understanding of essencelessness. If one sits down to draw up lists of concepts and prescribe them, it would only lead to a mental constipation. Instead of release there will be entanglement. Such a predicament is not unlikely.

## Nibbāna Sermon 14

This is something extremely wonderful about the arahant. He realizes the cessation of existence in his attainment to the fruit of arahant-hood. How does he come to realize the cessation of existence? Craving is extinct in him, hence there is no grasping. Where there is no grasping, there is no existence. Because there is no existence, birth, decay and death, along with sorrow and lamentation, cease altogether.

From the foregoing we could well infer that all those concepts like birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, come about as a result of a heap of pervert perceptions, pervert thoughts and pervert views, based on the conceit of an existence, the conceit 'am'.

These three kinds of perversions known as saññāvipallāsa, cittavipallāsa and diṭṭhivipallāsa give rise to a mass of concepts of an imaginary nature. The entire mass of suffering, summed up by the terms birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, are basically of a mental origin....

[Sn 1055-1056, Mettagūmāṇavapucchā Sutta:]

"Whatever you may know to be  
Above, below and across in the middle,  
Dispel the delight and the tendency to dwell in them,  
Then your consciousness will not remain in existence.  
A monk, endowed with understanding,  
Thus dwelling mindful and heedful,  
As he fares along giving up all possessions,  
Would abandon even here and now  
Birth, decay, sorrow, lamentation and suffering."

The word idh'eva occurring in the second verse is highly significant, in that it means the abandonment of all those things here and now, not leaving it for an existence to come. In the Mahāvīyūhasutta of the Sutta Nipāta also a similar emphasis is laid on this idea of 'here and now'. About the arahant it is said that he has no death or birth here and now -- cutūpapāto idha yassa natthi, "to whom, even here, there is no death or birth". In this very world he has transcended them by making those two concepts meaningless....

Existence is a conceit deep rooted in the mind, which gives rise to a heap of pervert notions. Its cessation, therefore, has also to be accomplished in the mind and by the mind.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 18, 2011 4:05 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

I don't know if he chose California or if it chose him? But either way it probably beats the -18°C that I'm currently experiencing.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 18, 2011 5:27 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

It has always seemed more intuitive to me to consider the āsava-s as "outflows" (effluents). But maybe this influx + outflow double entendre is worth considering? No one is born and raised in a complete vacuum. I'd suggest that this is the "negative" consensual delusion side of "interdependence."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 18, 2011 9:26 am

Title: Re: Looking for a sutta on self & feelings

Content:

Maybe DN 15 Mahānidāna Sutta:

Now, one who says, 'Feeling is my self,' should be addressed as follows: 'There are these three feelings, my friend — feelings of pleasure, feelings of pain, and feelings of neither pleasure nor pain. Which of these three feelings do you assume to be the self?' At a moment when a feeling of pleasure is sensed, no feeling of pain or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a feeling of pleasure is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a feeling of pain is sensed, no feeling of pleasure or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a feeling of pain is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed, no feeling of pleasure or of pain is sensed. Only a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed at that moment.

Now, a feeling of pleasure is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. A feeling of pain is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. A feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. Having sensed a feeling of pleasure as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of pleasure, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a feeling of pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of pain, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, 'my self' has perished.

Thus he assumes, assuming in the immediate present a self inconstant, entangled in pleasure and pain, subject to arising and passing away, he who says, 'Feeling is my self.' Thus in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume feeling to be the self.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 18, 2011 10:03 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

LOL.... Add beer to that mix and....

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 19, 2011 6:29 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

Yeah, I think the four āsava-s are general categories. The āsava of views is said to be eliminated upon stream entry, thus this category would include any wrong views associated with identity view, and so on.

I find that the ten fetters offer a more precise treatment of the same phenomena to be eliminated. Anyway, MN 02 goes into the practical details regarding how to work with the āsava-s.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 19, 2011 9:19 am

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

The view that TNH is presenting is pretty much straight up Huayan Dharma. His style of expression is the only difference. Huayan has had a significant influence on many of the greatest minds of East Asian Buddhism. Cleary's *Entry Into the Inconceivable* and Chang's *Buddhist Teaching of Totality* are decent introductions to Huayan teachings (both of which have some translated treatises included).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 19, 2011 12:25 pm

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

I'd suggest that the point is to see the illusion clearly for what it is, and in this way proceed to abandon all infatuation and distress regarding its manifold colorful and dramatic representations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 19, 2011 12:40 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

There are numerous well established traditional "Buddhisms." Each with a very long history. To learn even one tradition beyond mere generalizations requires many years of both studying and practicing that particular tradition's teachings with teachers from that tradition.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 19, 2011 11:53 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Thanissaro The full article.

Content:

Sure. I've heard Western Buddhist teachers give teachings which were no different from what someone like Wayne Dyer offers. A rose-colored picture which amounts to attempting to improve saṃsāra. Quite inaccurate and therefore misleading.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 5:14 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

The dhamma is indeed timeless. There's no contradiction whatsoever. Let's take a look at what Ven. Ñāṇananda has to say about "reality." In The Magic of the Mind he offers the following insight: The question of 'seeing what-is-shown', brings us to the relationship between sign and significance. Sense-perception at all levels relies largely on signs. This statement might even appear as a truism since the Pāli word saññā denotes perception as well as 'sign', 'symbol', 'mark' or 'token.' It is due to the processes of grasping and recognition implicit in sense-perception that the sign has come to play such an important part in it. Grasping -- be it physical or mental -- can at best be merely a symbolical affair. The actual point of contact is superficial and localized, but it somehow props up the conceit of grasping. Recognition too, is possible only within arbitrarily circumscribed limits. The law of impermanence is persistently undermining it, but still a conceit of recognition is maintained by progressively ignoring the fact of change....

Furthermore, as the Suttas often make it clear, all percepts as such are to be regarded as mere signs (saññā, nimitta). Hence while the worldling says that he perceives 'things' with the help of signs, the Tathāgata says that all we perceive are mere signs. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas are, all of them, signs which consciousness pursues. But still the question may be asked: "What do these signs signify?" "Things, of course" -- the Tathāgata would reply. 'Things', however, are not those that the worldling has in mind when he seeks an answer to this question. Lust, hatred and delusion are the 'things' which, according to the teaching of the Tathāgata, are signified by all sense-percepts. "Lust, friend, is a something; hatred is a something; delusion is a something." (M I 298, Mahāvedalla S.) "Lust, friends, is something significative, hatred is something significative, delusion is something significative" (ibid).

And then the part which deserves repeated consideration:

It is a fact often overlooked by the metaphysician that the reality attributed to sense-data is necessarily connected with their evocative power, that is, their ability to produce effects. The reality of a thing is usually registered in terms of its impact on the experiential side. This is the acid-test which an object is required to undergo to prove its existence in the Court of Reality. In the reference to materiality as 'manifestative and offering resistance' (D III 217, Sangiti S.) the validity of this test seems to have been hinted at. Now, the 'objects' of sense which we grasp and recognize as existing out-there, derive their object-status from their impact or evocative power. Their ability to produce effects in the form of sense-reaction is generally taken to be the criterion of their reality. Sense-objects are therefore signs which have become significant in themselves owing to our ignorance that their significance depends on the psychological mainsprings of lust, hatred and delusion. This, in other words, is a result of reasoning from the wrong end (ayoniso manasikāra) which leads both the philosopher and the scientist alike into a topsy-turvydom of endless theorising.

What most worldlings unquestioningly take to be "real," due to ascribing significance to the contents of deluded cognition, is nothing more than deluded cognition. Learners and arahants have understood deluded cognition to be false and have abandoned it (or are in the process of abandoning it in the case of learners). In this way they develop a "measureless mind." Seeing through the limitations of signs and symbols and language, they realize that there is no need -- and no possible way -- of trying to pin down this measureless freedom of absence by using signs and language. There is no point in attempting to construct and systematize a valid "reality." They've done what was needed to be done. The teachings they offer diagnose the problems of deluded cognition and point out the ways to unravel and eventually abandon passion, aggression, and delusion. And this path is as relevant today as it was 2500 years ago. It's quite amazing -- awe inspiring.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 5:40 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

"I" and "my" ....

Ven. Ñāṇananda, Seeing Through: A Guide to Insight Meditation:

Ānāpānasati : 'āna' means breathing in; 'apāna' means breathing out. Breathing in and breathing out. This is what we do everyday. We breath in and out. Between these two there is something rather

imperceptible, something that is overlooked. But that is the very thing which perpetuates saṃsāra. Why do we breathe in? We breathe in to maintain this existence. That is to maintain craving and ignorance -- to perpetuate this saṃsāra. We breathe in to preserve this body from destruction and death. There is grasping or 'upādāna' as an imperceptible gasping for breath. In short there is both 'gasping' as well as grasping. Beneath it lies craving and ignorance. There is supposed to be an 'I' behind this breathing -- a breather....

It is after holding on to the breath that one sets about doing the work one has to do. Within this very grasping lies the ego -- 'my ability', 'my strength', 'I can do' and all that sort of thing.

So, one takes in a breath and holds on to it, but he has to let go of it as well. This letting go happens out of sheer necessity -- per force. To let go of the breath that way, we call 'breathing out'. We breathe-in with some special purpose in mind -- to preserve our life. If it is possible to hold on to the breath for ever, for this purpose, so much the better, but we can't. Since we cannot do it, we have to let go of the breath after a while, whether we like it or not.

So then here too we seem to have a case of 'adāna' and 'patinissaga' -- a taking up and a letting-go, at least on the face of it. There is a stage in 'ānāpānasati' at which this insight emerges. If we analyze the last four of the 16 steps in ānāpānasati meditation taught by the Buddha, we can understand to some extent the way of emergence of this insight.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 6:41 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

From the perspective of practicing dhamma, functional things can be functional things without any need for metaphysical assumptions or ontological theories, all of which are endlessly debatable and are "a result of reasoning from the wrong end." As Ven. Ñāṇananda has quite clearly and insightfully indicated:

Sense-objects are therefore signs which have become significant in themselves owing to our ignorance that their significance depends on the psychological mainsprings of lust, hatred and delusion. This, in other words, is a result of reasoning from the wrong end (ayoniso manasikāra) which leads both the philosopher and the scientist alike into a topsy-turvydom of endless theorising.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 7:09 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:



The statement was in reference to phenomenological experience, not ontological theories.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 8:03 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

The beating of your heart is just the beating of your heart. How you relate to your body is what is important. This can be done either with appropriate attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) or inappropriate attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*). Appropriate attention, conjoined with mindfulness, full awareness, concentration, and discernment attends to unsatisfactoriness, the origin of unsatisfactoriness, the cessation of unsatisfactoriness, and the way leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*, *dukkhasamudaya*, *dukkhanirodha*, and *dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā*). Using this framework one comprehends arising, passing away, allure, drawbacks, and escape with regard to all phenomena experienced. Or one can pursue frameworks of inappropriate attention. Some of the unskillful types of inappropriate attention have already been indicated.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 9:56 am

Title: Re: Asubha Contemplation on Voice?

Content:

A classic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 10:10 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

In terms of relative importance, it's more important to avoid the extreme of "nothing exists" because nihilism can result in not considering the long term consequences of one's actions, which opens the door to the lower realms.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 10:53 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

Attempting to establish an "objective reality" is, at best, an unnecessary and superfluous line of investigation, and at worst, the extreme of "everything exists," which is an assumption dependent upon deluded cognitions. AN 4.24 Kāḷakārāma Sutta:

Thus, monks, a Tathāgata does not imagine a visible thing as apart from seeing, he does not imagine an unseen, he does not imagine a thing worth seeing, he does not imagine a seer. He does not imagine an audible thing as apart from hearing, he does not imagine an unheard, he does not imagine a thing worth hearing, he does not imagine a hearer. He does not imagine a thing to be sensed as apart from sensation, he does not imagine an unsensed, he does not imagine a thing worth sensing, he does not imagine one who senses. He does not imagine a cognizable thing as apart from cognition, he does not imagine an uncognized, he does not imagine a thing worth cognizing, he does not imagine one who cognizes.

Thus, monks, the Tathāgata, being such in regard to all phenomena, seen, heard, sensed and cognized, is such. Moreover than he who is such there is none other higher or more excellent, I declare.

Whatever is seen, heard, sensed,  
Or clung to and esteemed as truth by other folk,  
Midst those who are entrenched in their own views,  
Being such, I hold none as true or false.  
This barb I beheld well in advance,  
Whereon mankind is hooked, impaled,  
I know, I see, 'tis verily so,  
No such clinging for the Tathāgatas.

There is no need and no value in constructing an "objective reality" or proving "valid cognitions." The practitioner simply needs to set aside such speculations and return to the practice of the four applications of mindfulness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 11:25 pm

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

The Abhidhammapiṭaka doesn't define conditioned phenomena as paramattha dhammā or paramattha sabhāva. The former does occur once in the Kathāvatthu but it's hardly a ringing endorsement for how this notion of paramattha dhamma later came to be applied and interpreted. Moreover, even someone like Karunadasa admits that the later ābhidhammika treatises present a realist view. As Ven. Ñāṇananda has repeatedly pointed out, this view isn't supported by the suttas or earliest strata of abhidhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 20, 2011 11:46 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Ajahn Amaro:

I've known people, particularly those who have practiced in the Theravāda tradition, who have been taught and trained that the idea of meditation is to get to a place of cessation. We might get to a place where we don't feel or see anything; there is awareness but everything is gone. An absence of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, the body—it all vanishes. And then these students are told, "This is the greatest thing. That's what there is to look forward to." The teacher encourages them to put tremendous hours and diligence into their meditation. When one of these students told her teacher that she had arrived at that kind of state, he got really excited. He then asked her, "So what did it feel like?" and she said, "It was like drinking a glass of cold water but without the water and without the glass." On another occasion she said, "It was like being shut inside a refrigerator."

This is not the only way of understanding cessation.... When we stop creating sense objects as absolute realities and stop seeing thoughts and feelings as solid things, there is cessation. To see that the world is within our minds is one way of working with these principles. The whole universe is embraced when we realize that it's happening within our minds. And in that moment when we recognize that it all happens here, it ceases. Its thingness ceases. Its otherness ceases. Its substantiality ceases.

This is just one way of talking and thinking about it. But I find this brings us much closer to the truth, because in that respect, it's held in check. It's known. But there's also the quality of its emptiness. Its insubstantiality is known. We're not imputing solidity to it, a reality that it doesn't possess. We're just looking directly at the world, knowing it fully and completely.

So, what happens when the world ceases? I remember one time Ajahn Sumedho was giving a talk about this same subject. He said, "Now I'm going to make the world completely disappear. I'm going to make the world come to an end." He just sat there and said: "Okay, are you ready?... The world just ended.... Do you want me to bring it back into being again? Okay...welcome back."

Nothing was apparent from the outside. It all happens internally. When we stop creating the world, we stop creating each other. We stop imputing the sense of solidity that creates a sense of separation. Yet we do not shut off the senses in any way. Actually, we shed the veneer, the films of confusion, of opinion, of judgment, of our conditioning, so that we can see the way things really are. At that moment, dukkha ceases.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 21, 2011 6:35 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

Either you have failed to understand Ven. Ñāṇananda's commentaries already posted on this thread, or you disagree with them. At any rate, the problem with your assertions are this: deluded cognitions are deluded and are therefore of no value in ascertaining what is or isn't objectively real. An arahants cognitions are measureless and therefore there are no worldly criteria for establishing an objective basis for such cognitions. A learner's cognitions are also designated as measureless when engaged in practice. Thus there are no objective means for establishing what you are trying to propose. It's a fruitless line of investigation. It would be far more beneficial to practice the applications of mindfulness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:00 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

I was just paraphrasing the professor's own words. Karunadasa's The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical Cornerstone of the Abhidhamma:

What emerges from this Abhidhammic doctrine of dhammas is a critical realism, one which recognizes the distinctness of the world from the experiencing subject yet also distinguishes between those types of entities that truly exist independently of the cognitive act and those that owe their being to the act of cognition itself.

He goes on to say that "a dhamma is a truly existent thing (sabhāvasiddha)." This is a completely realist view. And the inevitable consequence entailed by this realist view, wherein all conditioned dhammas are "truly existing things," is that path cognitions and fruition cognitions of each of the four paths and fruits must occur within an utterly void vacuum state cessation, which is considered to be the ultimately existent "unconditioned." This is described by Jack Kornfield:

In Mahasi's model, enlightenment—or at least stream-entry, the first taste of nirvana—comes in the form of a cessation of experience, arising out of the deepest state of concentration and attention, when the body and mind are dissolved, the experience of the ordinary senses ceases, and we rest in perfect equanimity. We open into that which is unconditioned, timeless, and liberating: nirvana.... But there are a lot of questions around this kind of moment. Sometimes it seems to have enormously transformative effects on people. Other times people have this moment of experience and aren't really changed by it at all. Sometimes they're not even sure what happened.

This notion of path and fruition cognitions is not supported by the Pāli canon. Moreover, there are now numerous people who've had such experiences sanctioned by "insight meditation" teachers, and who have gone on to proclaim to the world that arahants can still experience lust and the other defiled mental phenomena. Taking all of this into account there is no good reason whatsoever to accept this interpretation of path and fruition cognitions. Void vacuum state cessations are not an adequate nor reliable indication of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 21, 2011 9:08 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

It's from Ven. Amaro's Small Boat, Great Mountain.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 21, 2011 9:32 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Indeed. If the jhāna factors are not present then it isn't supramundane path or fruition attainment either. This blackout emptiness notion is the inevitable consequence entailed by a realist view of dhamma, wherein all conditioned dhammas are considered to be "truly existing things," and therefore path cognitions and fruition cognitions of each of the four paths and fruits must occur within an utterly void vacuum state cessation, which is considered to be the ultimately existent "unconditioned." This notion of path and fruition cognitions is not supported by the Pāli canon. It's largely based on an unsustainable interpretation of the first chapter of the Paṭisambhidāmagga. Also, there is nothing specifically Buddhist about utterly void vacuum state cessations. In fact, precisely this type of stopping the mind is the goal of some non-Buddhist yogic traditions. Therefore, this contentless absorption cannot be equated with Buddhist nibbāna. Moreover, there are now a number of people who've had such experiences sanctioned by "insight meditation" teachers, and who have gone on to proclaim to the world that arahants can still experience lust and the other defiled mental phenomena. Taking all of this into account there is no good reason whatsoever to accept this interpretation of path and fruition cognitions. Void vacuum state cessations are not an adequate nor reliable indication of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 22, 2011 5:23 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

There are numerous people who appreciate Ven. Ñāṇananda's teachings who were initially inspired by the writings of Ven. Ñāṇavīra. Ven. Yogā-nanda is one such person. His meetings with Ven. Ñāṇananda can be read in his Heretic Sage Series.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 22, 2011 2:43 pm

Title: Re: Resources on Sarvastivada

Content:

The Abhidharmakośa is the root verses. The Abhidharmakośabhāṣya is the commentary paragraphs interspersed between the root verses. The Tibetans consider the Abhidharmakośa root verses to be Sarvāstivāda and the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya to be Sautrāntika.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 23, 2011 8:42 am

Title: Re: SN 22.95: Phena Sutta — Foam

Content:

Already described quite well by Kornfield: "[T]he first taste of nirvana—comes in the form of a cessation of experience, arising out of the deepest state of concentration and attention, when the body and mind are dissolved, the experience of the ordinary senses ceases, and we rest in perfect equanimity. We open into that which is unconditioned, timeless, and liberating: nirvana."

This is a consequence of a realist view: If all conditioned phenomena are truly existent impermanent things, and nibbāna is a truly existent permanent thing, then nibbāna can only be cognized as an utter void completely independent of these so-called truly existent impermanent things.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 25, 2011 7:47 am

Title: Re: Nagarjuna as the true interpret of the doctrine?

Content:

The Pāli dhamma is every bit as radical, if not moreso, than anything of importance that Nāgārjuna ever said.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 25, 2011 8:00 am

Title: Re: Nagarjuna as the true interpret of the doctrine?

Content:

The reference was to Tobes characterization of "radical" in the context of the discussion on Dharma Wheel. I'm suggesting that both the Pāli dhamma and Nāgārjuna are more "radical" than Tobes interpretation. Certainly, the view presented in the Pāli Tipiṭaka accords with what Nāgārjuna was getting at. Ven. Ñāṇananda:

Teach-ers like Nāgār-juna brought to light what was already there [in the Pāli suttas] but was hid-den from view. Unfor-tu-nately his later fol-low-ers turned it in to a vāda....

When I first read the Kārikā I too was doubt-ing Ven. Nāgārjuna's san-ity. But the work needs to be under-stood in the con-text. He was tak-ing a jab at the Sarvāstivādins. To be hon-est, even the oth-ers deserve the rebuke, although they now try to get away by using Sarvās-tivāda as an excuse. How skilled Ven. Nāgār-juna must have been, to com-pose those verses so ele-gantly and fill-ing them with so much mean-ing, like the Dhamma-pada verses. It's quite amazing.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 25, 2011 8:07 am

Title: Re: Nagarjuna as the true interpret of the doctrine?

Content:

The discussion is in this thread.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 27, 2011 1:52 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Just to add: Such blackout states are neither form sphere jhāna, nor vipassanā, nor supramundane jhāna accompanied by gnosis (ñāṇa) which arises when one enters the noble path. This supramundane gnosis is the understanding that all phenomena are signless, desireless, and empty. It arises from contemplating the signlessness of all phenomena. The Paṭisambhidāmagga states: Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness of form... feeling... recognition... fabrications... consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

Thus, this gnosis is the result of the correct contemplation of the signlessness (animittānupassanā) of all phenomena, and not the result of falling into any sort of blackout. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī clearly states that supramundane jhāna is accompanied by the jhāna factors. And the arising of supramundane jhāna is necessary for entering the noble paths and fruitions. A blackout state isn't. The non-arising (anuppāda) and non-continuance (appavatta), etc., which happens at the time of

change of lineage (gotrabhu), i.e. when one enters the noble paths, is the non-arising and non-continuance of the fetters and mental outflows specifically abandoned on each noble path, and not the non-arising and non-continuance of the the supramundane jhāna factors themselves. If there are no supramundane jhāna factors and no concomitant gnosis, there is no noble path and no possibility of liberation from fetters and mental outflows.

Also, it's worth mentioning that there is no canonical support for the notion that the noble path consists of two or three mind moments. For a good survey of the relevant passages from the Pāli Tipiṭaka, see Path, Fruit, and Nibbāna (PDF) by Ven. Kheminda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 27, 2011 3:35 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Well, it doesn't fit with the Paṭisambhidāmagga or the Dhammasaṅgaṇī either. And both of these texts have developed the path structure beyond what is given in the suttas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 28, 2011 2:34 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

This statement is both condescending and inaccurate. What should be let go of is attachment to teachers who contradict what is taught in the Canon.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 28, 2011 8:32 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Firstly, nibbāna isn't a "state." Secondly, nibbāna is the cessation of passion, aggression, and delusion. For a learner it is the cessation of the fetters extinguished on each path. The waking states where "suddenly all sensations and six senses stop functioning" are (1) mundane perceptionless samādhis, and (2) cessation of apperception and feeling. Neither of these are supramundane and neither of these are synonymous with experiencing nibbāna.



All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 29, 2011 9:35 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Ajahn Amaro is "not even familiar with Buddhist beliefs"?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 29, 2011 9:53 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

The Kathāvatthu and the Visuddhimagga both maintain that the cessation of apperception and feeling is not not-conditioned (asaṅkhata) and is not supramundane (lokuttara).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 29, 2011 9:57 pm

Title: Re: The Practical Aspects of Establishing Mindfulness

Content:

Good stuff Ian.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:28 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Nibbāna is the extinguishment of fetters. To be precise, the state wherein one experiences the extinguishment (nibbāna) of fetters appropriate to each path and fruition, is supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna). And this state must necessarily arise with the concomitant jhāna factors and other

mental factors such as attention (manasikāra) and apperception (saññā), as well as gnosis (ñāṇa). Without the presence of these mental factors there can be no gnosis and therefore no path attainment or fruition attainment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 01, 2011 12:17 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

In Concept and Reality Ven. Ñāṇananda equates the experience of featureless/non-manifestative consciousness (anidassana viññāṇa) with the fruition-gnosis samādhi (aññāphala samādhi) of an arahant, which after first attainment can be re-entered later as the arahant's meditation. AN 9.37 describes this samādhi as follows:

Sister, the concentration whereby -- neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed -- still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of gnosis.

On page 61 of Concept and Reality Ven. Ñāṇananda discusses this samādhi:

The unique feature of this samādhi is its very fluxional character. In it there is no such fixity as to justify a statement that it 'depends on' (nissāya) some object (ārammaṇa) as its support -- hence the frustration of gods and men who seek out the basis of the Tathāgata's consciousness. Normally, the jhānas are characterized by an element of fixity on which consciousness finds a footing or a steadying point. It is on this very fixity that the illusion of the ego thrives. In the above jhāna of the emancipated one, however, the ego has melted away in the fire of wisdom which sees the cosmic process of arising and cessation. Not only has the concept "I" (papañca par excellence) undergone combustion, but it has also ignited the data of sensory experience in their entirety. Thus in this jhāna of the Arahant, the world of concepts melts away in the intuitional bonfire of universal impermanence.

This general description also pertains to the supramundane jhāna of streamwinners, once returners, and non-returners as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 01, 2011 12:43 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Yes. There are three gateways to supramundane liberation: the signless, the desireless, and the emptiness deliverances. The signless deliverance is realized by beginning with the contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā). In the Nibbāna Sermons Ven. Ñāṇananda describes this process

of insight as follows:

With the dispelling of the perception of permanence, the tendency to grasp a sign or catch a theme is removed. It is due to the perception of permanence that one grasps a sign in accordance with perceptual data. When one neither takes a sign nor gets carried away by its details, there is no aspiration, expectation, or objective by way of craving. When there is no aspiration, one cannot see any purpose or essence to aim at.

It is through the three deliverances, the signless, the desireless, and the void, that the drama of existence comes to an end. The perception of impermanence is the main contributory factor for the cessation of this drama....

Why do we call the vision of the arahant a vacant gaze? At the highest point of the development of the three characteristics impermanence, suffering and not-self, that is, through the three deliverances animitta, appaṇihita and suññata, the "signess", the "undirected" and the "void", the arahant is now looking at the object with a penetrative gaze. That is why it is not possible to say what he is looking at. It is a gaze that sees the cessation of the object, a gaze that penetrates the object, as it were.

This corresponds with what is taught in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, where the contemplation of impermanence is said to result in entrance to the signless:

When he gives attention as impermanent his mind emerges from the sign; his mind enters into the signless.

Which is the supramundane contemplation of the signlessness (animittānupassanā) of all phenomena. Again, the Paṭisambhidāmagga:

Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness of form... feeling... recognition... fabrications... consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

It's worth noting here that signlessness pertains to seeing the signlessness of phenomena, what Ven. Ñāṇananda sometimes refers to as seeing through the object. With the arising of this supramundane gnosis, objects no longer represent anything of significance. And it is this gnosis which is truly liberating. It can't be shaken by any sensory experience because the signlessness of all experience has been fully understood. There is no need whatsoever to slip into a blackout cessation. In The Magic of the Mind Ven. Ñāṇananda offers the following insight into the relationship between signs and significance:

The question of 'seeing what-is-shown', brings us to the relationship between sign and significance. Sense-perception at all levels relies largely on signs. This statement might even appear as a truism since the Pāli word saññā denotes perception as well as 'sign', 'symbol', 'mark' or 'token.' It is due to the processes of grasping and recognition implicit in sense-perception that the sign has come to play such an important part in it. Grasping -- be it physical or mental -- can at best be merely a symbolical affair. The actual point of contact is superficial and localized, but it somehow props up the conceit of grasping. Recognition too, is possible only within arbitrarily circumscribed limits. The law of impermanence is persistently undermining it, but still a conceit of recognition is maintained by progressively ignoring the fact of change....

Furthermore, as the Suttas often make it clear, all percepts as such are to be regarded as mere signs (saññā, nimitta). Hence while the worldling says that he perceives 'things' with the help of signs, the Tathāgata says that all we perceive are mere signs. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas are, all of them, signs which consciousness pursues. But still the question may be asked: "What do these signs signify?" "Things, of course" -- the Tathāgata would reply. 'Things', however, are not those that the worldling has in mind when he seeks an answer to this question. Lust, hatred and delusion

are the 'things' which, according to the teaching of the Tathāgata, are signified by all sense-percepts. "Lust, friend, is a something; hatred is a something; delusion is a something." (M I 298, Mahāvedalla S.) "Lust, friends, is something significative, hatred is something significative, delusion is something significative" (ibid).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 2:31 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

I think it's important to remember that references to the deathless are pointing to the absence of passion, aggression, and delusion. The Thai forest style of teaching of Ajahn Chah which emphasizes simply being "that which knows" (poo roo: "the one who knows") can lead to this freedom of absence, where there is no identity, no need to grasp changing conditions to try to confirm our existence (which includes relinquishing the need to hold tightly to dhamma "views" as well).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 3:53 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

Where did I say that "the goal is to reach a feeling of oneness"?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 4:58 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

Which is why I replied to Starter's last post as I did. One has to be careful with such descriptions which may seem to be pointing to some sort of truly existent "unconditioned ground." Nibbāna is the extinguishment of the mental outflows (āsavā). The liberated mind is measureless (appamāṇa). This is not a "state of oneness with all of existence." It's an absence of identification (anattatā). It's non-indicative (anidassana), unestablished (appatitṭha), and not-dependent (anissita). None of these adjectives entail any sort of metaphysical "ground of being" or "unconditioned absolute." They are all negations. An arahant has simply "gone out."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 11:44 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

In keeping with the Kathāvatthu, the Visuddhimagga has to maintain that the cessation of apperception and feeling, which is also called cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti) is neither supramundane nor not-conditioned (asaṅkhata). Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.

Moreover, only arahants who are liberated both ways can experience cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti). Arahants who are liberated through discernment do not. Therefore it is not accurate to equate nibbāna with nirodhasamāpatti.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 12:10 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Yeah, blackout cessations are just another passing experience (or non-experience). Just one more thing to be let go of. Certainly not a sign of stream entry. There is no "silver bullet" or "panacea" experience. Life-long dedication and unwavering commitment to practice is what is required.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 12:53 pm

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

Nibbāna is the realization of the noble truth of the cessation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhanirodha ariyasacca), which is not synonymous with nirodhasamāpatti. DN 22:

And what is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving [for sensual pleasure, craving existence, craving non-existence].

Your interpretation of the supramundane paths and fruitions is not supported by the Pāli Tipiṭaka. This has already been pointed out on this thread. Your interpretation of fruition attainment isn't supported by the Pāli Tipiṭaka either.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 4:19 pm

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

The lack of canonical support for your interpretation of nibbāna has nothing to do with me or my practice, or anyone else's practice. Blackout cessations are just another passing experience (or non-experience). Just one more thing to be let go of. Certainly not a sign of stream entry. Such experiences are experienced by all sorts of yogis including those practicing non-Buddhist systems. Thus, they have nothing to do with the correct engagement of vipassanā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 4:35 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Again, your interpretation isn't supported by the Pāli Tipiṭaka or even by the commentarial tradition. In keeping with the Kathāvatthu, the Visuddhimagga has to maintain that the cessation of apperception and feeling, which is also called cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti) is neither supramundane nor not-conditioned (asaṅkhata). Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 02, 2011 6:12 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Of course there is. The canon tells us that it is the cutting off and full extinguishment (parinibbāna) of

the first three fetters. The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

How is it that the discernment of contemplating what is cut off is gnosis of liberation (vimuttiñāṇa)?

By the stream-entry path the following imperfections are completely cut off in his own mind: (1) identity-view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), (2) doubt (vicikicchā), (3) mistaken adherence to rules and duty (sīlabbataparāmāsa), (4) the underlying tendency of views (diṭṭhānusaya), (5) the underlying tendency of doubt (vicikicchānusaya). Mind is liberated, completely liberated from these five imperfections with their modes of obsession.

How is it that the discernment of the termination of occurrence in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa)?

Through the stream-entry path he terminates identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty.... This discernment of the termination of occurrence in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment....

He causes the cessation of identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty through the stream-entry path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 03, 2011 10:15 am

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

The non-arising (anuppāda) and non-continuance (appavatta), etc., which happens at the time of change of lineage (gotrabhu), i.e. when one enters the noble paths, is the non-arising and non-continuance of the fetters, mental outflows, and underlying tendencies specifically abandoned on each noble path, and not the non-arising and non-continuance of the the supramundane jhāna factors themselves. If there are no supramundane jhāna factors and no concomitant gnosis, there is no noble path and no possibility of liberation from fetters. The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

How is it that the discernment of contemplating what is cut off is gnosis of liberation (vimuttiñāṇa)?

By the stream-entry path the following imperfections are completely cut off in his own mind: (1) identity-view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), (2) doubt (vicikicchā), (3) mistaken adherence to rules and duty (sīlabbataparāmāsa), (4) the underlying tendency of views (diṭṭhānusaya), (5) the underlying tendency of doubt (vicikicchānusaya). Mind is liberated, completely liberated from these five imperfections with their modes of obsession.

How is it that the discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa)?

Through the stream-entry path he terminates identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty.... This discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment....

He causes the cessation of identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty through

the stream-entry path.

Also, it's worth mentioning that there is no canonical support for the notion that the noble path consists of two or three mind moments. For a good survey of the relevant passages from the Pāli Tipiṭaka, see Path, Fruit, and Nibbāna (PDF) by Ven. Kheminda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 03, 2011 10:16 pm

Title: Re: The deathless -- "our" most original "nature/home"?

Content:

The threads you are weaving together doesn't present a full picture. As already mentioned, it fails to accurately account for the path structure as presented in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, and the Puggalapaññatti. If one is going to use the path model of the vipassanā ñāṇa-s then it is important to fully account for the path structure as presented in these canonical treatises.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 03, 2011 10:37 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Ajahn Chah has also said the following on the subject of stream-entry. From Food for the Heart: "Not Sure!" -- The Standard of the Noble Ones:

The Buddha is still alive to this very day, go in and find him. Where is he? At aniccam, go in and find him there, go and bow to him: aniccam, uncertainty. You can stop right there for starters.

If the mind tries to tell you, "I'm a sotāpanna now," go and bow to the sotāpanna. He'll tell you himself, "It's all uncertain." If you meet a sakadāgāmī go and pay respects to him. When he sees you he'll simply say, "Not a sure thing!" If there is an anāgāmī go and bow to him. He'll tell you only one thing... "Uncertain." If you meet even an arahant, go and bow to him, he'll tell you even more firmly, "It's all even more uncertain!" You'll hear the words of the Noble Ones... "Everything is uncertain, don't cling to anything."

And on the value of keeping anicca in mind at all times:

All the teachings in this world can be contained in this one teaching: aniccam. Think about it. I've searched for over forty years as a monk and this is all I could find. That and patient endurance. This is how to approach the Buddha's teaching... aniccam: it's all uncertain.

No matter how sure the mind wants to be, just tell it, "Not sure!" Whenever the mind wants to grab on to something as a sure thing, just say, "It's not sure, it's transient." Just ram it down with this.



Using the Dhamma of the Buddha it all comes down to this. It's not that it's merely a momentary phenomenon. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, you see everything in that way. Whether liking arises or dislike arises you see it all in the same way. This is getting close to the Buddha, close to the Dhamma.

Now I feel that this is a more valuable way to practice. All my practice from the early days up to the present time has been like this. I didn't actually rely on the scriptures, but then I didn't disregard them either. I didn't rely on a teacher but then I didn't exactly "go it alone." My practice was all "neither this nor that."

Even though this may seem like a simplified dhamma, it's actually the result of mature and profound practice. Often the Abhidhammapiṭaka treatises and the stage models of vipassanā ñāṇa-s -- which seem deep in their complexity -- don't accurately convey the pith wisdom of mature practice rooted in a life of simplicity, renunciation, and a calm & clear mind.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 04, 2011 2:17 am

Title: Re: Realization of the fearfulness of the formations

Content:

This type of characterization really needs to be taken with a grain of salt. Better to practice in accord with the canonical treatises. The Paṭisambhidāmagga states:

Understanding of appearance as terror, gnosis of danger, and dispassion: these things are one in meaning, only the letters are different.

Thus, this stage of insight is related to dispassion, and not directly related to being "gripped by fear" or feeling "helpless." If there is gnosis one will not be gripped by fear or feel helpless. Dispassion is said to be the highest dhamma. It's liberating and the antithesis of fearfulness and helplessness. The Visuddhimagga also mentions this:

But does the knowledge of appearance as terror [itself] fear or does it not fear? It does not fear. For it is simply the mere judgment that past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing, and future ones will cease. Just as a man with eyes looking at three charcoal pits at a city gate is not himself afraid, since he only forms the mere judgment that all who fall into them will suffer no little pain;—or just as when a man with eyes looks at three spikes set in a row, an acacia spike, an iron spike, and a gold spike, he is not himself afraid, since he only forms the mere judgment that all who fall on these spikes will suffer no little pain;—so too the knowledge of appearance as terror does not itself fear; it only forms the mere judgment that in the three kinds of becoming, which resemble the three charcoal pits and the three spikes, past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing, and future ones will cease.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 05, 2011 7:48 pm

Title: Re: Realization of the fearfulness of the formations

Content:

There is a significant difference between dukkha and "pseudo-dukkha" based on the mistaken reification of fabricated phenomena as truly existent things.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 05, 2011 8:07 pm

Title: Re: Fox Wants In

Content:

Fox & bhikṣu (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia):

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 06, 2011 2:34 pm

Title: Re: Ingram, et al - "Hard Core Dharma" & claims of attainment

Content:

Indeed. From the above it seems quite clear that Ingram et al aren't interested in Buddhist liberation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 06, 2011 8:38 pm

Title: Re: Ingram, et al - "Hard Core Dharma" & claims of attainment

Content:

Hi Nibs,

I'm not interested in any sort of "us vs. them." Ingram's statements about an arahant still experiencing lust, etc., from the perspective of the suttas, is explicitly demonstrating wrong view. This illustrates a serious lack of understanding of conditioned arising and kamma. And the consequence of wrong view means that he hasn't entered the stream, let alone having any higher realization.

And from a pragmatic perspective, what kind of "liberation" is he and others with similar views offering? It's certainly not Buddhist liberation. And it's completely disingenuous of anyone to maintain what is contrary to the dhamma is actually liberation. There are many teachers out there who teach what is consistent with the dhammavinaya and are therefore far more credible.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 06, 2011 8:40 pm

Title: Re: Ingram, et al - "Hard Core Dharma" & claims of attainment

Content:

The dhamma isn't about "techniques."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 07, 2011 6:39 pm

Title: Re: Interbeing ?

Content:

I don't think that interbeing is a very common expression beyond TNH. Nevertheless, it's not uncommon to find *pratītyasamutpāda* (*paticcasamuppāda*) translated as "interdependent origination" etc., which is not the most accurate translation. Anyway, there is really no Pāli source for interbeing, as it is based on Chinese Huayan sources which were developments from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:01 pm

Title: Re: Interbeing ?

Content:

The view goes back to the metaphor of Indra's net in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, where there is a jewel at each intersection of a vast net, and each jewel reflects the image of every other jewel in the net. Thus, each jewel contains the image of every other jewel and is a representation of the whole. The Chinese Huayan tradition then developed this metaphor into a view of the "mutual interpenetration of all phenomena," an "oceanic reflection" meditation, and so on. These developments then influenced Chinese Chan as well as Japanese Zen teachers such as Dōgen Zenji.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:26 pm

Title: Re: Interbeing ?

Content:

This metaphor was never really developed in the Indo-Tibetan tradition, where Mādhyamaka negation is employed. Someone like Ven. Huifeng would likely know the specific developments of these ideas within Chinese Buddhist thought.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 08, 2011 9:07 pm

Title: Re: My latest theory: No stationary self

Content:

Of course, conventionally speaking, people exist. Simplistic reductionism cannot account for dynamic systems such as biological systems or mind-streams or sentient beings. An ordered, functioning system cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. A living cell cannot be reduced to the molecules which comprise it. A complex living organism cannot be reduced to the cells which comprise it. In the context of a mind-stream, a healthy functioning ego cannot simply be reduced to the aggregates which comprise it (or more precisely, from which it emerges). Why? Because there are pathological mind-streams which have all of the same component parts (i.e. feeling, apperception, contact, attention, intention, desire, etc.), yet a healthy, functional ego (which is a dynamic system) doesn't emerge from these component parts. This is why many contemporary insight meditation teachers have recognized that no significant progress can be made by employing the path of gradual training unless the student is in good mental health. Hence the well known phrase: "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody."

In order to understand the recognition of anatta (anattasaññā) it's important to understand the object of negation. Anatta is negating the notion of a permanent Self which is not subject to affliction/dis-ease. It is not negating the utility of a healthy, functional ego with conditional self-agency (attakāra). Take SN 22.59 for example, as it is a central teaching on anatta. The Self which is being negated in SN 22.59 is a Self which would be:

1. permanent
2. satisfactory
3. not subject to affliction/dis-ease

This "Self" is refuted: a permanent, satisfactory Self which is not prone to old age, sickness, and death. As SN 22.59 states:

Bhikkhus, form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness is not-self. Were form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness self, then this form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness would not lead to affliction/dis-ease.

This criterion of affliction/disease is context for the following statement that:

none can have it of form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness: 'Let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be thus, let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be not thus.'

This in no way negates conditional self-agency (attakāra). AN 6.38 Attakāra Sutta:

"This, master Gotama, is my doctrine; this is my view: There is no self-agency/acting (attakāra); there is no other-agency/acting (parakāra)."

"Never, brahman, have I seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view. How indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency/acting; there is no other-agency/acting'? What do you think, brahman, is there such a thing as initiative?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to initiate?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahman, since there is such a thing as initiative and beings are known to initiate, this among beings is self-agency; this is other-agency."

"What do you think, brahmin, is there such a thing as stepping away ... such a thing as stepping forward ... such a thing as stopping ... such a thing as standing still ... such a thing as stepping toward?"

"Yes, sir."

"That being so, are beings known to do all these things?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, brahmin, since there is such a thing as stepping away and stepping forward, and the rest, and beings are known to do these things, this among beings is self-agency/acting; this is other-agency/acting. Never, Brahmin, I have seen or heard of such a doctrine, such a view as yours. How indeed can one step forward, how can one step back, yet say: 'There is no self-agency; there is no other-agency'?"

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 10, 2011 3:18 am

Title: Re: My latest theory: No stationary self

Content:

Yes, indeed. An arahant has abandoned all notions of "I am."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 16, 2011 9:11 am

Title: Re: Anapanasati Vs. jhana

Content:

Indeed, if you're referring to a sign of light (*obhāsanimitta*) and a sign of form (*rūpanimitta*) mentioned in MN 128 *Upakkilesa Sutta*. Some contemporary teachers and commentators have suggested that the sign of light (*obhāsanimitta*) and/or the sign of form (*rūpanimitta*) mentioned in MN 128 *Upakkilesa Sutta* are canonical references to what later came to be designated as the counterpart sign (*pañibhāganimitta*) in the commentaries, and thus establishes that these *nimittas* were considered an essential aspect of the development of *jhāna* even in the early tradition.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning in this regard. Firstly, MN 128 is the only discourse where the term *nimitta* is used in this context. None of the other canonical occurrences of *nimitta* as either *samādhinimitta*, *samatha nimitta*, or *cittanimitta* refer to any of these *nimittas* being an *obhāsanimitta* or *rūpanimitta* as explained in the *Upakkilesa Sutta*.

Secondly, nowhere in the *Upakkilesa Sutta* does it state that either the *obhāsanimitta* or the *rūpanimitta* are essential prerequisites for attaining the first *jhāna*. Nor does this *sutta* maintain that the complete elimination of any experience of the five sensory spheres is essential for the arising of either of these two cognitive signs. Therefore, while these apperceptions of light and visions of form can occur during the course of meditational development, there is no explicit statement here, or elsewhere in the *suttas*, that such apperceptions must arise for one to enter *jhāna*. Indeed, even the commentarial tradition doesn't maintain that either of these types of *nimittas* are essential for the first *jhāna*.

For example, the *Vimuttimaggā* takes the instructions offered in the *Upakkilesa Sutta* to refer to the development of the divine eye. This is understandable, as *Anuruddhā*, the main interlocutor in this discourse with the Buddha, was later designated as the foremost disciple endowed with the divine eye.

And not even the *Visuddhimaggā* limits counterpart signs to apperceptions of light or forms. According to the *Visuddhimaggā* analysis, of the thirty meditations which lead to *jhāna*, twenty-two have counterpart signs as object. And of these, only nineteen require any sort of counterpart sign which is apprehended based solely on sight, and can therefore give rise to a mental image resulting from that *nimitta* (the ten stages of corpse decomposition and nine *kasiṇas*, excluding the air *kasiṇa* which can be apprehended by way of either sight or tactile sensation).

And so taking all of the above into consideration, according to the early Pāli dhamma there is no need to establish a *jhāna nimitta* (or *samathanimitta* or *cittanimitta*) apart from the *jhāna* factors. And even according to the *Vimuttimaggā* and *Visuddhimaggā* — where the presentation of the method using a counterpart sign is explicitly developed — there is no suggestion that a counterpart sign necessarily must be a sign of light (*obhāsanimitta*) and/or a sign of form (*rūpanimitta*). Indeed, according to the *Vimuttimaggā*, when employing mindfulness of breathing in order to attain *jhāna*, the counterpart sign should be concomitant with the pleasant feeling which arises as one attends to the breath at the nostril area or the area of the upper lip, which is likened to the pleasant feeling produced by a breeze. The text says that this counterpart sign doesn't depend on color or form, and any adventitious mental images which arise in the course of practice should not be attended to.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 17, 2011 4:48 am

Title: Re: Anapanasati Vs. jhana

Content:

I'd suggest that it's far better to continue practicing and developing samādhi, rather than wondering about these types of questions. If you're able to commit to renunciation and solitude, then the mind will calm and vipassanā will lead to disenchantment and dispassion. When the mind is calm and clear everything else can fall into place. Ajahn Chah, *Suffering on the Road*:

Sitting meditation with a distracted mind is uncertain. When the meditation brings good results and the mind enters a state of calm, that's also uncertain. This is where insight comes. What is there left for you to attach to? Keep following up on what's happening in the mind. As you investigate, keep questioning and prodding, probing deeper and deeper into the nature of impermanence. Sustain your mindfulness right at this point -- you don't have to go anywhere else. In no time at all, the mind will calm down just as you want it to.

The reason practising with the meditation word "Buddho" doesn't make the mind peaceful, or practising mindfulness of breathing doesn't make the mind peaceful, is because you are attaching to the distracted mind. When reciting "Buddho" or concentrating on the breath and the mind still hasn't calmed down, reflect on uncertainty and don't get too involved with the state of mind whether it's peaceful or not. Even if you enter a state of calm, don't get too involved with it, because it can delude you and cause you to attach too much meaning and importance to that state. You have to use some wisdom when dealing with the deluded mind. When it is calm you simply acknowledge the fact and take it as a sign that the meditation is going in the right direction. If the mind isn't calm you simply acknowledge the reality that the mind is confused and distracted, but there's nothing to be gained from refusing to accept the truth and trying to struggle against it. When the mind is peaceful you can be aware that it is peaceful, but remind yourself that any peaceful state is uncertain. When the mind is distracted, you observe the lack of peace and know that it is just that -- the distracted state of mind is equally as prone to change as a peaceful one.

If you have established this kind of insight, the attachment to the sense of self collapses as soon as you begin to confront it and investigate.

Ajahn Chah, *Monastery of Confusion*:

Whatever suits you, whatever you feel comfortable with and helps you fix your mind, focus on that.

It's like this: if we get attached to the ideals and take the guidelines that we are given in the instructions too literally, it can be difficult to understand. When doing a standard meditation such as mindfulness of breathing, first we should make the determination that right now we are going to do this practice, and we are going to make mindfulness of breathing our foundation. We only focus on the breath at three points, as it passes through the nostrils, the chest and the abdomen. When the air enters it first passes the nose, then through the chest, then to the end point of the abdomen. As it leaves the body, the beginning is the abdomen, the middle is the chest, and the end is the nose. We merely note it. This is a way to start controlling the mind, tying awareness to these points at the beginning, middle and end of the inhalations and exhalations.

Before we begin we should first sit and let the mind relax. It's similar to sewing robes on a treadle sewing machine. When we are learning to use the sewing machine, first we just sit in front of the machine to get familiar with it and feel comfortable. Here, we just sit and breathe. Not fixing

awareness on anything, we merely take note that we are breathing. We take note of whether the breath is relaxed or not and how long or short it is. Having noticed this, then we begin focusing on the inhalation and exhalation at the three points.

We practice like this until we become skilled in it and it goes smoothly. The next stage is to focus awareness only on the sensation of the breath at the tip of the nose or the upper lip. At this point we aren't concerned with whether the breath is long or short, but only focus on the sensation of entering and exiting.

Different phenomena may contact the senses, or thoughts may arise. This is called initial thought (vitakka). The mind brings up some idea, be it about the nature of compounded phenomena (sankhārā), about the world, or whatever. Once the mind has brought it up, the mind will want to get involved and merge with it. If it's an object that is wholesome then let the mind take it up. If it is something unwholesome, stop it immediately. If it is something wholesome then let the mind contemplate it, and gladness, satisfaction and happiness will come about. The mind will be bright and clear; as the breath goes in and out and as the mind takes up these initial thoughts. Then it becomes discursive thought (vicāra). The mind develops familiarity with the object, exerting itself and merging with it. At this point, there is no sleepiness.

After an appropriate period of this, take your attention back to the breath. Then as you continue on there will be the initial thought and discursive thought, initial thought and discursive thought. If you are contemplating skillfully on an object such as the nature of sankhāra, then the mind will experience deeper tranquility and rapture is born. There is the vitakka and vicāra, and that leads to happiness of mind. At this time there won't be any dullness or drowsiness. The mind won't be dark if we practice like this. It will be gladdened and enraptured.

This rapture will start to diminish and disappear after a while, so you can take up the initial thought again. The mind will become firm and certain with it -- undistracted. Then you go on to discursive thought again, the mind becoming one with it. When you are practicing a meditation that suits your temperament and doing it well, then whenever you take up the object, rapture will come about: the hairs of the body stand on end and the mind is enraptured and satiated.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 17, 2011 11:29 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 17, 2011 11:35 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:



Indeed. And this cessation is the cessation of mistaken perceptual signs of permanence. Ven.

Ñāṇananda's Nibbāna Sermons:

With the dispelling of the perception of permanence, the tendency to grasp a sign or catch a theme is removed. It is due to the perception of permanence that one grasps a sign in accordance with perceptual data. When one neither takes a sign nor gets carried away by its details, there is no aspiration, expectation, or objective by way of craving. When there is no aspiration, one cannot see any purpose or essence to aim at.

It is through the three deliverances, the signless, the desireless, and the void, that the drama of existence comes to an end. The perception of impermanence is the main contributory factor for the cessation of this drama....

Since the world is built up by the six sense-spheres, it has also to cease by the cessation of those six sense-spheres. That is why Nibbāna is defined as the cessation of the six sense-spheres, *saḷāyatanaṇirodho Nibbānaṃ*. All those measuring rods and scales lose their applicability with the cessation of the six sense-spheres.

How can there be an experience of cessation of the six sense-spheres? The cessation here meant is actually the cessation of the spheres of contact. A sphere of contact presupposes a duality. Contact is always between two things, between eye and forms, for instance. It is because of a contact between two things that one entertains a perception of permanence in those two things. Dependent on that contact, feelings and perceptions arise, creating a visual world. The visual world of the humans differs from that of animals. Some things that are visible to animals are not visible to humans. That is due to the constitution of the eye-faculty. It is the same with regard to the ear-faculty. These are the measuring rods and scales which build up a world. Now this world, which is a product of the spheres of sense-contact, is a world of *papañca*, or "proliferation". Nibbāna is called *nippapañca* because it transcends this proliferation, puts an end to proliferation. The end of proliferation is at the same time the end of the six sense-spheres....

It is the substructure of this sense created world that the Buddha has revealed to us in this particular discourse on impermanence. The substructure, on analysis, reveals a duality, *dvayaṃ*, *bhikkhave*, *paṭicca viññāṇaṃ sambhoti*, "dependent on a dyad, monks, arises consciousness". Consciousness is not something substantial and absolute, like the so-called soul. That is precisely the point of divergence for Buddhism, when compared with those religious systems which rely on soul theories.

In the Dhamma there is mention of six consciousnesses, as *cakkhu-viññāṇa*, *sotaviññāṇa*, *ghānaviññāṇa*, *jivhāviññāṇa*, *kāyaviññāṇa* and *manoviññāṇa*, eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-consciousness. Everyone of these consciousnesses is based on a dyad. Just as in the case of eye-consciousness we are given the formula beginning with *cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca*, "dependent on eye and forms", so with regard to ear-consciousness we get *sotañca paṭicca sadde ca*, "dependent on ear and sounds", and so on. Even when we come to mind-consciousness, the theme is the same, *manañca paṭicca dhamme ca*, "dependent on mind and mind-objects". Mind also is vibrating, changing and transforming with extreme rapidity every moment. So are the objects of the mind.

The entire world is structured on these vibrant, transient and evanescent basic elements. That is the burden of this powerful discourse of the Buddha. Therefore, if someone developed the contemplation of impermanence to the highest degree and brought his mind to the signless state, having started from the sign itself, it goes without saying that he has realized the cessation of the world. That is, the experience of Nibbāna.

It is, at the same time, the cessation of proliferation, *papañcanirodha*. Prolific conceptualization is

founded on the perception of permanence, whereby one comes under the sway of reckonings born of prolific perceptions, papañcasaññāsaṅkhā. Proliferation creates things, giving rise to the antinomian conflict. Duality masquerades behind it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 17, 2011 2:22 pm

Title: Re: Anapanasati Vs. jhana

Content:

Ajahn Chah, "Not Sure!" — The Standard of the Noble Ones:

All the teachings in this world can be contained in this one teaching: anicca. Think about it. I've searched for over forty years as a monk and this is all I could find. That and patient endurance. This is how to approach the Buddha's teaching... anicca: it's all uncertain.

No matter how sure the mind wants to be, just tell it, "Not sure!" Whenever the mind wants to grab on to something as a sure thing, just say, "It's not sure, it's transient." Just ram it down with this. Using the Dhamma of the Buddha it all comes down to this. It's not that it's merely a momentary phenomenon. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, you see everything in that way. Whether liking arises or dislike arises you see it all in the same way. This is getting close to the Buddha, close to the Dhamma.

Now I feel that this is a more valuable way to practice. All my practice from the early days up to the present time has been like this. I didn't actually rely on the scriptures, but then I didn't disregard them either. I didn't rely on a teacher but then I didn't exactly "go it alone." My practice was all "neither this nor that."

Frankly it's a matter of "finishing off," that is, practicing to the finish by taking up the practice and then seeing it to completion, seeing the apparent and also the transcendent.

I've already spoken of this, but some of you may be interested to hear it again: if you practice consistently and consider things thoroughly, you will eventually reach this point... At first you hurry to go forward, hurry to come back, and hurry to stop. You continue to practice like this until you reach the point where it seems that going forward is not it, coming back is not it, and stopping is not it either! It's finished. This is the finish. Don't expect anything more than this, it finishes right here. Khīnāsavo - one who is completed. He doesn't go forward, doesn't retreat and doesn't stop. There's no stopping, no going forward and no coming back. It's finished. Consider this, realize it clearly in your own mind. Right there you will find that there is really nothing at all.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 18, 2011 3:08 pm

Title: Re: The Heretic Sage- Interview with Bhante Ñāṇananda

Content:

What precisely do you find peculiar about it?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 18, 2011 3:18 pm

Title: Re: Sectarianism

Content:

Indeed. Of course, when individuals have sufficient understanding of the philological, philosophical and historical basis for comparison we have informative dialogues and not the pointless and uninformed diatribes which so often seem to occur when this understanding is lacking.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 18, 2011 3:44 pm

Title: Re: Ajahn Chah Zen Theravada?

Content:

While this may have some basis in Japanese circles, there have been and still are Chinese teachers who closely adhere to vinaya. Ven. Xuānhuà being one well known modern example.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 18, 2011 4:06 pm

Title: Re: Ajahn Chah Zen Theravada?

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 1:10 am

Title: Re: The Heretic Sage- Interview with Bhante Ñāṇananda

Content:

Such as?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 2:00 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Anyone who relies on the jhāna theory of Ven. Brahmavamso (as well as many people who rely on the Visuddhimagga jhāna descriptions without a careful study of all relevant older material) is going to have a very different understanding of what jhāna is, than someone who relies on the Tipiṭaka as canonical authority and has also studied other early para-canonical Pāḷi and other Sthaviravāda treatises.

For example, in The Jhānas Ven. Brahmavamso describes singleness of mind as follows:

One-pointedness describes the mindfulness that is so sharply focused on a minute area of existence. It is one-pointed in space because it only sees the point source of bliss, together with a small area surrounding the bliss caused by the first jhāna wobble.

But the canon offers a much different understanding of singleness of mind (citta ekagga, cittekaggatā). Singleness of mind is possible in any state which has discarded the five hindrances and therefore has nothing to do with being "sharply focused on a minute area of existence." For example, AN 4.12 Sīla Sutta:

If while he is walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, a monk is free from greed and ill will, from sloth and torpor, from restlessness and worry, and has discarded doubt, then his will has become strong and impregnable; his mindfulness is alert and unclouded; his body is calm and unexcited; his mind is concentrated and collected (samāhitam cittam ekaggaṃ).

And also, differing from Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna, the canon describes the mind in jhāna as vast and expansive. MN 127 describes the expansive liberation of mind (mahaggatā cetovimutti), which is a synonym for the mastery of jhāna, as follows:

And what, householder, is the expansive liberation of mind? Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the root of one tree, pervading it as expansive: this is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the roots of two or three trees, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of one village, pervading it as expansive ... an area the size of two or three villages... an area the size of one major kingdom... an area the size of two or three major kingdoms... an area the size of the earth bounded by the ocean, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind.

Moreover, MN 111, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī are all canonical authorities which support developing vipassanā within jhāna. MN 111 informs us that in the first seven attainments phenomena are differentiated and known as they occur. It's not vipassanā of phenomena that had passed, ceased, and changed, it's vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occurred:

tyāssa dhammā anupadavavatthitā honti; tyāssa dhammā veditā uppajjanti, veditā upaṭṭhahanti, veditā abbattham gacchanti.

these phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him these phenomena arose, known they were present, known they disappeared.

This is a description of vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occurred (anupadadhammavipassanā). But according to Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna, there can be no comprehension within jhāna. In The Jhānas Ven. Brahmavamso states:

When perspective is removed, so is comprehension. Thus in jhāna, not only is there no sense of time, but also there is no comprehension of what is going on.

This lack of comprehension precludes any differentiation and knowing of phenomena one by one as they occur in jhāna. For Ven. Brahmavamso this differentiation and knowing of mental factors is impossible within jhāna. He continues:

Furthermore, the ultra-stillness of mindfulness in jhāna freezes the activity of mind called comprehension to the extent that, while in jhāna, one can hardly make sense of one's experience. The landmarks of jhāna are only recognized later, after emerging and reviewing.

Therefore, according to Ven. Brahmavamso, the MN 111 statement that "these phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred," would be impossible. This passage would have to be discarded for all of the first seven attainments and replaced by the passage describing the final two attainments:

so tāya samāpattiya sato vuṭṭhahati. so tāya samāpattiya sato vuṭṭhahitvā ye dhammā atītā niruddhā vipariṇatā te dhamme samanupassati 'evaṃ kirame dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventī'ti

He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the phenomena that had passed, ceased and changed, thus: 'So indeed, these phenomena, not having been, come into being; having been they vanished.'

But in the sutta this passage only pertains to the final two attainments. In the final two attainments phenomena cannot be differentiated and known as they occur because apperception isn't sufficiently engaged.

And not only is this the case for MN 111, but also the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Mahāvibhāṣā, and the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (i.e. all major Indian Theravāda/Sthaviravāda texts), as well as the detailed Sautrāntika and Yogācāra texts all maintain that vipassanā can and should optimally be developed within jhāna. For example, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī section on Rūpāvacarakusala lists the mental factors engaged in an optimally skillful rūpāvacarajjhānacitta on that specific occasion, specifically, at that time. This list includes sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsati, sampajañña, samatha, and vipassanā:

What at that time is samatha? That which at that time is stability of mind, steadfastness of mind, thorough steadfastness of mind, unshakableness, non-distraction, imperturbability, calmness of mind, faculty of concentration, strength of concentration, right concentration. This at that time is samatha.

What at that time is vipassanā? That which at that time is discernment (paññā), thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, investigation of phenomena, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination.... This at that time is vipassanā.

Taking the canonical Pāli treatises into consideration, as well as the numerous major non-Pāli Abhidharma treatises, there is nothing whatsoever unusual about the inclusion of vipassanā here.

The Sarvāstivāda \*Mahāvibhāṣā (Apidamo dapiposha lun) states:

In the four dhyānas, śamatha and vipaśyanā are equal in strength, and thus they are named a

pleasant dwelling.

The Abhidharmakośabhāṣya:

Samādhi is in fact excellent: it is a dhyāna filled with "parts," which goes by the means of the yoke of śamatha and vipaśyanā [that is to say, in which śamatha and vipaśyanā are in equilibrium], that is termed in the Sūtra "happiness in this world" and "the easy path," the path by which one knows better and easily.

The Yogācārabhūmiśāstra:

Furthermore, only by depending on the dhyānas and the access concentration preceding the first dhyāna, the incompletely attained concentration, can one make the [initial] breakthrough to the noble truths. The formless attainments are inadequate. What is the reason? In the state of the formless attainments, the path of śamatha is superior, whereas the path of vipaśyanā is inferior. The inferior path of vipaśyanā is incapable of attaining the [initial] breakthrough to the noble truths.

The \*Tattvasiddhiśāstra (Chengshih lun), the \*Prakaraṇāryavācaśāstra (Xianyang shengjiao lun), and the \*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa (Dazhi du lun) all make similar statements to these.

As happens in every case, all of these references are completely incompatible with Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna theory.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 2:40 am

Title: Re: The Heretic Sage- Interview with Bhante Ñāṇananda

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda is exposing the "myth of the given" and what he has referred to as the "relentless tyranny of the empirical consciousness" (Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought, p. 32).

From Ven. Ñāṇananda's The Magic of the Mind, p. 63:

It would indeed appear strange to us that in Buddhist psychology even contact and feeling – with which we are so intimate – are treated as 'designations' (paññatti). We might feel that this is an intrusion of the 'designation' into the jealously guarded recesses of the psyche. Yet this is not the case, for, in the very act of apperception contacts and feelings are reckoned, evaluated, defined, and designated on the basis of one's latencies (i.e. the aggregates). Thus there is hardly any justification for regarding them as 'the given', though we are accustomed to take them for granted. In other words, what we are wont to treat as 'the given,' turns out to be 'synthetic' and 'composite' (saṅkhata).

And from his Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought, p. 87:

The primary significance of the formula of Dependent Arising lies here. Lists of phenomena, both mental and material, are linked together with the term "paccayā" or any of its equivalents, and the fact of their conditionality and non-substantiality is emphasized with the help of analysis and synthesis. Apart from serving the immediate purpose of their specific application, these formulas help us to attune our minds in order to gain paññā. Neither the words in these formulas, nor the formulas as such, are to be regarded as ultimate categories. We have to look not so much at them as

through them. We must not miss the wood for the trees by dogmatically clinging to the words in the formulas as being ultimate categories. As concepts, they are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation....

Concept and Reality, pp. 55 - 56:

Concepts – be they material or spiritual, worldly or transcendental – are not worthy of being grasped dogmatically. They are not to be treated as ultimate categories and are to be discarded in the course of the spiritual endeavour.... That the emancipated sage (muni) no longer clings even to such concepts as "nibbāna" or "detachment" (virāga) is clearly indicated in the following verse of the Sutta Nipāta:

"For the Brahmin (the Muni) who has transcended all bounds, there is nothing that is grasped by knowing or by seeing. He is neither attached to attachment nor is he attached to detachment. In this world, he has grasped nothing as the highest." [Sn 795]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 4:16 am

Title: Re: The Heretic Sage- Interview with Bhante Ñāṇananda

Content:

And what agenda would that be?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 4:26 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The real question is the optimal development of the noble eightfold path. The noble eightfold path presented in the Pāli Tipiṭaka and early para-canonical sources such as the Peṭakopadesa and the Nettippakaraṇa always include the coupling of calm (samatha) and clear seeing (vipassanā) at some stage of the noble path. These two mental factors are mutually conditioning, each serving to strengthen the other when skillfully employed within jhāna.

Ven. Ṭhānissaro describes what Ajahn Fuang considered to be wrong concentration as follows: There were two exceptions to Ajaan Fuang's usual practice of not identifying the state you had attained in your practice, and both involved states of wrong concentration. The first was the state that comes when the breath gets so comfortable that your focus drifts from the breath to the sense of comfort itself, your mindfulness begins to blur, and your sense of the body and your surroundings gets lost in a pleasant haze. When you emerge, you find it hard to identify where exactly you were focused. Ajaan Fuang called this moha-samadhi, or delusion-concentration.

The second state was one I happened to hit one night when my concentration was extremely one-pointed, and so refined that it refused settle on or label even the most fleeting mental objects. I dropped into a state in which I lost all sense of the body, of any internal/external sounds, or of any thoughts or perceptions at all — although there was just enough tiny awareness to let me know,

when I emerged, that I hadn't been asleep. I found that I could stay there for many hours, and yet time would pass very quickly. Two hours would seem like two minutes. I could also "program" myself to come out at a particular time.

After hitting this state several nights in a row, I told Ajaan Fuang about it, and his first question was, "Do you like it?" My answer was "No," because I felt a little groggy the first time I came out. "Good," he said. "As long as you don't like it, you're safe. Some people really like it and think it's nibbana or cessation. Actually, it's the state of non-perception (*asaññi-bhava*). It's not even right concentration, because there's no way you can investigate anything in there to gain any sort of discernment. But it does have other uses." He then told me of the time he had undergone kidney surgery and, not trusting the anesthesiologist, had put himself in that state for the duration of the operation.

In both these states of wrong concentration, the limited range of awareness was what made them wrong. If whole areas of your awareness are blocked off, how can you gain all-around insight? And as I've noticed in years since, people adept at blotting out large areas of awareness through powerful one-pointedness also tend to be psychologically adept at dissociation and denial. This is why Ajaan Fuang, following Ajaan Lee, taught a form of breath meditation that aimed at an all-around awareness of the breath energy throughout the body, playing with it to gain a sense of ease, and then calming it so that it wouldn't interfere with a clear vision of the subtle movements of the mind. This all-around awareness helped to eliminate the blind spots where ignorance likes to lurk.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 4:55 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Ven. Ṭhānissaro, Wings to Awakening Part III F: Concentration & Discernment:

The role of jhana as a condition for transcendent discernment is one of the most controversial issues in the Theravada tradition. Three basic positions have been advanced in modern writings. One, following the commentarial tradition, asserts that jhana is not necessary for any of the four levels of Awakening and that there is a class of individuals — called "dry insight" meditators — who are "released through discernment" based on a level of concentration lower than that of jhana. A second position, citing a passage in the Canon [AN 3.88] stating that concentration is mastered only on the level of non-returning, holds that jhana is necessary for the attainment of non-returning and arahantship, but not for the lower levels of Awakening. The third position states that the attainment of at least the first level of jhana is essential for all four levels of Awakening.

Evidence from the Canon supports the third position, but not the other two. As MN 117 points out, the attainment of stream-entry has eight factors, one of which is right concentration, defined as jhana. In fact, according to this particular discourse, jhana is the heart of the streamwinner's path. Second, there is no passage in the Canon describing the development of transcendent discernment without at least some skill in jhana. The statement that concentration is mastered only on the level of non-returning must be interpreted in the light of the distinction between mastery and attainment. A streamwinner may have attained jhana without mastering it; the discernment developed in the process of gaining full mastery over the practice of jhana will then lead him/her to the level of non-returning. As for the term "released through discernment," MN 70 shows that it denotes people who



have become arahants without experiencing the four formless jhanas. It does not indicate a person who has not experienced jhana.

Part of the controversy over this question may be explained by the fact that the commentarial literature defines jhana in terms that bear little resemblance to the canonical description. The Path of Purification — the cornerstone of the commentarial system — takes as its paradigm for meditation practice a method called kasina, in which one stares at an external object until the image of the object is imprinted in one's mind. The image then gives rise to a countersign that is said to indicate the attainment of threshold concentration, a necessary prelude to jhana. The text then tries to fit all other meditation methods into the mold of kasina practice, so that they too give rise to countersigns, but even by its own admission, breath meditation does not fit well into the mold: with other methods, the stronger one's focus, the more vivid the object and the closer it is to producing a sign and countersign; but with the breath, the stronger one's focus, the harder the object is to detect. As a result, the text states that only Buddhas and Buddhas' sons find the breath a congenial focal point for attaining jhana.

None of these assertions have any support in the Canon. Although a practice called kasina is mentioned tangentially in some of the discourses, the only point where it is described in any detail [MN 121] makes no mention of staring at an object or gaining a countersign. If breath meditation were congenial only to Buddhas and their sons, there seems little reason for the Buddha to have taught it so frequently and to such a wide variety of people. If the arising of a countersign were essential to the attainment of jhana, one would expect it to be included in the steps of breath meditation and in the graphic analogies used to describe jhana, but it isn't. Some Theravadins insist that questioning the commentaries is a sign of disrespect for the tradition, but it seems to be a sign of greater disrespect for the Buddha — or the compilers of the Canon — to assume that he or they would have left out something absolutely essential to the practice.

All of these points seem to indicate that what jhana means in the commentaries is something quite different from what it means in the Canon. Because of this difference we can say that the commentaries are right in viewing their type of jhana as unnecessary for Awakening, but Awakening cannot occur without the attainment of jhana in the canonical sense.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 19, 2011 5:16 am

Title: Re: The Heretic Sage- Interview with Bhante Ñāṇananda

Content:

Well, you're certainly entitled to your opinion. It's been a while since I read it, but I didn't get any sense that it was fictitious or contrary to Ven. Ñāṇananda's known writings. That said, I don't know anything about Ven. Yogānanda. According to Adeh's post above, this interview has been included in the published book *The Mind Stilled*. So if it's a ruse it's a pretty well thought out and elaborate one.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 20, 2011 9:22 am

Title: Re: Bodhi & nibbana: stream-entry or arhatship?

Content:

Nibbāna is a negation. It means extinguishment. With the fruition of each of the four paths one knows the termination of the fetters which are eliminated by that path. This termination is nibbāna appropriate to that path. The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

How is it that the discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa)?

Through the stream-entry path he terminates identity view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubt (vicikicchā), and mistaken adherence to rules and duty (sīlabbataparāmāsa).... This discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment....

He causes the cessation of identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty through the stream-entry path.

And so on for the fetters which are terminated on the remaining three paths. The once-returner path terminates the gross fetters of desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda) and aversion (vyāpāda/byāpāda). The non-returner path terminates the secondary fetters of desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda) and aversion (vyāpāda/byāpāda). The arahant path terminates the fetters of passion for form [existence] (rūparāga), passion for formless [existence] (arūparāga), conceit (māna), restlessness (uddhacca), and ignorance (avijjā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 21, 2011 11:15 am

Title: Re: Ven. Vimalaramsi on the Abhidhamma & the Visuddhi Magga

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda has primarily dealt with correcting mistaken notions regarding view. In The Mind Stilled: Nibbāna Sermon 01 he offers historical perspective on how this came about:

There is a popular belief that the commentaries are finally traceable to a miscellany of the Buddha word scattered here and there, as pakiṇṇakadesanā. But the true state of affairs seems to be rather different. Very often the commentaries are unable to say something conclusive regarding the meaning of deep suttas. So they simply give some possible interpretations and the reader finds himself at a loss to choose the correct one. Sometimes the commentaries go at a tangent and miss the correct interpretation. Why the commentaries are silent on some deep suttas is also a problem to modern day scholars. There are some historical reasons leading to this state of affairs in the commentaries.

In the Āṇisutta of the Nidānavagga in the Saṃyutta Nikāya we find the Buddha making certain prophetic utterances regarding the dangers that will befall the Sāsana in the future. It is said that in times to come, monks will lose interest in those deep suttas which deal with matters transcendental, that they would not listen to those suttas that have to do with the idea of emptiness, suññatā. They

would not think it even worthwhile learning or pondering over the meanings of those suttas.

There is also another historical reason that can be adduced. An idea got deeply rooted at a certain stage in the Sāsana history that what is contained in the Sutta Piṭaka is simply the conventional teaching and so it came to imply that there is nothing so deep in these suttas. This notion also had its share in the present lack of interest in these suttas. According to Manorathapūraṇī, the Aṅguttara commentary, already at an early stage in the Sāsana history of Sri Lanka, there had been a debate between those who upheld the precept and those who stood for realization. And it is said that those who upheld the precept won the day. The final conclusion was that, for the continuity of the Sāsana, precept itself is enough, not so much the realization.

Of course the efforts of the reciter monks of old for the preservation of the precept in the midst of droughts and famines and other calamitous situations are certainly praiseworthy. But the unfortunate thing about it was this: the basket of the Buddha word came to be passed on from hand to hand in the dark, so much so that there was the risk of some valuable things slipping out in the process.

Also there have been certain semantic developments in the commentarial period, and this will be obvious to anyone searching for the genuine Dhamma. It seems that there had been a tendency in the commentarial period to elaborate even on some lucid words in the suttas, simply as a commentarial requirement, and this led to the inclusion of many complicated ideas. By too much overdrawing in the commentaries, the deeper meanings of the Dhamma got obscured. These commentarial notions also had a significant impact on how meditation came to be defined and presented. Speaking on the very practical matter of how the Visuddhimagga jhānas bear no resemblance to how this essential component of practice is integrated into the sutta presentation of the noble eightfold path, Ven. Ṭhānissaro, in *Wings to Awakening Part III F: Concentration & Discernment* states:

The role of jhāna as a condition for transcendent discernment is one of the most controversial issues in the Theravada tradition. Three basic positions have been advanced in modern writings. One, following the commentarial tradition, asserts that jhāna is not necessary for any of the four levels of Awakening and that there is a class of individuals — called "dry insight" meditators — who are "released through discernment" based on a level of concentration lower than that of jhāna. A second position, citing a passage in the Canon [AN 3.88] stating that concentration is mastered only on the level of non-returning, holds that jhāna is necessary for the attainment of non-returning and arahantship, but not for the lower levels of Awakening. The third position states that the attainment of at least the first level of jhāna is essential for all four levels of Awakening.

Evidence from the Canon supports the third position, but not the other two. As MN 117 points out, the attainment of stream-entry has eight factors, one of which is right concentration, defined as jhāna. In fact, according to this particular discourse, jhāna is the heart of the streamwinner's path. Second, there is no passage in the Canon describing the development of transcendent discernment without at least some skill in jhāna. The statement that concentration is mastered only on the level of non-returning must be interpreted in the light of the distinction between mastery and attainment. A streamwinner may have attained jhāna without mastering it; the discernment developed in the process of gaining full mastery over the practice of jhāna will then lead him/her to the level of non-returning. As for the term "released through discernment," MN 70 shows that it denotes people who have become arahants without experiencing the four formless jhānas. It does not indicate a person who has not experienced jhāna.

Part of the controversy over this question may be explained by the fact that the commentarial literature defines jhāna in terms that bear little resemblance to the canonical description. The Path

of Purification — the cornerstone of the commentarial system — takes as its paradigm for meditation practice a method called *kasiṇa*, in which one stares at an external object until the image of the object is imprinted in one's mind. The image then gives rise to a countersign that is said to indicate the attainment of threshold concentration, a necessary prelude to *jhāna*. The text then tries to fit all other meditation methods into the mold of *kasiṇa* practice, so that they too give rise to countersigns, but even by its own admission, breath meditation does not fit well into the mold: with other methods, the stronger one's focus, the more vivid the object and the closer it is to producing a sign and countersign; but with the breath, the stronger one's focus, the harder the object is to detect. As a result, the text states that only Buddhas and Buddhas' sons find the breath a congenial focal point for attaining *jhāna*.

None of these assertions have any support in the Canon. Although a practice called *kasiṇa* is mentioned tangentially in some of the discourses, the only point where it is described in any detail [MN 121] makes no mention of staring at an object or gaining a countersign. If breath meditation were congenial only to Buddhas and their sons, there seems little reason for the Buddha to have taught it so frequently and to such a wide variety of people. If the arising of a countersign were essential to the attainment of *jhāna*, one would expect it to be included in the steps of breath meditation and in the graphic analogies used to describe *jhāna*, but it isn't. Some Theravādins insist that questioning the commentaries is a sign of disrespect for the tradition, but it seems to be a sign of greater disrespect for the Buddha — or the compilers of the Canon — to assume that he or they would have left out something absolutely essential to the practice.

All of these points seem to indicate that what *jhāna* means in the commentaries is something quite different from what it means in the Canon. Because of this difference we can say that the commentaries are right in viewing their type of *jhāna* as unnecessary for Awakening, but Awakening cannot occur without the attainment of *jhāna* in the canonical sense.

And in *One Tool Among Many: The Place of Vipassanā in Buddhist Practice*, he adds:

Almost any book on early Buddhist meditation will tell you that the Buddha taught two types of meditation: *samatha* and *vipassanā*. *Samatha*, which means tranquility, is said to be a method fostering strong states of mental absorption, called *jhāna*. *Vipassanā* — literally "clear-seeing," but more often translated as insight meditation — is said to be a method using a modicum of tranquility to foster moment-to-moment mindfulness of the inconstancy of events as they are directly experienced in the present. This mindfulness creates a sense of dispassion toward all events, thus leading the mind to release from suffering. These two methods are quite separate, we're told, and of the two, *vipassanā* is the distinctive Buddhist contribution to meditative science. Other systems of practice pre-dating the Buddha also taught *samatha*, but the Buddha was the first to discover and teach *vipassanā*. Although some Buddhist meditators may practice *samatha* meditation before turning to *vipassanā*, *samatha* practice is not really necessary for the pursuit of Awakening. As a meditative tool, the *vipassanā* method is sufficient for attaining the goal. Or so we're told.

But if you look directly at the Pāli discourses — the earliest extant sources for our knowledge of the Buddha's teachings — you'll find that although they do use the word *samatha* to mean tranquility, and *vipassanā* to mean clear-seeing, they otherwise confirm none of the received wisdom about these terms. Only rarely do they make use of the word *vipassanā* — a sharp contrast to their frequent use of the word *jhāna*. When they depict the Buddha telling his disciples to go meditate, they never quote him as saying "go do *vipassanā*," but always "go do *jhāna*." And they never equate the word *vipassanā* with any mindfulness techniques. In the few instances where they do mention *vipassanā*, they almost always pair it with *samatha* — not as two alternative methods, but as two qualities of mind that a person may "gain" or "be endowed with," and that should be developed together.

Ven. Gunaratana, in his paper Should We Come Out of Jhāna to Practice Vipassanā? agrees: Can jhānic concentration penetrate things as they really are? Do we have to come out of jhāna in order to practice vipassanā? Is concentration the same as absorption? If jhānic concentration is the same as being absorbed by our object of focus then yes, we must leave jhāna to practice vipassanā. But, when we become absorbed into our object of focus, what we are practicing is "wrong" jhāna. When we practice "right" jhāna we will be able to see things as they really are.

When we read how the Buddha used his own fourth jhānic concentration, as described in many suttas, we have no reason to believe that he came out of jhāna to develop the three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of seeing the past, knowledge of seeing beings dying and taking rebirth, and knowledge of the destruction of defilements. The Buddha used the fourth jhāna for vipassanā.

Using the English word "absorption" to denote the deep concentration in the jhāna is very misleading. There are many mental factors in any jhāna and the meditator is quite aware of them. When you are aware of these mental factors you are not absorbed into them, but conscious of them or mindful of them. If you are absorbed in the subject you will not understand, nor remember anything.

And in his Path, Fruit and Nibbāna, Ven. Kheminda also agrees that according to the Pāli canon jhāna is an essential component of the path:

[W]ith the first meditation (paṭhamajjhāna) he [i.e. the Bodhisatta] was able to replace the hindrances with the meditation factors. Here it is well to note that the Bodhisatta put away the five hindrances by developing the first meditation, and not by any other means. Shortly after his enlightenment the Buddha came to the conclusion under the Goatherd's Banyan that the sole way to the purification of beings is the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness. And the four foundations of mindfulness begin with a serenity (samatha) subject of meditation, namely, mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing (ānāpānasati)....

Meditation (jhāna) is therefore essential to the journey from here to the other shore. It is not to be treated lightly with sweeping statements like "It is found in outside (bahira) teachings, too, and so is not important." We have seen how the Bodhisatta rejected the meditation taught by his former teachers who were outsiders (bahiraka), and the not-breathing meditation which, too, is an outside teaching, to follow the first meditation (jhāna) which finally led him to supreme enlightenment.

There is also analysis of some the commentarial developments which culminated in the Visuddhimagga treatment of jhāna in The Mystery of the Breath Nimitta by Ven. Soṇa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 21, 2011 10:32 pm

Title: Re: concentration on the signless

Content:

The Pāli is animitto samādhi. There are three samādhis mentioned in the Saṅgīti Sutta and a few other suttas: emptiness samādhi (suññatā samādhi), signless samādhi (animittā samādhi), and undirected samādhi (appaṇihitā samādhi). The status and place of these samādhis isn't clearly

spelled out in the suttas, but it's clear that they are fruitional meditations and not to be equated with any of the four formless attainments or the attainment of the cessation of apperception and feeling.

In addition to the suttas already posted, MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta describes the signless liberation of mind (animittā cetovimutti) as follows:

What is the signless liberation of mind? There is the case where a monk, through not attending to all signs, enters and remains in the signless concentration of mind. Friend, this is said to be the signless liberation of mind.

MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta describes the emptiness liberation of mind (suññatā cetovimutti) as follows:

What is the emptiness liberation of mind? Here a monk goes to the forest, to the root of a tree, or to an empty place and reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' Friend, this is said to be the emptiness liberation of mind.

The development of undirected samādhi (appaṇihitā samādhi) is described in SN 47.10 Bhikkhunūpassaya Sutta:

And how, Ānanda, is there development without direction (appaṇidhāya bhāvanā)?

Not directing his mind outwardly, a monk understands: 'My mind is not directed outwardly.' Then he understands: 'It is unconstricted after and before, liberated, undirected.' Then he further understands: 'I dwell contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, mindful; I am [experiencing] pleasure.'

Not directing his mind outwardly, a monk understands: 'My mind is not directed outwardly.' Then he understands: 'It is unconstricted after and before, liberated, undirected.' Then he further understands: 'I dwell contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, fully aware, mindful; I am [experiencing] pleasure.'

Not directing his mind outwardly, a monk understands: 'My mind is not directed outwardly.' Then he understands: 'It is unconstricted after and before, liberated, undirected.' Then he further understands: 'I dwell contemplating mind in mind, ardent, fully aware, mindful; I am [experiencing] pleasure.'

Not directing his mind outwardly, a monk understands: 'My mind is not directed outwardly.' Then he understands: 'It is unconstricted after and before, liberated, undirected.' Then he further understands: 'I dwell contemplating phenomena in phenomena, ardent, fully aware, mindful; I am [experiencing] pleasure.'

It is in this way, Ānanda, that there is development without direction.

In the Abhidhammapiṭaka Dhammasaṅgaṇī these three samādhis are equated with supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna). Also, in the Paṭisambhidāmagga these supramundane jhānas are designated in terms of three contemplations (suññatānupassanā, animittānupassanā, appaṇihitānupassanā), three abidings (suññatā vihāra, animittā vihāra, appaṇihitā vihāra), and three deliverances (suññatā vimokkha, animittā vimokkha, appaṇihitā vimokkha). It's said that the contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā) results in the signless deliverance, the contemplation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhānupassanā) results in the undirected deliverance, and the contemplation of selflessness (anattānupassanā) results in the emptiness deliverance. For example:

When he gives attention as impermanent his mind emerges from the sign; his mind enters into the signless.... Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness of form... feeling... recognition... fabrications...

consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 21, 2011 11:11 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

You've yet to provide any canonical support for this "complete cessation" notion of yours. Yet you seem insistent on repeating it ad nauseam....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 22, 2011 8:22 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Not sure if you're responding to claims that something remains after an arahant's death, i.e. nibbāna element with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu), or if you're suggesting that the noble paths and fruitions are non-cognitive "complete cessations" as Mattheesha states. Regarding the latter, Ven. Ñāṇananda, Nibbāna Sermons:

The worldling discerns the world around him with the help of six narrow beams of light, namely the six sense-bases. When the superior lustre of wisdom arises, those six sense-bases go down. This cessation of the six sense bases could also be referred to as the cessation of name-and-form, nāmarūpanirodha, or the cessation of consciousness, viññāṇanirodha.

The cessation of the six sense-bases does not mean that one does not see anything. What one sees then is voidness. It is an in-'sight'. He gives expression to it with the words suñño loko, "void is the world."

In Concept and Reality Ven. Ñāṇananda equates the experience of non-indicative/non-manifestative consciousness (anidassana viññāṇa) with the fruition-gnosis samādhi (aññāphala samādhi) of an arahant. AN 9.37 describes this samādhi as follows:

Sister, the concentration whereby -- neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed -- still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of gnosis.

On page 61 of Concept and Reality he discusses this samādhi:

The unique feature of this samādhi is its very fluxional character. In it there is no such fixity as to justify a statement that it 'depends on' (nissāya) some object (ārammaṇa) as its support -- hence the frustration of gods and men who seek out the basis of the Tathāgata's consciousness. Normally, the jhānas are characterized by an element of fixity on which consciousness finds a footing or a steadying

point. It is on this very fixity that the illusion of the ego thrives. In the above jhāna of the emancipated one, however, the ego has melted away in the fire of wisdom which sees the cosmic process of arising and cessation. Not only has the concept "I" (papañca par excellence) undergone combustion, but it has also ignited the data of sensory experience in their entirety. Thus in this jhāna of the Arahant, the world of concepts melts away in the intuitional bonfire of universal impermanence.

And on p. 67:

With his penetrative insight the Arahant sees through the concepts. Now, an object of perception (ārammaṇa) for the worldling is essentially something that is brought into focus -- something he is looking at. For the Arahant, however, all concepts have become transparent to such a degree in that all-encompassing vision, that their boundaries together with their umbra and penumbra have yielded to the radiance of wisdom. This, then, is the significance of the word 'anantaṃ' (endless, infinite). Thus the paradoxically detached gaze of the contemplative sage as he looks through concepts is one which has no object (ārammaṇa) as the point of focus for the worldling to identify it with.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 22, 2011 12:14 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

When all acquisitions have been released (i.e. sabbūpadhipaṭinissagga) there is no need to designate "contact." Udāna 2.4 (Ud 12):

Contacts make contact

Dependent on acquisition.

Where there is no acquisition,

What would contacts contact?

Explained with slightly different translation of terms in Ven. Ñāṇananda's Nibbāna Sermons:

In order to transcend the narrow point of view limited to the bases of sense contact or the six sense spheres and realize the state of Nibbāna indicated by the words viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ, anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ, "consciousness which is non-manifestative, endless, lustrous on all sides", one has to see the cessation of contact.

In a certain discourse in the Mucalindavagga of the Udāna, the Buddha has declared in a verse of uplift that the cessation of contact comes about only by doing away with that which brings about contact. The wandering ascetics of other sects grew jealous of the Buddha and his congregation of monks, because of their own loss of gain and honour, and began to hurl abuse on monks in the village and in the forest. A group of monks came and reported this to the Buddha. The Buddha's response to it was only a paean of joy. Udāna actually means a spontaneous utterance of joy, and the verse he uttered was such a one. But it embodied an instruction on Dhamma and a norm of Dhamma as well.

Gāme araññe sukhadukkhaphuṭṭho,  
nev'attato no parato dahetha,



phusanti phassā upadhiṃ paṭicca,  
Nirūpadhiṃ kena phuseyyum phassā.

In the first two lines we get an instruction:

"Touched by pain in village or in forest,  
Think not in terms of oneself or others."

The reason for it is given in the norm of Dhamma which follows:

"Touches can touch one, because of assets,  
How can touches touch him, who is asset-less?"

This is all what the Buddha uttered. From this we can glean another aspect of the significance of the terms sabbūpadhipaṭinissagga, relinquishment of all assets, and nirupadhi, the asset-less, used with reference to Nibbāna.

Also, Ven. Ñāṇavīra's Notes on Dhamma:

Phassa, 'contact', is defined as the coming together of the eye, forms, and eye-consciousness... But it is probably wrong to suppose that we must therefore understand the word phassa, primarily at least, as contact between these three things. So long as there is avijjā, all things (dhammā) are... inherently in subjection, they are appropriated, they are mine. This is the foundation of the notion that I am and that things are in contact with me. This contact between me and things is phassa. The ditthisampanna sees the deception, but the puthujjana accepts it at its face value and elaborates it into a relationship between himself and the world... But though the ditthisampanna is not deceived, yet until he becomes arahat the aroma of subjectivity hangs about all his experience.

All normal experience is dual: there are present (i) one's conscious six-based body (saviññānaka salāyatanika kāya), and (ii) other phenomena (namely, whatever is not one's body); and reflexion will show that, though both are objective in the experience, the aroma of subjectivity that attaches to the experience will naturally tend to be attributed to the body. In this way, phassa comes to be seen as contact between the conscious eye and forms—but mark that this is because contact is primarily between subject and object, and not between eye, forms, and eye-consciousness. This approach makes it possible to see in what sense, with the entire cessation of all illusion of 'I' and 'mine', there is phassanirodha in the arahat (where, though there are still, so long as he continues to live, both the conscious body and the other phenomena, there is no longer any appropriation).

But when (as commonly) phassa is interpreted as 'contact between sense-organ and sense-object, resulting in consciousness'—and its translation as '(sense-)impression' implies this interpretation—then we are at once cut off from all possibility of understanding phassanirodha in the arahat; for the question whether or not the eye is the subject is not even raised—we are concerned only with the eye as a sense-organ, and it is a sense-organ in puthujjana and arahat alike. Understanding of phassa now consists in accounting for consciousness starting from physiological (or neurological) descriptions of the sense-organs and their functioning. Consciousness, however, is not physiologically observable, and the entire project rests upon unjustifiable assumptions from the start. This epistemological interpretation of phassa misconceives the Dhamma as a kind of natural-science-cum-psychology that provides an explanation of things in terms of cause-and-effect.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 22, 2011 10:03 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Yes. In canonical abhidhamma terms, when one who has entered the stream is abiding in supramundane jhāna they discern the signlessness of phenomena which is equivalent to the reverse sequence of paṭiccasamuppāda. The penetration of paṭiccasamuppāda in both forward sequence (anuloma) and reverse sequence (paṭiloma) eliminates adherence to any mistaken views of existence and non-existence. When one who's entered the stream has developed supramundane jhāna sufficiently they realize the fruition of stream-entry (sotāpattiphala) which is the complete termination of the first three fetters (saṃyojanā).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 22, 2011 11:25 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

When we are talking about the noble paths and fruitions we employ designations, but these are merely designations (paññattimatta). Whether the cognitions of the paths and fruitions attend to signs (i.e. when engaged in the supramundane applications of mindfulness) or discern the signlessness of phenomena (supramundane jhāna), those path and fruition cognitions are measureless (appamāṇa) and have measureless object-supports (appamāṇārammaṇa) and are non-indicative (anidassana), cf. Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga. Thus, they are all unincluded (apariyāpanna). And so, although we can employ designations such as "contact," etc., these designations are not ultimately established (paramatthasiddhi). They are merely designations (paññattimatta) employed for the purpose of explaining the path leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness. The raft is for crossing over, not for constructing philosophical systems.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 12:34 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

It's a translation of lokuttara, which is defined in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Treatise on the Supramundane as follows:

What dhammas are supramundane?

The four applications of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four pathways of achievement,

the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors of awakening, the eightfold path, and the four noble paths, the four ascetic fruitions, and nibbāna.

In what sense are they supramundane?

They cross from the world, thus they are supramundane. They cross over from the world, thus they are supramundane.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 12:55 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Conditioned arising in its forward sequence is always a description of deluded cognition. When rooted in ignorance and craving, any experience automatically includes all of the first eleven links. That is, for the worldling there is always ignorance, contact, craving, grasping, becoming, and birth, which is the birth of a "being" (satta).

This sets up identity and alienation -- i.e. the struggle for ego survival -- of "my being" in "the world." Whenever there is "a being" in "the world" there is going to arise circumstances of "my being" vs. "the world."

When the forward and reverse sequences of conditioned arising are penetrated the entire deluded cognitive and conflicted affective edifice of the forward sequence of dependent arising immediately collapses like a house of cards. This is why the mind of a learner engaged in practice is designated as measureless (appamāṇa). But this does not mean that there is a non-cognitive blackout. Non-cognitive absorptions are never considered supramundane. Ven. Ñāṇananda, Nibbāna Sermons: The cessation of the six sense-bases does not mean that one does not see anything. What one sees then is voidness. It is an in-'sight'. He gives expression to it with the words *suñño loko*, "void is the world."

In Concept and Reality Ven. Ñāṇananda equates the experience of non-indicative/non-manifestative consciousness (anidassana viññāṇa) with the fruition-gnosis samādhi (aññāphala samādhi) of an arahant. AN 9.37 describes this samādhi as follows:

Sister, the concentration whereby -- neither pressed down nor forced back, nor with fabrication kept blocked or suppressed -- still as a result of release, contented as a result of standing still, and as a result of contentment one is not agitated: This concentration is said by the Blessed One to be the fruit of gnosis.

On page 61 of Concept and Reality he discusses this samādhi:

The unique feature of this samādhi is its very fluxional character. In it there is no such fixity as to justify a statement that it 'depends on' (nissāya) some object (ārammaṇa) as its support -- hence the frustration of gods and men who seek out the basis of the Tathāgata's consciousness. Normally, the jhānas are characterized by an element of fixity on which consciousness finds a footing or a steadying point. It is on this very fixity that the illusion of the ego thrives. In the above jhāna of the

emancipated one, however, the ego has melted away in the fire of wisdom which sees the cosmic process of arising and cessation. Not only has the concept "I" (papañca par excellence) undergone combustion, but it has also ignited the data of sensory experience in their entirety. Thus in this jhāna of the Arahant, the world of concepts melts away in the intuitional bonfire of universal impermanence.

And on p. 67:

With his penetrative insight the Arahant sees through the concepts. Now, an object of perception (ārammaṇa) for the worldling is essentially something that is brought into focus -- something he is looking at. For the Arahant, however, all concepts have become transparent to such a degree in that all-encompassing vision, that their boundaries together with their umbra and penumbra have yielded to the radiance of wisdom. This, then, is the significance of the word 'anantaṃ' (endless, infinite). Thus the paradoxically detached gaze of the contemplative sage as he looks through concepts is one which has no object (ārammaṇa) as the point of focus for the worldling to identify it with.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 3:48 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Precisely.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 4:20 pm

Title: Re: Over confidence in our understanding of Suttas

Content:

The suttas prescribe the means to be employed, and describe the stages of the path to be developed. But we have to take up the practice injunctions and follow them with persistence and commitment before they will bear any fruit. And here teachers are helpful. Nevertheless, the onus is on each of us to compare what teachers say with what is presented in the canon, in order to check the veracity of these sayings and interpretations with the dhamma and vinaya. DN 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: And there the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Now, bhikkhus, I shall make known to you the four great references. Listen and pay heed to my words." And those bhikkhus answered, saying:

"So be it, Lord."

Then the Blessed One said: "In this fashion, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu might speak: 'Face to face with the Blessed One, brethren, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the

Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In an abode of such and such a name lives a community with elders and a chief. Face to face with that community, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In an abode of such and such a name live several bhikkhus who are elders, who are learned, who have accomplished their course, who are preservers of the Dhamma, the Discipline, and the Summaries. Face to face with those elders, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation'; or: 'In an abode of such and such a name lives a single bhikkhu who is an elder, who is learned, who has accomplished his course, who is a preserver of the Dhamma, the Discipline, and the Summaries. Face to face with that elder, I have heard and learned thus: This is the Dhamma and the Discipline, the Master's Dispensation.'

"In such a case, bhikkhus, the declaration of such a bhikkhu is neither to be received with approval nor with scorn. Without approval and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses and verify them by the Discipline. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Discipline, one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is not the Blessed One's utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' In that way, bhikkhus, you should reject it. But if the sentences concerned are traceable in the Discourses and verifiable by the Discipline, then one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is the Blessed One's utterance; this has been well understood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' And in that way, bhikkhus, you may accept it on the first, second, third, or fourth reference. These, bhikkhus, are the four great references for you to preserve."

Thus, we are each responsible for continually developing our understanding and our practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 5:07 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Dhammas "are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 9:33 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

As Kenshou indicated, your entire premise of the noble paths and fruitions is based on commentaries written in the 20th century. If they are actually saying what you are suggesting then they are not accurately presenting the stages of insight-gnosis as presented in the Suttapiṭaka,

Abhidhammapiṭaka, and Paṭisambhidāmagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 9:47 pm

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 10:14 pm

Title: Re: Over confidence in our understanding of Suttas

Content:

There are three levels of discernment: discernment obtained through listening (sutamayā paññā), discernment obtained through reflection (cintāmayā paññā), and discernment obtained through meditative development (bhāvanāmayā paññā). All three need to be engaged and refined. SN 20.7 Āṇi Sutta:

Thus should you train yourselves: "When those discourses uttered by the Tathāgata that are profound, deep in meaning, supramundane, connected with emptiness, are being recited, we will be eager to listen to them, will lend an ear, will set our minds to understand them; we will regard those teachings as worth studying and mastering."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 10:20 pm

Title: Re: Not thinking vs Thinking

Content:

Good instructions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Feb 23, 2011 10:29 pm  
Title: Re: Over confidence in our understanding of Suttas  
Content:  
These are valuable teachers too.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Feb 24, 2011 4:24 am  
Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?  
Content:  
Why do you have a problem with the distinction between worldly and supramundane jhāna? It in no way entails the consequence of the "3 mind-moment path."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Feb 24, 2011 12:18 pm  
Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?  
Content:  
What is a degeneration of the dispensation is mistaking momentary experiences for adequate indications of stream-entry. The only adequate and reliable indication of the fruition of stream-entry is the complete termination of the first three fetters.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Feb 24, 2011 12:23 pm  
Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?  
Content:  
Yes, well this misunderstanding isn't limited to contemporary English readers. But this is the fault of inadequate view, not the terminology used.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 25, 2011 11:56 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

No it doesn't. Moreover, the Paṭisambhidāmagga is part of the Suttapiṭaka, and as already mentioned, it is the canonical source for the insight-gnoses. The Paṭisambhidāmagga includes in the stages of insight-gnosis the stage of contemplating the signlessness of the mind and mental factors.

This is the supramundane jhāna of stream-entry:

Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness (animittānupassanāññā) of feeling... recognition... fabrications... consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

And:

What is the ultimate meaning of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware?... Through the contemplation of signlessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of signs.

It's essential to develop this vipassanā directly seeing the signlessness of all phenomena because the fetters occur in relation to phenomena. And the cessation of unsatisfactoriness also has to occur in relation to phenomena. This is the only way that liberation is possible. DN 22 Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta:

And what is the noble truth of the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

And where, when being abandoned, is this craving abandoned? And where, when ceasing, does it cease? Whatever is endearing & alluring in terms of the world: that is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

And what is endearing & alluring in terms of the world? The eye is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

The ear... The nose... The tongue... The body... The intellect...

Forms... Sounds... Smells... Tastes... Tactile sensations... Ideas...

Eye-consciousness... Ear-consciousness... Nose-consciousness... Tongue-consciousness... Body-consciousness... Intellect-consciousness...

Eye-contact... Ear-contact... Nose-contact... Tongue-contact... Body-contact... Intellect-contact...

Feeling born of eye-contact... Feeling born of ear-contact... Feeling born of nose-contact... Feeling born of tongue-contact... Feeling born of body-contact... Feeling born of intellect-contact...

Perception of forms... Perception of sounds... Perception of smells... Perception of tastes... Perception of tactile sensations... Perception of ideas...

Intention for forms... Intention for sounds... Intention for smells... Intention for tastes... Intention for tactile sensations... Intention for ideas...



Craving for forms... Craving for sounds... Craving for smells... Craving for tastes... Craving for tactile sensations... Craving for ideas...

Thought directed at forms... Thought directed at sounds... Thought directed at smells... Thought directed at tastes... Thought directed at tactile sensations... Thought directed at ideas...

Evaluation of forms... Evaluation of sounds... Evaluation of smells... Evaluation of tastes... Evaluation of tactile sensations... Evaluation of ideas is endearing & alluring in terms of the world. That is where, when being abandoned, this craving is abandoned. That is where, when ceasing, it ceases.

This is called the noble truth of the cessation of stress.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 25, 2011 12:50 pm

Title: Re: Over confidence in our understanding of Suttas

Content:

Of course this can be a problem. Following the gradual training will eliminate this problem if one is sufficiently committed to the practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 26, 2011 10:45 pm

Title: Re: concentration on the signless

Content:

The Visuddhimagga uses the Paṭisambhidāmagga terminology. In the Paṭisambhidāmagga the triad is referred to as three contemplations (suññatānupassanā, animittānupassanā, appaṇihitānupassanā), three abidings (suññatā vihāra, animittā vihāra, appaṇihitā vihāra), and three deliverances (suññatā vimokkha, animittā vimokkha, appaṇihitā vimokkha). It's said that the contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā) results in the signless deliverance, the contemplation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhānupassanā) results in the undirected deliverance, and the contemplation of selflessness (anattānupassanā) results in the emptiness deliverance.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 26, 2011 11:25 pm

Title: Re: Over confidence in our understanding of Suttas

Content:

Indeed. Practice is essential. Personally, I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to devote all of my time and energy to practice (with a modicum of study included).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 27, 2011 2:58 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

You're drawing a fallacious consequence. At any rate, if you are not willing to discuss the subject of vipassanāñāṇa-s in ābhidhammika terms then there is no point in discussing the subject any further.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 28, 2011 9:35 pm

Title: Re: Open invitation: Help us improve your DW experience!

Content:

IMO Dhamma Wheel is healthy and functioning well. The moderators are doing an outstanding job with an appropriately light touch. That said, I don't spend much time reading threads or posts which I consider to be trivial and/or frivolous.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 28, 2011 9:44 pm

Title: Re: Do you really find the Dhamma inspiring?

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 2:35 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Sorry, but your entire premise is lacking both well reasoned consideration and canonical support. The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

How is it that the discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa)?

Through the stream-entry path he terminates identity view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubt (vicikicchā), and mistaken adherence to rules and duty (sīlabbataparāmāsa).... This discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment....

He causes the cessation of identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty through the stream-entry path.

And so on for the fetters which are terminated on the remaining three paths. These gnoses of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa-s) are also called gnoses of the bliss of liberation (vimuttisukha ñāṇa-s). The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

With the stream-entry path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (1) identity view,
- (2) doubt,
- (3) mistaken adherence to rules and duty,
- (4) the underlying tendency of view,
- (5) the underlying tendency of doubt.

With the once-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (6) the gross fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (7) the gross fetter of aversion,
- (8) the gross underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (9) the gross underlying tendency of aversion.

With the non-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (10) the secondary fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (11) the secondary fetter of aversion,
- (12) the secondary underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (13) the secondary underlying tendency of aversion.

With the arahant path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (14) passion for form [existence],
- (15) passion for formless [existence],
- (16) conceit,
- (17) restlessness,

- (18) ignorance,
- (19) the underlying tendency of conceit,
- (20) the underlying tendency of passion for existence,
- (21) the underlying tendency of ignorance.

And none of these extinguishments require the attainment of cessation of apperception and feeling.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 11:16 am

Title: Re: Open invitation: Help us improve your DW experience!

Content:

Tilt has a life?...

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 12:41 pm

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

As for anidassana, in this context I'm liking the translation as "non-illustrative" or "non-indicative." "Non-illustrative" in the sense of the term as used in MN 21 Kakacūpama Sutta: ākāso arūpī anidassano, the sky is formless and non-illustrative. "Non-indicative" in the sense of the term as used in the Abhidhammapiṭaka, where the applications of mindfulness. etc., are said to be anidassana. The sense here being that they are not indicative of defilements, and so on.

Also cf. Ven. Ñāṇananda, Nibbāna Sermon 07:

Now viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ is a reference to the nature of the released consciousness of an arahant. It does not reflect anything. To be more precise, it does not reflect a nāma-rūpa, or name-and-form. An ordinary individual sees a nāma-rūpa, when he reflects, which he calls 'I' and 'mine'. It is like the reflection of that dog, which sees its own delusive reflection in the water. A non-arahant, upon reflection, sees name-and-form, which however he mistakes to be his self. With the notion of 'I' and 'mine' he falls into delusion with regard to it. But the arahant's consciousness is an unestablished consciousness.

We have already mentioned in previous sermons about the established consciousness and the unestablished consciousness. A non-arahant's consciousness is established on name-and-form. The unestablished consciousness is that which is free from name-and-form and is unestablished on name-and-form. The established consciousness, upon reflection, reflects name-and-form, on which it is established, whereas the unestablished consciousness does not find a name-and-form as a reality. The arahant has no attachments or entanglements in regard to name-and-form. In short, it is a sort of penetration of name-and-form, without getting entangled in it. This is how we have to unravel the meaning of the expression anidassana viññāṇa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 4:08 pm

Title: Re: Open invitation: Help us improve your DW experience!

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 4:28 pm

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

There are plenty of other suttas which, if properly considered, safeguard against such notions.

Ven. Ṭhānissaro's latent fire theory really cannot be sustained. The fire metaphor most commonly refers to the three fires of passion, aggression, and delusion. If the Indian Buddhist understanding of fire was really that an extinguished fire goes into a "latent state," then these three fires could re-combust within an arahant's mind as long as there is fuel remaining (i.e. saupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna element with fuel remaining). Of course, this would render nibbāna quite meaningless.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 4:36 pm

Title: Re: Open invitation: Help us improve your DW experience!

Content:

Merely a bit of jocular frivolity. But point taken.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 5:03 pm

Title: Re: Does illegal downloading violate the 2nd precept?

Content:

Yes, illegal downloading is both illegal and a break of the second precept.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 8:43 pm

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

This is translated from a transcription of a tape recording by Ajahn Dune, which has been identified as him reading a translation of Chinese Chan patriarch Huangbo Xiyun's Chung-ling Record.

Huangbo's teachings were translated into Thai by Ajahn Buddhadasa, not directly from the Chinese but from the English translation of John Blofeld.

As for the view expressed there, I'd suggest that it's far more skillful to follow the advise of the Buddha as recorded in the Pāḷi Canon. This will safeguard against engaging in pointless mental proliferation (papañca). Suttanipāṭa 5.6:

[Upasiva:] He who has reached the end: Does he not exist, or is he for eternity free from dis-ease? Please, sage, declare this to me as this phenomenon has been known by you.

[The Buddha:] One who has reached the end has no criterion by which anyone would say that — for him it doesn't exist. When all phenomena are done away with, all means of speaking are done away with as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 9:02 pm

Title: Re: paññā vs ñāṇa is there a difference?

Content:

The way ñāṇa is used in a Buddhist context, it is usually considered as the knowledge/gnosis which arises as a result of paññā. Thus, it is fruitional. There are three levels of discernment (paññā): discernment obtained through hearing (sutamayā paññā), discernment obtained through reflection (cintāmayā paññā), and discernment obtained through meditative development (bhāvanāmayā paññā). There are many types of ñāṇa mentioned in the suttas and canonical ābhidhammika treatises. These knowledges are obtained through the engagement and refinement of the three types of paññā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 9:46 pm

Title: Re: paññā vs ñāṇa is there a difference?

Content:

It all depends upon the context, but usually ñāṇa is considered the insight knowledge which results

from practice, i.e. which results from discernment obtained through meditative development (bhāvanāmayā paññā). These types of ñāṇa include the gnosis and vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañāṇadassana), the gnosis of nibbāna (nibbānañāṇa), gnosis of elimination [of the āsava-s] (khaṇeñāṇa), and so on.

There are a number of related terms derived from the verb root - vñā (to know):

saññā: recognition, apperception, perception, cognition

viññāṇa: consciousness, cognition

paññā: discernment

ñāṇa: gnosis, knowledge

abhiññā: higher gnosis; six types of higher gnosis (chalabhiññā)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 01, 2011 10:15 pm

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

What I'm suggesting is that such terminology is also contingent and provisional. It would be an error to try to construct a metaphysical headtrip out of such terms. Ajahn Chah:

Question: Is this mind you are talking about called the 'Original Mind'?

Ajahn Chah's Answer: What do you mean?

Question: It seems as if you are saying there is something else outside of the conventional body-mind (the five khandhas). Is there something else? What do you call it?

Answer: There isn't anything and we don't call it anything – that's all there is to it! Be finished with all of it. Even the knowing doesn't belong to anybody, so be finished with that, too! Consciousness is not an individual, not a being, not a self, not an other, so finish with that – finish with everything! There is nothing worth wanting! It's all just a load of trouble. When you see clearly like this then everything is finished.

Question: Could we not call it the 'Original Mind'?

Answer: You can call it that if you insist. You can call it whatever you like, for the sake of conventional reality. But you must understand this point properly. This is very important. If we didn't make use of conventional reality we wouldn't have any words or concepts with which to consider actual reality – Dhamma. This is very important to understand.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 12:25 am

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

What is being referred to is the lucidity, clarity, and suppleness of mind. When one meditates a lot the mind can become incredibly lucid and clear. This vivid presence of mind can be mistaken for an unchanging quality. But the mind must necessarily change along with its perceptions. If the mind didn't change along with its perceptions then either:

(a) the mind would forever be frozen exclusively perceiving one unchanging object, or

(b) the mind would continuously perceive every single object cognized.

If we take visual consciousness for example: If you turn your head from right to left (with eyes open), your entire visual field changes as your head moves. When your head is to the left you are no longer cognizant of what was cognized in the beginning position to the right. Therefore, both (a) and (b) above are refuted, and we can correctly discern that visual consciousness changes along with its perceptions. And what is true for visual consciousness is also true for the other five consciousnesses. There can be no unchanging, permanent consciousness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 1:42 am

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

Consciousness is impermanent. Therefore, any qualities of consciousness are also impermanent.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 1:53 am

Title: Re: SN 35.23 Sabba Sutta: The All

Content:

I suspect that there may be a fair bit that we can agree on.

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 3:04 pm

Title: Re: A Heretical Thought.

Content:

The term is pajahatha: "Whatever is not yours abandon/let go of it.

Some other related terms:

vossagga: letting go

pahāna: abandoning

paṭinissagga: release, relinquishment

paṭinissaggānupassanā: contemplation of release/relinquishment

atammayatā: nonfashioning

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 3:27 pm

Title: Re: A Heretical Thought.

Content:

Well, the general sense what these expressions are getting at is to let go of and abandon what has already been appropriated, which is the five clinging aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā). In the context of the four noble truths -- which is the meta-structure of the entire dhamma -- the five clinging aggregates are the truth of unsatisfactoriness. The truth of unsatisfactoriness is to be fully understood (dukkha pariññeyya). Craving, which is the origin of unsatisfactoriness, is to be abandoned (dukkhasamudaya pahātabba). The cessation of craving, which is the cessation of unsatisfactoriness, is to be realized (dukkhanirodha sacchikātabba). And the path, which is the way leading to the cessation of unsatisfactoriness, is to be developed (dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā bhāvetabba).

And as you know, it is to this end that all aspects of ethical conduct, meditation, and discernment, are directed. And so, while someone may at times need to actively reject the occurrence of conflicted mental qualities or the impulsive urge to engage in unskillful actions, this is not really the more "advanced" meaning of letting go. The more advanced or mature development would be of not picking up in the first place, as you suggest. (Sometimes easier said than done!)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 02, 2011 4:12 pm

Title: Re: A Heretical Thought.

Content:

I would add that just suppressing unwanted urges or conflicting emotions (kilesa-s) is not a very effective tool in the long term (I think this may be what you are implying in this thread?). Whatever is being suppressed has a tendency to leak out in other ways -- sometimes quite unexpected ways. Therefore, at some point we have to acknowledge and begin working directly with those undesirable aspects of ourselves. Working directly with the underlying factors which fuel our habitual thoughts and actions. This takes a lot of commitment and dedication to the process of actually walking the path in a realistic way. In short, we have to be very honest with ourselves if we want to be authentic. This is where a teacher can be an invaluable aid. The simple fact of the matter is that we are not always in the best position to be able to recognize and acknowledge the sources of our own difficulties. We're often too close and too involved in the habitual patterns to be able to see our own biases operating. But with the help of a skillful teacher, and plenty of time on the cushion, we can learn to see how our mind works with a more panoramic perspective.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 03, 2011 12:29 am

Title: Re: What fabrications to still? What acquisitions to relinquish?

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda is specifically referring to saṅkhāras connected to the influxes/outflows (āsavas). This is in keeping with the canonical texts. Moreover, his teacher, Ven. Ñāṇārāma, states that the supramundane path-consciousness of stream-entry is supramundane jhāna which includes the presence of the jhāna factors. In his Seven Stages of Purification & the Insight Knowledges he states:

At whatever moment he attains the supramundane path, that path-consciousness comes to be reckoned as a jhāna in itself, since it has some affinity with the factors proper to jhānas, such as the first jhāna. What are known as transcendental meditations in Buddhism are these supramundane levels of concentration within the reach of the pure insight meditator.

This is in keeping with the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, where the supramundane jhāna which occurs at the moment of stream-entry includes the jhāna factors and the five faculties and various other saṅkhāras necessary for the presence of right view and the other components of the noble path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 03, 2011 1:16 am

Title: Re: Why is there so much disagreement?

Content:

I would venture to guess that commonalities and agreements are generally far more prevalent than disagreements. If I replied with affirmation to every post that I agreed with, I'd be very busy. As already indicated by some of the above replies, the perception of disharmony may arise because points of disagreement often generate more energetic discussions and more diverse responses.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 03, 2011 8:00 pm

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

Ven. Brahmavamso's explicit contradiction (and tacit rejection) of the doctrines contained in the Canonical Theravāda Abhidhammapiṭaka and major parts of the Canonical Theravāda Khuddakanikāya, and Ven. Sujato's explicit rejection of the same doctrines, leaves very little "Theravāda" in what they are presenting. The doctrines contained in the Theravāda Abhidhammapiṭaka and Theravāda Khuddakanikāya texts such as the Paṭisambhidāmagga are what constitute the Theravāda as a unique doctrinal school (vāda). These treatises are all specific to the Theravāda. They have no parallel counterparts even amongst the other Sthaviravāda schools such as the Sarvāstivāda. Therefore, whatever it is that Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato, et al, are teaching, it cannot be called Theravāda. To call it Theravāda renders the designation quite meaningless.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 03, 2011 10:10 pm

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

Well, the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka is the Theravāda Canon. And it's the Theravāda Canon for a reason. The treatises of the Khuddakanikāya and the Abhidhammapiṭaka present the parameters of the Theravāda as a unique doctrinal school (vāda). These are the "baseline" doctrines which distinguish the Theravāda from the other Sthaviravāda and non-Sthaviravāda schools. To dismiss most or all of these Canonical doctrinal teachings is to reject the Theravāda as a vāda. When this is done we often see the Suttapiṭaka -- usually without a comprehensive survey of the entire Suttapiṭaka -- being used to justify all sorts of pet theories. This creates a wild west situation where almost anything goes. Just find a sutta or two to justify one's pet theory and this makes one's interpretation is just as valid as any other.... This is quite an ill-conceived and unfortunate approach to Buddhist hermeneutics.

This isn't to say that text critical analysis is entirely unjustified. But to limit text critical analysis just to the sutta strata of received tradition and use this methodology to dismiss the abhidhamma strata of received tradition is problematic for a number of reasons. It fails to acknowledge just how indebted we all are to the entirety of the canonical, para-canonical, and commentarial texts for our understanding of Pāḷi as a language. It also implies (and is sometimes explicitly stated) that the

compilers of the Abhidhammapiṭaka had already lost the realization of the dhamma within one or two hundred years of the Buddha's parinibbāna. These are just two of many faults and dubious assumptions which could be mentioned. IMO the bar should be set higher.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 4:41 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

The commentaries and the Visuddhimagga are not canonical. Moreover, the commentaries do not present a homogeneous doctrine. It's not uncommon to find multiple opinions presented regarding a particular canonical passage, etc. It's also not uncommon to find quite dubious etymologies of particular terms and an obvious lack of understanding of canonical metaphors, and so on. This is due to the commentaries being authored by people separated from the historical, geographical, and cultural situation of the early Buddhist community. This has been well documented by a number of translators and scholars. Therefore, while the commentaries are also important, they aren't of the same caliber as the Tipiṭaka.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 8:16 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 8:28 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

The teachings of both these venerables fit nicely within the parameters of the Tipiṭaka. Ajahn Chah's colloquial style shouldn't be mistaken for a lack of understanding of Theravāda dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 8:34 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

I guess if one only accepts the suttas then they are some sort of modern Pāḷi suttantika.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 8:46 am

Title: Re: The Commentaries are unreliable: I know better

Content:

I have no interest in discussing the commentaries, especially within this particular sub-forum. Some discussion has occurred on this thread:

Reliability of Mahāvihāra Commentaries?... Right View.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 04, 2011 9:17 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

I wouldn't disagree. I'm in favor of a text-critical approach, but one that is inclusive of the entire Tipiṭaka, as well as the commentaries, and non-Pāḷi Sthaviravāda sources. One example would be some of Ven. Anālayo's writings. Another would be the methodology of our fellow DW member Dmytro.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 05, 2011 5:36 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

They are the same thing.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 05, 2011 12:40 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Are you now suggesting that supramundane jhāna occurs without dhammavicaya? That too, would be quite impossible. The presence of dhammavicaya, just like the presence of sammādiṭṭhi, etc., does not require vitakka or vicāra.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 05, 2011 12:46 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Dhammasaṅgaṇī 1027:

What phenomena are expansive (mahaggaṭā)?

There are skillful and neither-skillful-nor-unskillful phenomena of the form sphere (rūpāvacarā) and the formless sphere (arūpāvacarā), the feeling aggregate, recognition aggregate, fabrications aggregate, and consciousness aggregate; these phenomena are expansive.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 05, 2011 2:36 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

All of your nonsensical qualms have been addressed in detail previously. Certainly, ignoring the Tipiṭaka is your choice. Good luck with that "jhāna" devoid of comprehension. I trust that such a "jhāna" will result in a long rest in a non-perceptive realm as an asaṅñasatta.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 05, 2011 6:17 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 06, 2011 8:27 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Yes, it would be preferable to rely on the teachings. As for the Kathāvatthu controversy, it doesn't entail accepting Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna theory either. The sense faculties don't blackout every time one engages in thought. The six consciousnesses are nominal designations. As MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta tells us, "Consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises." And so there is a difference between simply attending to a mental object (nimitta) via mental consciousness, and the formless attainments wherein the mind is totally isolated from the five sense faculties. In commentarial terms, attending exclusively to a cognitive representation/mental object already occurs at the stage of access samādhi. Thus, the engagement is exclusively that of the apperception of the counterpart representation via mental consciousness. The difference between access samādhi and the first jhāna is the degree of stability of the jhāna factors. The difference between the first jhāna and the formless attainments is indicated in both the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga when they discuss the formless attainments and mention Aḷāra Kālāma not seeing or hearing the five-hundred carts passing by when abiding in a formless attainment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 06, 2011 10:04 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Yes, the seven factors of awakening are a model of the conditioned process explaining how right mindfulness, right effort/right exertion, and right samādhi are to be developed and integrated, optimally culminating in the purity of mindfulness (fourth jhāna).

But dhamma-vicaya as a factor of awakening is also considered to be synonymous with discernment (paññā), right view (sammādiṭṭhi), clear seeing (vipassanā), and awakening (bodhi). This is stated in the Mahāniddeśa and the Abhidhammapiṭaka. Therefore, dhamma-vicaya is said to be present at the time of attaining the noble paths and fruitions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 12:54 am

Title: Re: The Commentaries are unreliable: I know better

Content:

The Vimuttimagga may not be a Mahāvihāra work, but it is a Theravāda work. Ven. Arahā Upatissa, the author of the Vimuttimagga, was knowledgeable of and quotes from the Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Vibhaṅga, and the Peṭakopadesa. All of these are Theravāda texts.

There are numerous texts such as these which may not be Mahāvihāra works, but they are Theravāda texts. These Yogāvacara teachings were still being practiced in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Thailand as recently as the 20th century, and it's possible that they may still be alive in some form somewhere in Cambodia or Thailand today.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 3:30 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

One who practices sammāsamādhi instead of asaṅṅisamādhi learns the difference between apperception (saññā) and thought (vitakka). It is apperception which differentiates, not thought.

And this relates to the main issue: Meditation which is specifically Buddhist is qualified by the presence of vipassanā. This is explicitly stated in the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Sautrāntika treatises already cited in this thread. And this is why the Mahāvihāra commentarial tradition can maintain that rūpāvacarajjhāna is not essential for awakening. Jhāna devoid of vipassanā isn't an essential dhamma of Theravāda or Sthaviravāda Buddhism.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 5:20 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

I merely wrote "concomitant" instead of "associated." My mistake. At any rate, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppāḍakaṇḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā explicitly equates the discernment faculty (paññindriya) with the dhamma-discrimination factor of awakening (dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga) as



a supramundane dhamma at the time of attaining the noble path via supramundane jhāna. And the Mahānidessa equates awakening (bodhi) with gnosis of the four paths (catūsu maggesu ñāṇa), the faculty of discernment (paññindriya), the strength of discernment (paññābala), the dhamma-discrimination factor of awakening (dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga), investigation (vīmaṃsā), clear seeing (vipassanā), and right view (sammādiṭṭhi). No back reading of anything.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 8:35 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

All that's out of the bag is your drawing fallacious conclusions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 8:38 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

It's been demonstrated to you time and again that there is nothing Buddhist about jhāna devoid of vipassanā, but you're very determined to not acknowledge it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 8:46 am

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

Not irrational at all. Non-apperceptive absorptions are states wherein there is no possibility of development. If one isn't already at a very advanced stage then by entering non-apperceptive absorptions one is arresting any possibility of development. Thus, it is very prudent to heed the commentarial tradition's advice and extinguish as many levels of fetters as possible before engaging in any non-apperceptive samādhi.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 9:22 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

There is no Theravāda without Abhidhamma. I'm not a hardcore ābhidhammika by any means, but without some recourse to these early exegetical treatises there is very little possibility of ever getting

it right.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 4:37 pm

Title: Re: Australian Brahmic Buddhism

Content:

I think this is accurate.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 4:55 pm

Title: Re: Ajahn Chah's Life & Dhamma Teachings

Content:

I first read this passage (or one very much like it) many years ago in A Still Forest Pool. A very memorable instruction.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 10:27 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Vipassanā doesn't require vitakka and/or vicāra. It requires apperception (saññā), which is functional in all four jhānas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 07, 2011 11:01 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The Kathāvatthu and the Visuddhimagga maintain that the cessation of apperception and feeling

(saññāvedayitanirodha), which is also called cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti) is neither supramundane nor not-conditioned (asaṅkhata). Cf. Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.

The Visuddhimagga also states that only non-returners and arahants can attain the cessation of apperception and feeling. The suttas and the commentaries both state that arahants who are liberated through discernment do not. Therefore it is not accurate to equate nibbāna with nirodhasamāpatti. Cf. MN 70 Kīṭāgiri Sutta:

And what, monks, is the person liberated through discernment? There is the case where a certain person does not remain touching with his body those peaceful liberations that transcend form, that are formless, but having seen with discernment his mental outflows are ended. This is called a person who is liberated through discernment.

And AN 4.87 Samaṇamacala Putta Sutta:

And how, monks, is a person a white lotus ascetic? Herein a monk, having eliminated the mental outflows, is without mental outflows. With liberation of mind and liberation through discernment, having realized supramundane gnosis, he abides with that attainment. Yet he does not abide personally experiencing the eight deliverances. Thus, monks, is a person a white lotus ascetic.

The eighth deliverance of the eight deliverances (aṭṭha vimokkhā) is the cessation of apperception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodha). Arahants who are liberated through discernment do not attain this cessation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 6:46 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Kāmasaññānirodha doesn't require that "all the five senses are totally shut down." Attending to a mental object (nimitta) in rūpāvacarajjhāna doesn't require that "all the five senses are totally shut down." There is a difference between attending to a mental object via mental consciousness, and the formless attainments wherein the mind is totally isolated from the five sense faculties. In commentarial terms, attending exclusively to a cognitive representation/mental object already occurs at the stage of access samādhi. Thus, the engagement is exclusively that of the apperception of the counterpart representation via mental consciousness. The difference between access samādhi and the first jhāna is the degree of stability of the jhāna factors. The difference between the first jhāna and the formless attainments is indicated in both the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga when they discuss the formless attainments and mention Alāra Kālāma not seeing or hearing the five-hundred carts passing by when abiding in a formless attainment.

It's quite clear from Ven. Brahmavamso's descriptions of his jhānas that his use of mindfulness (sati), full awareness (sampajañña), and apperception (saññā) and so on, have no basis in the suttas or abhidhamma. I and others have gone to great length to discuss this. I have no doubt that this

doesn't sit well with his devout followers, but I think it's probably worth saying out loud (even if it stirs up a hornets nest of objections from his followers). And I assure you that I get no pleasure from criticizing him. As Dmytro and others have said more than once, this idea of approaching the suttas without reference to the canonical and para-canonical definitions of terms which are not explicitly defined in the suttas is problematic, to say the least. And the qualms you repeatedly raise are red herrings. The suttas simply don't say what you are trying to make them say. This has been demonstrated in great detail, whether you choose to acknowledge it or not.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 8:09 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Ah yes, the Vibhaṅga must be completely wrong. The Mahāniddeśa must be completely wrong. The Peṭakopadesa must be completely wrong. And there can be no possibility of vipassanā while abiding in jhāna. Therefore, the Paṭisambhidāmagga must be completely wrong. The Vibhaṅga must be completely wrong. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī must be completely wrong. The Mahāvibhāṣā must be completely wrong. The Abhidharmakośabhāṣya must be completely wrong. The Tattvasiddhiśāstra must be completely wrong. In short, all of the major Indian Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Sautrāntika exegetical treatises must be completely wrong.

And not only the Indian treatises. Ven. Ṭhānissaro who is a translator monk, and Ven. Gunaratana who wrote a doctoral dissertation on Theravāda jhāna, and Ven. Bodhi who is one of the best modern translators and is also a scholar monk; these venerables are all completely wrong. In his anthology of translated discourses, In the Buddha's Words, Ven. Bodhi states:

The commentarial method of explanation stipulates that the meditator emerges from the jhāna attainment and practices insight contemplation with a mind made sharp and supple by the jhāna. However, the suttas themselves say nothing about emerging from the jhāna. If one reads the suttas alone, without the commentaries, it seems as if the meditator examines the factors within the jhāna itself.

And the commentarial method of attaining the noble path via momentary samādhi (khaṇikasamādhi), access samādhi (upacārasamādhi), or preparatory stage samādhi (anāgāmya-samādhi, which is the Sarvāstivāda equivalent of access samādhi) must also be completely wrong. Therefore, every single Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Sautrāntika commentator, ancient or modern, must be completely wrong. Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato have miraculously rediscovered the Buddhadhamma after 2500 years, and their teachings must be right even though they are contradicted by almost every other scholar, translator, or commentator, ancient or modern, Theravāda or Sarvāstivāda or Sautrāntika or Yogācāra.

Sorry, but I don't buy it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 8:41 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

From the Vibhaṅga Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga:

And how does a monk dwell contemplating the body in the body?

Here a monk, at whatever time, develops supramundane jhāna, which leads on, which goes to decrease (of rebirth), to abandonment of wrong views, to the attainment of the first ground, (where) quite secluded from sense desires, secluded from unwholesome things, having thinking, reflection, and the happiness and rapture born of seclusion, he dwells, having attained the first jhāna, and with painful practice and slow deepening of knowledge, and at that time: there is contact, there is feeling, there is perception, there is intention, there is thought, there is thinking, there is reflection, there is joyful interest, there is happiness, there is one-pointedness, there is the faculty of faith, there is the faculty of energy, there is the faculty of mindfulness, there is the faculty of concentration, there is the faculty of wisdom, there is the mind-faculty, there is the joy-faculty, there is the life-faculty, there is right view, there is right intention, there is right endeavour, there is right mindfulness, there is right concentration, there is the strength of faith, there is the strength of energy, there is the strength of mindfulness, there is the strength of concentration, there is the strength of wisdom, there is the strength of conscience, there is the strength of shame, there is no greed, there is no hate, there is no delusion, there is no avarice, there is no ill-will, there is right view, there is conscience, there is shame, there is bodily calm, there is mental calm, there is bodily lightness, there is mental lightness, there is bodily plasticity, there is mental plasticity, there is bodily workableness, there is mental workableness, there is bodily proficiency, there is mental proficiency, there is bodily uprightness, there is mental uprightness, there is mindfulness, there is full awareness, there is samatha, there is vipassanā, there is support, there is balance: these are wholesome things.

It's quite nonsensical to insist that a corresponding reading cannot be applied to the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's treatment of rūpāvacarajjhāna associated with gnosis.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 9:23 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The Theravāda is a Three Piṭaka Abhidhamma school. There is no early Theravāda which can be differentiated from the Theravāda monastics who redacted the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Early Buddhism was not Theravāda any more than it was Sarvāstivāda or Mahāsāṃghika.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 10:27 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Ah yes, all the rest of us have got it wrong, and Ven. Brahmavamso and Ven. Sujato and their modern sect have rediscovered the Buddhadhamma....

Utter nonsense.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 6:40 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Are you suggesting that there would be no faculty of discernment or vipassanā occurring if one were to attain the noble path through the second, third, or fourth jhāna? Are you suggesting that the Dhammasaṅgaṇī is short of both the satisambojjhaṅga and the dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 7:27 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Ven. Gunaratana states:

The belief that one must come out of jhāna to gain supernormal knowledge (abhiññās) or to destroy defilements and attain enlightenment is based on an assumption that the concentrated mind becomes one with the object of meditation and is absorbed into that object. For this reason some people translate jhāna or samādhi as absorption concentration. If the mind is absorbed into the object then the mind is paralyzed and incapable of doing anything.

This may be true when the jhāna is gained without mindfulness. This is what happened to the teachers of the Bodhisatta Gotama. They were stuck in jhāna but they thought that they had attained enlightenment. This cannot happen when you practice jhāna with mindfulness. When we attain right jhāna, our mindfulness is pure, our equanimity is strong, our concentration is strong and our attention is sharp. Right concentration consolidates all the mental factors that the Buddha has listed in the Anupada Sutta. Concentration is one of the factors present in right jhāna. You are fully aware, without words or concepts, of the subtlest impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness that takes place in this state of samādhi. These are your direct experience, not philosophical or logical thoughts.

Are you suggesting that there is no possibility of developing vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā) while abiding in jhāna? Are you suggesting that MN 111 and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Vibhaṅga are wrong to include apperception in their analyses of

dhammas occurring in jhāna? MN 111 informs us that in the first seven attainments phenomena are differentiated and known as they occur. It's not vipassanā of phenomena that had passed, ceased, and changed, it's vipassanā of phenomena one by one as they occurred: "These phenomena were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him these phenomena arose, known they were present, known they disappeared."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 08, 2011 11:39 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Yes, it's quite clear that Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna is incompatible with what is presented in the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka as well as all of the other major Indian Sthaviravāda treatises, all of which present vipassanā occurring within jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 1:53 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

As I've already mentioned, the Paṭisambhidāmagga Yuganaddhakathā is the canonical commentary on this sutta, where the coupling of samatha and vipassanā are said to occur together upon attainment of the noble path. They are concomitant path factors of supramundane jhāna. This is the same as what is presented in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādakaṇḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 2:35 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The only thing which is bizarre is your insistence on tossing everything out the window which doesn't fit with Brahmavamso's jhāna theory. This isn't surprising, as this is the methodology employed by Ven. Sujato in an attempt to legitimize his and Ven. Brahmavamso's strange notions of what jhāna and Therāvada doctrine should be.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 2:41 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Really? Just my understanding? How about the understanding of countless meditators, scholars, translators, and commentators who contradict what you are trying to establish?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 2:51 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Your misunderstanding of the difference between thought and apperception has already been noted and addressed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 3:26 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Reference to the canon and to specialists in the fields of Buddhist meditation, translation, and scholarship are completely valid. Let's see what some specialists in these fields have to say on the subject, and see if you agree or disagree with them. I won't list their credentials, as I'm sure you're well aware of them. Ajahn Chah:

In appanā samādhi the mind calms down and is stilled to a level where it is at its most subtle and skilful. Even if you experience sense impingement from the outside, such as sounds and physical sensations, it remains external and is unable to disturb the mind. You might hear a sound, but it won't distract your concentration. There is the hearing of the sound, but the experience is as if you don't hear anything.

Do you agree or disagree with this? How about Ven. Ṭhānissaro reporting what Ajahn Fuang considered to be wrong concentration:

The second state [of wrong concentration] was one I happened to hit one night when my concentration was extremely one-pointed, and so refined that it refused settle on or label even the most fleeting mental objects. I dropped into a state in which I lost all sense of the body, of any



internal/external sounds, or of any thoughts or perceptions at all — although there was just enough tiny awareness to let me know, when I emerged, that I hadn't been asleep. I found that I could stay there for many hours, and yet time would pass very quickly. Two hours would seem like two minutes. I could also "program" myself to come out at a particular time.

After hitting this state several nights in a row, I told Ajaan Fuang about it, and his first question was, "Do you like it?" My answer was "No," because I felt a little groggy the first time I came out. "Good," he said. "As long as you don't like it, you're safe. Some people really like it and think it's nibbana or cessation. Actually, it's the state of non-perception (*asaññi-bhava*). It's not even right concentration, because there's no way you can investigate anything in there to gain any sort of discernment....

In both these states of wrong concentration, the limited range of awareness was what made them wrong. If whole areas of your awareness are blocked off, how can you gain all-around insight? And as I've noticed in years since, people adept at blotting out large areas of awareness through powerful one-pointedness also tend to be psychologically adept at dissociation and denial.

Do you agree with this or not? How about Ven. Bodhi:

The commentarial method of explanation stipulates that the meditator emerges from the *jhāna* attainment and practices insight contemplation with a mind made sharp and supple by the *jhāna*. However, the suttas themselves say nothing about emerging from the *jhāna*. If one reads the suttas alone, without the commentaries, it seems as if the meditator examines the factors within the *jhāna* itself.

Do you agree with this or not? How about Ven. Gunaratana:

The belief that one must come out of *jhāna* to gain supernormal knowledge (*abhiññās*) or to destroy defilements and attain enlightenment is based on an assumption that the concentrated mind becomes one with the object of meditation and is absorbed into that object. For this reason some people translate *jhāna* or *samādhi* as absorption concentration. If the mind is absorbed into the object then the mind is paralyzed and incapable of doing anything.

This may be true when the *jhāna* is gained without mindfulness. This is what happened to the teachers of the Bodhisatta Gotama. They were stuck in *jhāna* but they thought that they had attained enlightenment. This cannot happen when you practice *jhāna* with mindfulness. When we attain right *jhāna*, our mindfulness is pure, our equanimity is strong, our concentration is strong and our attention is sharp. Right concentration consolidates all the mental factors that the Buddha has listed in the Anupada Sutta. Concentration is one of the factors present in right *jhāna*. You are fully aware, without words or concepts, of the subtlest impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness that takes place in this state of *samādhi*. These are your direct experience, not philosophical or logical thoughts.

Do you agree with this or not? And a few ancient Indian sources. The Vibhaṅga Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga: And how does a monk dwell contemplating the body in the body?

Here a monk, at whatever time, develops supramundane *jhāna*, which leads on, which goes to decrease (of rebirth), to abandonment of wrong views, to the attainment of the first ground, (where) quite secluded from sense desires, secluded from unwholesome things, having thinking, reflection, and the happiness and rapture born of seclusion, he dwells, having attained the first *jhāna*, and with painful practice and slow deepening of knowledge, and at that time: there is contact, there is feeling, there is perception, there is intention, there is thought, there is thinking, there is reflection, there is joyful interest, there is happiness, there is one-pointedness, there is the faculty of faith, there is the faculty of energy, there is the faculty of mindfulness, there is the faculty of concentration, there is

the faculty of wisdom, there is the mind-faculty, there is the joy-faculty, there is the life-faculty, there is right view, there is right intention, there is right endeavour, there is right mindfulness, there is right concentration, there is the strength of faith, there is the strength of energy, there is the strength of mindfulness, there is the strength of concentration, there is the strength of wisdom, there is the strength of conscience, there is the strength of shame, there is no greed, there is no hate, there is no delusion, there is no avarice, there is no ill-will, there is right view, there is conscience, there is shame, there is bodily calm, there is mental calm, there is bodily lightness, there is mental lightness, there is bodily plasticity, there is mental plasticity, there is bodily workableness, there is mental workableness, there is bodily proficiency, there is mental proficiency, there is bodily uprightness, there is mental uprightness, there is mindfulness, there is full awareness, there is samatha, there is vipassanā, there is support, there is balance: these are wholesome things.

Do you agree with this or not? How about the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādaṅgaḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā:

When at a certain time one develops supramundane jhāna, which leads out, which goes to decrease (of rebirth), to abandonment of wrong views, to the attainment of the first stage (i.e. sotāpattimagga), quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion, and with difficult practice and slow acquisition of gnosis, then at that time there is contact, there is feeling, there is apperception, there is volitional intention, there is directed thought, there is evaluation, there is joy, there is pleasure, there is singleness of mind, there is the faculty of faith, there is the faculty of energy, there is the faculty of mindfulness, there is the faculty of concentration, there is the faculty of discernment, there is the mind-faculty, there is the happiness-faculty, there is the life-faculty, there is the 'I-shall-come-to-know-the-unknown' faculty, there is right view, there is right resolve, there is right effort, there is right mindfulness, there is right concentration, there is the strength of faith, there is the strength of energy, there is the strength of mindfulness, there is the strength of concentration, there is the strength of discernment, there is the strength of conscience, there is the strength of shame, there is no greed, there is no hate, there is no delusion, there is no avarice, there is no aversion, there is right view, there is conscience, there is shame, there is bodily calm, there is mental calm, there is bodily lightness, there is mental lightness, there is bodily pliability, there is mental pliability, there is bodily workableness, there is mental workableness, there is bodily proficiency, there is mental proficiency, there is bodily uprightness, there is mental uprightness, there is mindfulness, there is full awareness, there is samatha, there is vipassanā, there is exertion, there is non-distraction.

What at that time is the faculty of discernment? That which at that time is discernment, thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, dhamma-investigation, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination, reflection, comparative examination, breadth of knowledge, wisdom that destroys defilements, penetrative wisdom, vipassanā, full awareness, discernment like a guiding goad, faculty of discernment, strength of discernment, discernment like a sword, discernment like a tower, discernment like light, discernment like radiance, discernment like a torch, discernment like a jewel, non-delusion, dhamma-investigation, right view, awakening factor of dhamma-investigation, a path factor, knowledge included in the path – this at that time is the faculty of discernment.

What at that time is vipassanā? That which at that time is discernment, thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, dhamma-investigation, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination, reflection, comparative examination, breadth of knowledge, wisdom that destroys defilements, penetrative wisdom, vipassanā, full awareness, discernment like a guiding goad, faculty of discernment, strength of discernment, discernment like a sword, discernment like a tower,

discernment like light, discernment like radiance, discernment like a torch, discernment like a jewel, non-delusion, dhamma-investigation, right view, awakening factor of dhamma-investigation, a path factor, knowledge included in the path – this at that time is vipassanā.

Do you agree with this or not? And since Ven. Sujato is using Sarvāstivāda texts to try to legitimize his and Ven. Brahmavamso's theories, it's appropriate to include two authoritative Indian Sarvāstivāda sources. How about the Mahāvibhāṣā:

In the four dhyānas, śamatha and vipaśyanā are equal in strength, and thus they are named a pleasant dwelling.

Do you agree with this or not? How about the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya:

Samādhi is in fact excellent: it is a dhyāna filled with "parts," which goes by the means of the yoke of śamatha and vipaśyanā [that is to say, in which śamatha and vipaśyanā are in equilibrium], that is termed in the Sūtra "happiness in this world" and "the easy path," the path by which one knows better and easily.

Do you agree with this or not? It would be good to hear your thoughts on these specific quotations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 3:54 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

You continue to either misunderstand or intentionally misrepresent the Abhidhammapiṭaka. If it's intentional then it's merely an attempt at misdirection.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 6:20 am

Title: Re: Characteristics of Faith-follower and Dhamma-follower

Content:

Ven. Kheminda has also written on this subject, which is the first part of his book titled Path, Fruit, and Nibbāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 2:56 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

I think Ven. Yuttadhammo said it quite accurately in his critique of Ven. Brahmavamso's The Jhānas: What I have a problem with is what seems clearly to be a distortion of the Buddha's teaching in order to support his own way of teaching.

I would extend this to Ven. Sujato's methodology of beginning with a preconceived thesis and then attempting to force the suttas into agreement.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 3:02 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Already done in the quotation from the Dhammasaṅgaṇī:

What at that time is the faculty of discernment? That which at that time is discernment, thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, dhamma-investigation, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination, reflection, comparative examination, breadth of knowledge, wisdom that destroys defilements, penetrative wisdom, vipassanā, full awareness, discernment like a guiding goad, faculty of discernment, strength of discernment, discernment like a sword, discernment like a tower, discernment like light, discernment like radiance, discernment like a torch, discernment like a jewel, non-delusion, dhamma-investigation, right view, awakening factor of dhamma-investigation, a path factor, knowledge included in the path – this at that time is the faculty of discernment.

What at that time is vipassanā? That which at that time is discernment, thorough understanding, investigation, comprehensive investigation, dhamma-investigation, consideration, discrimination, direct discrimination, erudite intelligence, proficiency, refined intelligence, discriminative examination, reflection, comparative examination, breadth of knowledge, wisdom that destroys defilements, penetrative wisdom, vipassanā, full awareness, discernment like a guiding goad, faculty of discernment, strength of discernment, discernment like a sword, discernment like a tower, discernment like light, discernment like radiance, discernment like a torch, discernment like a jewel, non-delusion, dhamma-investigation, right view, awakening factor of dhamma-investigation, a path factor, knowledge included in the path – this at that time is vipassanā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 4:45 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Mindfulness (sati) and full awareness (sampajañña) are fully developed in the third and fourth jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 09, 2011 10:23 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī details a number of different jhānas, including the kasiṇa jhānas, the brahmavihāra jhānas, the asubha jhānas, and so on. All of these jhānas are capable of expansive development. Terms such as totality (kasiṇa), immeasurable (appamāṇa), and expansive (mahaggatā) which are used in the descriptions of these samādhis indicate the expansiveness of jhāna. MN 127 explains the meaning of expansive mind-liberation and indicates the way of development:

And what, householder, is the expansive liberation of mind (mahaggatā cetovimutti)? Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the root of one tree, pervading it as expansive: this is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of the roots of two or three trees, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind. Here a monk abides resolved upon an area the size of one village, pervading it as expansive ... an area the size of two or three villages... an area the size of one major kingdom... an area the size of two or three major kingdoms... an area the size of the earth bounded by the ocean, pervading it as expansive: this too is called the expansive liberation of mind.

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī (1027) states that this expansiveness is distinctive of the mind engaged in jhāna: What phenomena are expansive (mahaggatā)? There are skillful and neither-skillful-nor-unskillful phenomena of the form sphere (rūpāvacarā) and the formless sphere (arūpāvacarā), the feeling aggregate, recognition aggregate, fabrications aggregate, and consciousness aggregate; these phenomena are expansive.

MN 77 lists the ten kasiṇa jhānas, the first of which is earth-perception kasiṇa jhāna:

Again, Udāyin, I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the ten totality spheres. One perceives the earth totality above, below, and across, undivided and immeasurable... And thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the perfection and consummation of direct gnosis.

MN 121 explains the way of developing earth-perception kasiṇa jhāna:

Now, as well as before, I remain fully in a dwelling of emptiness. Just as this palace of Migara's mother is empty of elephants, cattle, & mares, empty of gold & silver, empty of assemblies of women & men, and there is only this non-emptiness — the singleness based on the community of monks; even so, Ananda, a monk — not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of human being — attends to the singleness based on the perception of wilderness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness.

He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of village are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of village. This

mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

Further, Ananda, the monk — not attending to the perception of human being, not attending to the perception of wilderness — attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth. Just as a bull's hide is stretched free from wrinkles with a hundred stakes, even so — without attending to all the ridges & hollows, the river ravines, the tracts of stumps & thorns, the craggy irregularities of this earth — he attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth.

He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of wilderness are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of wilderness. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of earth.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

Sigālapita Theragāthā 1.18 describes skeleton-perception asubha jhāna:

There was an heir to the Buddha, a monk in the Bhesakala forest,  
Who suffused this whole earth with skeleton-perception,  
Quickly, I say, he abandoned passion for sensual pleasure.

The brahmavihāra jhānas are described in many places, such as AN 11.17:

Then again, a monk keeps pervading the first direction with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, and all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with a mind imbued with loving-kindness — abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will.

The other types of jhāna are listed in many suttas and detailed in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Vibhaṅga, and the Paṭisambhidāmagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 12:38 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

From the same Introduction:

It has been said above that fifty-six dhamma factors constitute the First Category of Meritorious Thought. There are two points to be made here. The first is that in the seventeen groups of dhamma factors mentioned above, the first group of dhamma factors, namely, the group of five dhamma factors headed by contact, is the most proximate cause for the arising of the meritorious thought;

the second group which consists of the five factors of the first jhana is the most proximate cause for arising of the first group headed by contact. and so it goes on step by step till the seventeenth group. However, this is only an analytical view. The actual fact is that there are thirty dhamma factors occurring as fifty-six items in the complete list and these arise simultaneously. Your qualms, as per usual, are completely unfounded.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 2:53 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The citations have already been provided from the Dhammasaṅgaṇī. I can understand why you may have difficulty understanding the synthesis of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, as it presents an integral eightfold path, whereas Ven. Brahmavamso's teachings aren't very integral. I would recommend beginning with Wings to Awakening by Ven. Ṭhānissaro, and The Buddhist Path to Awakening by R. M. Gethin.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 2:56 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Not so. I've already provided the reference to the Dhammasaṅgaṇī which explains mahaggatā in the context of jhāna. The term cetovimutti is used in different ways in different contexts (e.g. mettā cetovimutti, adukkhamasukhā cetovimutti, etc. Cf. Bhante G. A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas, p. 355) where it often refers to meditative attainments realized through the development of calm (samathabhāvanā). AN 2.32 Vijjābhāgiyā Sutta:

When calm (samatha) is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And what is the benefit of a developed mind? Passion is abandoned.... Defiled by passion, the mind is not released.... Thus, monks, from the fading away of passion there is liberation of mind (cetovimutti).

This use of mahaggatā cetovimutti refers to jhāna attainment. These terms as they relate to the jhānas are standardized in the Abhidhammapiṭaka.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 3:06 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The concomitance is quite obvious from the text itself, taken in context. It's been noticed that one of your favorite diversion tactics for raising qualms which are no more than red herrings is to attempt grammatical distinctions which have no relevance to the passage in question. And FTR, I don't have "high disdain" for the commentaries.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 3:11 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

How could I be any clearer? Vipassanā has to occur and be present as a supramundane dhamma whenever there is path attainment. It doesn't matter if it's the first jhāna, second jhāna, third jhāna, or fourth jhāna path attainment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 3:34 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

This is just another sustained ad hom with no basis in fact. I don't have "such high disdain for the Pali Commentaries." The understanding that the noble path is attained at once, designated as "one moment," is a canonical Theravāda doctrine which is stated in the Paṭisambhidāmagga. This doctrine doesn't entail adherence to a theory of radical momentariness; nor does the understanding of concomitant dhammas entail adherence to a theory of radical momentariness. At any rate, it seems that this discussion isn't worth pursuing any further.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 8:04 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Another fallacious misrepresentation. I completely fail to understand what you hope to gain by



misrepresenting what I've said. I've already suggested two good sources for deepening one's appreciation and understanding of the integral model of the 37 requisites of awakening. Unless there is some agreement about path structure and some basic terms like sati, sampajañña, samādhi, saññā, nimitta, and mahaggatā citta, and how these relate to the kasiṇa jhānas, the brahmavihāra jhānas, the asubha jhānas, and so on, there is little basis for meaningful discussion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 12:01 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

In the Abhidhamma the seven factors of awakening are all considered to be present at the time of attaining the noble path -- hence "awakening." This demonstrates the integral synthesis of awakening. And of the seven factors, dhamma-investigation is singled out as synonymous with both the faculty of discernment, and vipassanā. As already mentioned, in the Mahāniddeśa dhamma-investigation is said to be synonymous with bodhi. Also, from the Milindapañha:  
"By how many factors does one awaken to the truth?"

"By one, dhamma-investigation, for nothing can be understood without that."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 12:23 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

The kāmehi refers to both the objects of sensual pleasure (vatthukāmā) and the defilements of sensual pleasure (kilesakāmā). In commentarial terms, the form portion of the "whole body" experienced in jhāna is mind-produced form which pervades the physical body. The Dīghanikāyaṭṭhaka: Mind-produced form (cittajarūpa) suffuses every area where there is kamma-produced form (kammajarūpa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 10, 2011 10:37 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

In both the Abhidhammapiṭaka and the Aṭṭhakathā mahaggata citta and mahaggatā cetovimutti are understood to refer to jhāna. The commentary on MN 127 specifically says that mahaggatā cetovimutti refers to kasiṇa jhāna:

He covers the are the size of one tree root with the kasiṇanimitta, and he abides resolved upon that totality sign, pervading it with the mahaggatajjhāna.

The same applies to the more expansive totalities. And also in the commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta the mahaggata citta is understood to refer to the expansive mind abiding in jhāna. There is no reason to interpret these suttas differently.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 11, 2011 5:19 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

I rarely ever grumble. But the heart of the matter is the assertion made by Ven. Brahmavamso and his associates that he is teaching the Buddha's sammāsamādhi, and that most everyone else isn't. Coupled with this is the dubious hermeneutic methodology of his associates such as Ven. Sujato and Piya Tan who have attempted to validate this assertion by forcing the suttas to agree with Brahmavamso's jhāna. To this end they have either intentionally or unintentionally ignored many suttas and all of the earliest strata of commentary (canonical, para-canonical, and post-canonical) which doesn't accord with their thesis. This is no different than the hermeneutic methodology used by Ven. Ṭhānissaro to validate his "mind like fire unbound" theory.

If we compare the descriptions of Ven. Brahmavamso's jhāna with the suttas and commentaries the descriptions and definition of terms don't correspond.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 11, 2011 6:22 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

A quote transferred from another very old internet forum post.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 11, 2011 3:34 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

There is no direct one-to-one correspondence between the three worlds (lokas) and the three spheres (avacaras) as classification schemes of related phenomena. A human being who abides in jhāna is still in the kāmaloka, but his or her mind and mental factors are not engaged with any phenomena which would give rise to sensual pleasure (kāma). This can lead to rebirth in the rūpaloka. Thus, the mind and mental factors (cittacetāsikā) of rūpāvacarajjhāna are similar to the mind and mental factors of deities abiding in the rūpaloka, but abiding in rūpāvacarajjhāna doesn't mean that one has entered the rūpaloka.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 11, 2011 4:32 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Of course. They develop. The purpose of sammāsamādhi is just this mental development (bhāvanā) which culminates in gnosis.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 11, 2011 4:40 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Yes, this was already addressed. The seclusion from kāmehi in the jhāna formula refers to both the objects of sensual pleasure (vatthukāmā) and the defilements of sensual pleasure (kilesakāmā). In commentarial terms, the form portion of the "whole body" experienced in jhāna is mind-produced form which pervades the physical body. The Dīghanikāyaṭṭhikā:

Mind-produced form (cittajarūpa) suffuses every area where there is kamma-produced form (kammajarūpa).

This subtle felt-sense of the body being pervaded by pleasure (J1 & J2) and by equanimity (J3 & J4) is a part of the phenomenology of jhāna as an experience.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 12, 2011 1:57 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Yes, but it's important to understand that what is designated as the mental body is not a disembodied experience. The experience of the whole body (sabba kāya) still includes a refined experience of the body. Peṭakopadesa 7.72:

The twofold bodily and mental pain does not arise in one steadied in directed thought and evaluation, and the twofold bodily and mental pleasure does arise. The mental pleasure thus produced from directed thought is joy, while the bodily pleasure is bodily feeling.

The Vimuttimagga:

Just as the bath-powder when inside and outside saturated with moisture, adheres and does not scatter, so the body of the meditator in the first jhāna is permeated with joy and pleasure from top to bottom, from the skullcap to the feet and from the feet to the skullcap, skin and hair, inside and outside. And he dwells without falling back. Thus he dwells like a Brahma god.

[Q.] Joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) are said to be formless phenomena (arūpa-dhamma). How then can they stay permeating the body?

[A.] Name (nāma) depends on form (rūpa). Form depends on name. Therefore, if name has joy, form also has joy. If name has pleasure, form also has pleasure.

Again, form born from joy causes tranquility of body, and when the entire body is tranquillized there is pleasure due to the tranquility of form.

Therefore there is no contradiction.

The Dīghanikāyaṭīkā:

Mind-produced form (cittajarūpa) suffuses every area where there is kamma-produced form (kammajarūpa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 13, 2011 10:36 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamsa's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Well said.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 13, 2011 11:05 am

Title: Re: The Commentaries are unreliable: I know better

Content:

Issues of inconsistencies and dubious interpretations present in the commentarial literature have

been noted by various teachers, translators, and scholars, largely based on quite reasonable readings of the different historical strata of texts. But there is still plenty of middle ground between the two extremes of dogmatic allegiance to every commentarial word an letter on the one hand, and dogmatic wholesale rejection of all commentary on the other. As was already mentioned in the post which Robert quoted at the start of this thread: "The commentaries and the Visuddhimagga are not canonical. Moreover, the commentaries do not present a homogeneous doctrine. It's not uncommon to find multiple opinions presented regarding a particular canonical passage, etc. It's also not uncommon to find quite dubious etymologies of particular terms and an obvious lack of understanding of canonical metaphors, and so on. This is due to the commentaries being authored by people separated from the historical, geographical, and cultural situation of the early Buddhist community. This has been well documented by a number of translators and scholars. Therefore, while the commentaries are also important, they aren't of the same caliber as the Tipiṭaka."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 13, 2011 11:54 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Well, I doubt that there is only one pathway to pītisukha. Therefore, there isn't just one phenomenological description of the experience of pītisukha. Experientially speaking, pītisukha can certainly arise as waves of universal bliss coursing throughout the body. It can feel like passing through an invisible "membrane" wherein all sense of constriction is simply gone and the felt-sense of the inner body vastly expands along with waves of universal bliss. This pītisukha can begin in the chest area, or the solar plexus, or the forehead area, or along the lower spine, etc. It can feel like one's entire being is saturated with waves of cosmic deva-like love, or immeasurable universal compassion, or simply "bliss." It can be accompanied by light nimittas of different description (size, color, etc.). And it can certainly be characterized as "heavenly" or "divine." Anyone who has experienced this will understand the correlation between the jhānas and the cosmological brahma-worlds (brahmalokas). But if one absorbs into any experience of pītisukha to the point of loss of comprehension then that is indulgent -- it no longer serves as an optimal condition for mental development (bhāvanā). And such indulgence can certainly be addictive. It can impede development whereby one gets stuck in a habitual pattern of "blissing-out."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 13, 2011 4:02 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

As already indicated, the seven factors of awakening are a model of the conditioned process explaining how right mindfulness, right effort/right exertion, and right samādhi are to be developed and integrated. The process model of the seven factors of awakening is directly related to the

process model of the four jhānas. Insight can be developed at every stage of the seven factors of awakening, and therefore in every jhāna. In fact, there can be no gnosis without it. SN 46.71 Anicca Sutta:

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and benefit.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit? Here, monks, a monk develops the awakening factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit.

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning.

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, it leads to great good.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that it leads to great good? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the

perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great good.

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, it leads to great security from bondage.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that it leads to great security from bondage? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great security from bondage.

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, it leads to a great sense of urgency.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that it leads to a great sense of urgency? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to a great sense of urgency.

Monks, when the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated, it leads to dwelling in great comfort.

And how, monks, is the perception of impermanence developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort? Here, monks, a monk develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of concentration accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. He develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity accompanied by the perception of impermanence, based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in letting go. It is in this way that the perception of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 13, 2011 4:30 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Again, it's quite apparent that you don't know what you're talking about. The pītisukha of jhāna can definitely become an object of deep attachment. Especially for anyone who has a predisposition for addiction. It's far better than any drug. And if one knows how to induce it, it's free. It can be so utterly blissful that theist yogis think it's union with god. In terms of the ten fetters, any attachment to the four jhānas is included under the fetter of passion for form (rūparāga).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 14, 2011 3:01 am

Title: Re: The Commentaries are unreliable: I know better

Content:

The main Abhidhammapiṭaka commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) are traditionally attributed to Buddhaghosa. However, some modern scholars have questioned attributing these commentaries to Buddhaghosa.



All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 14, 2011 9:07 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Your interpretation of SN 36.6 remains novel and unsupported by anything other than your own hermeneutic cartwheels.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 14, 2011 9:14 am

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

It is precisely what the Dhammasaṅgaṇī says. Once again, there is no need for novel hermeneutic cartwheels....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 14, 2011 2:51 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of Brahmavamso's "The Jhanas"

Content:

Ven. Bodhi translates kāma (singular) as "sensual pleasure." Based on the Pāli and Sanskrit for kāma this is accurate. Better than "sensuality." At any rate, there is no point in pursuing this discussion any further. I'm following Dmytro's lead and retiring. Be well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 16, 2011 10:31 am

Title: Re: Before Nirvana Extremely painful sensations.

Content:

The underlying structure of the eighteen insight-ñāṇa-s as presented in the Paṭisambhidāmagga can

be traced to the suttas. They are termed "contemplation" (anupassanā) and "gnosis of contemplation" (anupassanāññā) in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, and are either termed "recognition" (saññā) or "contemplation" (anupassanā) in the suttas. The most well known sutta source is the fourth tetrad of the Ānāpānassati Sutta: contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassana), contemplation of dispassion (virāgānupassana), contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassanā), contemplation of release (paṭinissaggānupassana). Other suttas expand on this structure:

AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108): Recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā)

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46)

AN 7.95 (PTS A iv 145)

SN 46.71 (PTS S v 132, CDB 1620)

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46): Recognition of unsatisfactoriness in what is impermanent (anicca dukkhasaññā)

AN 7.96 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.72 (PTS S v 132, CDB 1620)

AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108): Recognition of selflessness (anattasaññā)

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46): Recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory (dukkha anattasaññā)

AN 7.97 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.73 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1620)

AN 7.98 (PTS A iv 146): Recognition of decay (khayasaññā)

AN 7.99 (PTS A iv 146): Recognition of passing away (vayasaññā)

AN 10.60 PTS A v 108: Recognition of dispassion (virāgasaññā)

AN 7.100 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.75 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1621)

AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108): Recognition of cessation (nirodhasaññā)

AN 7.101 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.76 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1621)

AN 7.102 (PTS A iv 146): Recognition of release (paṭinissaggasaññā)

Cf. the eighteen insight-ñāṇa-s as presented in the Paṭisambhidāmagga:

(1) contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā), (2) contemplation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhānupassanā), (3) contemplation of selflessness (anattānupassanā), (4) contemplation of disenchantment (nibbidānupassanā), (5) contemplation of dispassion (virāgānupassanā), (6) contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassanā), (7) contemplation of release (paṭinissaggānupassanā), (8) contemplation of decay (khayānupassanā), (9) contemplation of passing away (vayānupassanā), (10) contemplation of change (vipariṇāmanupassanā), (11) contemplation of signlessness (animittānupassanā), (12) contemplation of desirelessness (apañihitānupassanā), (13) contemplation of emptiness (suññatānupassanā), (14) clear seeing of dhamma with heightened discernment (adhipaññādharmavipassanā), (15) gnosis and vision of things as they are (yathābhūtaññāḍassana), (16) contemplation of misery/danger (ādināvanupassanā), (17) reflexive contemplation (paṭisaṅkhānupassanā), (18) contemplation of turning away (vivattaṇānupassanā).

Thus, the Paṭisambhidāmagga is just an elaboration of suttanta materials. Of course, what the

Paṭisambhidāmagga presents is not the same as the Visuddhimagga, which again reformulates these 18 contemplations and interprets phenomena according to the theory of radical momentariness. And it's possible that modern Burmese based interpretations of the insight-gnoses may not fully reflect what is presented in the Visuddhimagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 16, 2011 11:40 am

Title: Re: Before Nirvana Extremely painful sensations.

Content:

What are your sources for interpretation of the eighteen insight-gnoses?

Also, with reference to the general topic of this thread: I've come to appreciate the benefits of what I consider to be a somewhat more balanced approach to intensive practice, i.e. focusing on developing calm (samatha) and skillful affective practices such as the brahmavihāras and buddhānussati, in addition to insight practice. But having done numerous intensive retreats (up to 6 mo. in duration), my experience has been that intensive practice can run the full spectrum from times of elation and joy and gratitude to those of deep sadness, fear, boredom, and even physical pain. Over the years these extremes do begin to even out, but I doubt that anyone can intensively engage in this process without experiencing discomfort on various levels and shedding a few tears along the way.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 24, 2011 11:47 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Dmytro!!

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 27, 2011 8:19 am

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

Indeed it is. I read A Path With Heart when it first came out about 20 years ago, and found it helpful. I still recommend it and Seeking the Heart of Wisdom (co-authored with Goldstein) to people who are interested in practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 29, 2011 10:52 am

Title: Re: Luminous Mind. - What is it?

Content:

Indeed. It's far less problematic to regard "luminosity" as a metaphor. SN 1.13 Natthiputtasama Sutta: Natthi paññāsamā ābhā.

There is no radiance comparable to discernment.

AN 4.141 Ābhā Sutta:

Catasso imā bhikkhave ābhā. Katamā catasso? Candābhā, suriyābhā, aggābhā, paññābhā. Imā kho bhikkhave catasso ābhā. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave imāsaṃ catassannaṃ ābhānaṃ yadidaṃ paññābhāti.

Monks, there are these four radiances. What four? The radiance of the moon, the radiance of the sun, the radiance of fire, and the radiance of discernment. These, monks, are the four radiances. This, monks, is the highest among these four radiances, namely the radiance of discernment.

AN 4.142 Pabhā Sutta:

Catasso imā, bhikkhave, pabhā. Katamā catasso? Candappabhā, sūriyappabhā, aggippabhā, paññappabhā. Imā kho, bhikkhave, catasso pabhā. Etadaggaṃ, bhikkhave, imāsaṃ catunnaṃ pabhānaṃ, yad idaṃ paññappabhā.

Monks, there are these four lustres. What four? The lustre of the moon, the lustre of the sun, the lustre of fire, and the lustre of discernment. These, monks, are the four lustres. This, monks, is the highest among these four lustres, namely the lustre of discernment.

AN 4.143 Āloka Sutta:

Cattārome bhikkhave ālokā. Katame cattāro? Candāloko, suriyāloko, aggāloko, paññāloko. Ime kho bhikkhave cattāro ālokā. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave imesaṃ catunnaṃ ālokānaṃ yadidaṃ paññālokoti.

Monks, there are these four lights. What four? The light of the moon, the light of the sun, the light of fire, and the light of discernment. These, monks, are the four lights. This, monks, is the highest among these four lights, namely the light of discernment.

AN 4.144 Obhāsa Sutta:

Cattārome bhikkhave obhāsā. Katame cattāro? Candobhāso, suriyobhāso, aggobhāso, paññobhāso. Ime kho bhikkhave cattāro obhāsā. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave imesaṃ catunnaṃ obhāsānaṃ yadidaṃ paññobhāsoti.

Monks, there are these four brightnesses. What four? The brightness of the sun, the brightness of the moon, the brightness of fire, and the brightness of discernment. These, monks, are the four brightnesses. This, monks, is the highest among these four brightnesses, namely the brightness of discernment.

Of course, this probably won't stop people from opting for literal interpretations of the "light" of discernment. But any "light" that one perceives is necessarily conditioned, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. It is to be abandoned along the way, not taken up as the fruition of the path.

All the best,

Geoff

Edit: typo.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 29, 2011 2:59 pm

Title: Re: Luminous Mind. - What is it?

Content:

IMO "discernment" is a better translation than "wisdom," which is more akin to ñāṇa in most contexts.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 29, 2011 7:20 pm

Title: Re: Samadhi leading to knowledge and vision?

Content:

Ven. Anālayo, *From Craving to Liberation: Excursions into the Thought-world of the Pāli Discourses*: A prominent antidote to sloth-and-torpor, mentioned on frequent occasions in the Pāli discourses, is the development of "perception of light," ālokasaññā, together with mindfulness and clear comprehension (e.g. DN I 71). Some discourses associate the expression "perception of light" with a mind that is "open," vivaṭṭa, and "uncovered," apariyonaddha, by day and by night, and indicate that such "perception of light" will lead to knowledge and vision (DN III 223). This suggests the expression "perception of light" to refer to the development of mental clarity.

Such a way of understanding finds support in the Vibhaṅga, which glosses "perception of light" as a perception that is "open," vivaṭṭa, "pure," parisuddha, and "clean," pariyodāta (Vibh 254).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 30, 2011 9:24 pm

Title: Re: Conditioning.

Content:

Indeed. Apparently the canonical definition of nibbāna as the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion isn't good enough.... Of course, this is nothing new. There's a long history of seeking out new and novel definitions of nibbāna in all Buddhist schools. In *Metaphor and Literalism in Buddhism: The Doctrinal History of Nirvana*, Soonil Hwang states:

[N]ew etymologies of nirvana seems to have started at the time when the extinction of the triple fires of passion, hatred and delusion was still used and accepted as the definition of nirvana, while its metaphorical structure had started to be forgotten. Without an understanding of its metaphorical structure, the original definition of nirvana could not satisfy later Buddhists, since it did not cover all aspects of their highest goal.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 05, 2011 3:40 am

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

Both Goldstein and Kornfield have been able to see through the dense layers of conceptual nonsense which hang over Theravāda Buddhism and are accepted as literal facts by far too many modern, well educated Western practitioners who really should do a better job of learning the teachings and not be so gullible. This is to their credit. Both are fine teachers.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 05, 2011 10:45 am

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

Yes. Of course. It applies to the Mahāyāna as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 05, 2011 12:16 pm

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

For example, see [here](#) or [here](#) or [here](#) or [here](#), etc.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 06, 2011 9:40 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Paṭiccasamuppāda has to be understood in both forward and reverse sequence. That is dhamma. The forward sequence beginning with ignorance is no longer applicable when ignorance has been eliminated.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 06, 2011 10:52 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Sure. But somewhere in the Aṅguttaranikāya there is a sutta which explains that with the remainderless passing away and cessation of ignorance there is no longer a fabricated body, voice, or mind conditioned by which pleasure or pain arise internally. My guess would be that this means that an arahant doesn't generate either kusala or akusala kamma -- all actions would then be kiriya.

At any rate, I haven't been paying attention to what it is that you guys are debating so I'll step aside.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 06, 2011 7:54 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

It's AN 4.171 Cetanā Sutta:

In all these states, monks, ignorance is involved. But with the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance, there is no longer that body, speech or mind conditioned by which pleasure and pain may arise in oneself. There is no longer a field, a site, a base or a foundation conditioned by which pleasure and pain may arise in oneself.\*

Ven. Ñāṇaponika's endnote:

\*This refers to an arahant. Though he too engages in bodily, verbal, and mental activity, the volition responsible for these activities does not produce any kamma-result.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 9:19 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda gets it. The aggregate scheme is mere designation (paññattimatta). The classical Mahāvihāra two truth hermeneutic is deeply flawed -- resulting in either an eternalistic or nihilistic view. We also see variations on these extremes playing out all over this forum and amongst many Theravāda teachers as well. The aggregates are not to be taken as "the given." Nor is contact. With the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion the mind is measureless (appamāṇacetasa). There is no criterion or measurement (pamāṇa) which can be used as a reference point to define a measureless cognition. SN 6.7 Kokālika Sutta:

What wise man here would seek to define  
A measureless one by taking his measure?  
He who would measure a measureless one  
Must be, I think, an obstructed worldling.

In evocative terms, one who is awake is deep (gambhīra), boundless (appameyya), and fathomless (duppariyogāḷha) -- utterly free from any reference to specifically fabricated consciousness (viññāṇasaṅkhayavimutta). "Gone" (atthaṅgata), the measureless mind is not dependent (anissita) on any findable support, and therefore, is untraceable (ananuvejja) here and now. MN 22

Alagaddūpama Sutta:

Monks, when the gods with Indra, with Brahmā and with Pajāpati seek a monk who is thus liberated in mind, they do not find [anything of which they could say], "The tathāgata's consciousness is dependent on this." Why is that? A tathāgata, I say, is untraceable even here and now.

Elsewhere this non-abiding mind is designated as "unestablished consciousness" (appatitṭha viññāṇa). Ven. Ñāṇananda gets it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 9:53 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

What bare mechanics? Phenomenological description? That's mere designation. Some of this issue has been touched upon here. In short:

Sense-objects are therefore signs which have become significant in themselves owing to our ignorance that their significance depends on the psychological mainsprings of lust, hatred and delusion. This, in other words, is a result of reasoning from the wrong end (ayoniso manasikāra) which leads both the philosopher and the scientist alike into a topsy-turvydom of endless theorising.

Contact was also touched upon here.

All the best,

Geoff



Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 10:35 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

The all is to be abandoned. The path is to be developed in order to abandon the all. The path is entirely 100% fabricated for that specific purpose. The raft is for crossing over, not for carrying around once crossed over, and certainly not for constructing philosophies.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 10:46 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Well, I'll defer that question to the arahants. SN 6.7 Kokālika Sutta:

What wise man here would seek to define

A measureless one by taking his measure?

He who would measure a measureless one

Must be, I think, an obstructed worldling.

One can talk about an arahants experience in terms of phenomenological description, but I'm not sure what purpose it would serve? Historically, it's lead to numerous thickets of views. Better to develop the path and then taste the fruit for oneself. The gnosis and vision of liberation (vimuttiñāṇadassana) -- non-referential inner peace (ajjhataṣanti) -- is to be individually experienced (paccatta veditabba). The path is to be developed to this end.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 10:53 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Sure, an arahant has a body. But an arahant is also utterly freed from reference/classification/reckoning in terms of form (rūpasāṅkhayavimutta). The same is the case for the other aggregates.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 5:46 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

If you follow the noble eightfold path to its fruition and thereby eliminate passion, aggression, and delusion, then you'll have your answer. In the meantime, Ven. Ñāṇananda's Nibbāna Sermons will have to suffice:

Now as to this vacant gaze, there is much to be said, though one might think that it is not at all worth discussing about. If someone asks us: 'What is the object of the gaze of one with such a vacant gaze', what shall we say? The vacant gaze is, in fact, not established anywhere (appatiṭṭham). It has no existence (appavattaṃ) and it is object-less (anārammaṇaṃ). Even at the mention of these three terms, appatiṭṭham, appavattaṃ and anārammaṇaṃ, some might recall those highly controversial discourses on Nibbāna.

Why do we call the vision of the arahant a vacant gaze? At the highest point of the development of the three characteristics impermanence, suffering and not-self, that is, through the three deliverances animitta, appaṇihita and suññata, the "signess", the "undirected" and the "void", the arahant is now looking at the object with a penetrative gaze. That is why it is not possible to say what he is looking at. It is a gaze that sees the cessation of the object, a gaze that penetrates the object, as it were.

Also, SN 12.64: "Where consciousness does not become established and come to growth, there is no decent of name-and-form." (Yattha appatiṭṭhitaṃ viññāṇaṃ avirūḷhaṃ, natthi tattha nāmarūpassa avakkanti.) Ven. Bodhi's endnote:

The present passage is clearly speaking of the arahant's consciousness while he is alive. Its purport is not that an "unestablished consciousness" remains after the arahant's parinibbāna, but that his consciousness, being devoid of lust, does not "become established in" the four nutriments in any way that might generate a future existence.

As for my rendering of "unestablished" (appatiṭṭha) as an adjective for a "consciousness which does not become established," this is in keeping with the sense of the above from Ven. Ñāṇananda. One could designate it as mental-consciousness (manoviññāṇa), as per MN 38: "[W]hen consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness." This is what the early ābhidhammikas have decided, adding that said mental-consciousness is classified within the unincluded level (apariyāpanna bhūmi). That's fine by me, but doesn't really convey the full meaning of Ven. Ñāṇananda's interpretation of SN 12.64 and Udāna 8.1 (PTS Ud 80).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 6:13 pm

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

There are also some skills which should be developed before undertaking a 3 mo. retreat intensive. These have to do with developing a good foundation of ethical conduct (sīla), renunciation (nekkhamma), and meditative composure (samādhi). The latter including the development of calm (samathabhāvanā) as well as the development of loving-kindness (mettābhāvanā). Ven. Ṭhāṇissaro,

One Tool Among Many: The Place of Vipassanā in Buddhist Practice:

This program for developing vipassanā and samatha, in turn, needs the support of many other attitudes, mental qualities, and techniques of practice. This was why the Buddha taught it as part of a still larger program, including respect for the noble ones, mastery of all seven approaches for abandoning the mental fermentations, and all eight factors of the noble path. To take a reductionist approach to the practice can produce only reduced results, for meditation is a skill like carpentry, requiring a mastery of many tools in response to many different needs. To limit oneself to only one approach in meditation would be like trying to build a house when one's motivation is uncertain and one's tool box contains nothing but hammers.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 07, 2011 6:31 pm

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

Yes, we can and should. A Path With Heart is not the final word on Buddhist Practice. It does, however, offer some valuable suggestions and approaches for working with hindrances and other difficulties at various stages of practice, especially for Western householders. One may find the view presented in the book to be diluted, and I would agree. But this isn't unique to Kornfield. As just one example, I've attended Zen retreats where the forms were all well preserved, but the Dharma talks weren't any different from what someone like Wayne Dyer might offer. Not exactly my cup of tea. But at the end of the day, one gets out of one's practice what one puts into it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 08, 2011 3:28 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Already addressed here. In brief, when all acquisitions have been released (i.e. sabbūpadhipaṭinissagga) there is no need to designate "contact." Udāna 2.4 (Ud 12):

Contacts make contact

Dependent on acquisition.

Where there is no acquisition,

What would contacts contact?

Both Ven. Ñāṇananda and Ven. Ñāṇavīra have understood this correctly.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 08, 2011 3:33 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Again, you're free to analyze however you see fit. I don't see the relevance or the utility in this line of inquiry. The path has been fabricated in order to reach the fruition, not to speculate about the fruition.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 08, 2011 4:55 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Sure. It's quite obvious that an arahant still has the six faculties and still dies.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 08, 2011 5:09 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

I'm not insisting on anything. There isn't really any advantage to this entire line of investigation. I personally consider Ven. Ñāṇananda and Ven. Ñāṇavīra's interpretations to be reasonable and appropriate in the current climate of mainstream Theravāda philosophical realism. Thus, it's something of a countermeasure -- just as Nāgārjuna was a countermeasure to similar trends in antiquity. To paraphrase Ven. Ñāṇananda, it's too bad that Nāgārjuna's followers had to turn it into a Vāda. It's possible that some of Ñāṇavīra's followers are trying to do the same. I don't see the point.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 09, 2011 6:58 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

The only one I see here who is attempting to reify anything is you with your penchant for jumping to fallacious conclusions. Do you not know of any other way to communicate besides the very lame

tactic of reduction to the absurd and the equally lame tactic of the fallacy of distraction? Life is far too short to engage in such bullshit games.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 09, 2011 7:30 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Your reading of the relevant suttas is mistaken. Yet once again you're running off at the mouth without having the foggiest idea of what Ven. Ñāṇananda and Ven. Bodhi and Ven. Ṭhānissaro are indicating.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 09, 2011 11:17 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

I have no more time for you bud. Zero.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 2:36 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

I think that there are numerous sutta references to the awakened mind which explain what is not the foundation of an arahant's experience. Firstly, by way of training: The seen is merely the seen (diṭṭhamatta). The heard is merely the heard (sutamatta). The sensed is merely the sensed (mutamatta). The known is merely the known (viññātamatta). Ud 1.10 Bāhiya Sutta:

‘The seen will be merely the seen, the heard will be merely the heard, the sensed will be merely the sensed, the known will be merely the known.’ This is how you should train, Bāhiya.

When, Bāhiya, for you the seen will be merely the seen, the heard will be merely the heard, the sensed will be merely the sensed, the known will be merely the known, then Bāhiya, you will not be that. When, Bāhiya, you are not that, then Bāhiya, you will not be there. When, Bāhiya, you are not there, then Bāhiya, you will be neither here nor beyond nor between-the-two. Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness.

Secondly, the absence of specific fabrication (abhisankharoti) or volitional intention (abhisancetayati) towards either existence or non-existence. MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

One does not form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence. Not forming any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence, he does not cling to anything in this world. Not clinging, he is not excited. Unexcited, he personally attains complete nibbāna. He discerns that, ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here.’

Cf. Ven. Ñāṇananda, Nibbāna Sermon 04:

What is called the cessation of consciousness has a deeper sense here. It means the cessation of the specifically prepared consciousness, abhisankhata viññāṇa. An arahant's experience of the cessation

of consciousness is at the same time the experience of the cessation of name-and-form.

And Nibbāna Sermon 06:

The more one sees preparations (saṅkhāras) as preparations, ignorance is dispelled, and the more one dispels ignorance, the preparations lose their significance as preparations. Then one sees the nature of preparations with wisdom as signless, desireless, and void. So much so that, in effect, preparations cease to be preparations.... The relation of saṅkhāras to ignorance is somewhat similar to the relation a drama has to its back-stage preparations. It seems, then, that from the standpoint of Dhamma the entire saṃsāra is a product of specifically prepared intentions, even like the drama with its back-stage preparations....

The phrase saṅkhatam paṭiccasamuppannam (e.g. M III 299), 'prepared and dependently arisen', suggests that the prepared nature is also due to that contact. What may be called abhisāṅkhata viññāṇa (S III 58), 'specifically prepared consciousness', is that sort of consciousness which gets attached to name-and-form. When one sees a film show, one interprets a scene appearing on the screen according to one's likes and dislikes. It becomes a thing of experience for him. Similarly, by imagining a self in name-and-form, consciousness gets attached to it. It is such a consciousness, which is established on name-and-form, that can be called abhisāṅkhata viññāṇa. Then could there be also a consciousness which does not reflect a name-and-form? Yes, there could be. That is what is known as anidassana viññāṇa, or 'non-manifestative consciousness'.

And thirdly, consciousness which is unestablished (appatiṭṭha viññāṇa). SN 22.53 Upaya Sutta: When that consciousness is unestablished, not increasing, not concocting, it is liberated. Being liberated, it is steady. Being steady, it is content. Being content, he is not excited. Unexcited, he personally attains complete nibbāna. He discerns that, 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here.'

As for the qualm that this last passage refers to the death of an arahant, the phrase: "Unexcited, he personally attains complete nibbāna. He discerns that, 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here,'" is the standard paricope referring to the time of awakening, i.e. a statement of the attainment of arahant fruition (e.g. DN 15, MN 105, etc.), and not the time of death of an arahant.

The above passages referring to the cognition of an arahant are succinctly presented in AN 4.24 Kālakārāma Sutta:

Thus, monks, the Tathāgata does not conceive an [object] seen when seeing what is to be seen. He does not conceive an unseen. He does not conceive a to-be-seen. He does not conceive a seer.

He does not conceive an [object] heard when hearing what is to be heard. He does not conceive an unheard. He does not conceive a to-be-heard. He does not conceive a hearer.

He does not conceive an [object] sensed when sensing what is to be sensed. He does not conceive an unsensed. He does not conceive a to-be-sensed. He does not conceive a senser.

He does not conceive an [object] known when knowing what is to be known. He does not conceive an unknown. He does not conceive a to-be-known. He does not conceive a knower.

Ven. Ñāṇananda considered the Kālakārāma Sutta important enough to write a text on it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 3:35 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Well, I'd suggest that this amounts to measuring and classifying the arahant in terms of the aggregates. Also, the aggregate scheme isn't necessary to account for awakened experience. And as I've previously mentioned, the suttas do not use the aggregate classification when referring to the Buddha or an arahant. They use the faculties classification. The suttas never equate the aggregates with the sense spheres or the faculties. Given the definition of the fabrications aggregate as volitional intention pertaining to the six objects (e.g. SN 22.56 Upādānaparivatta Sutta), there may be good reason for this. MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

One does not form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence. Not forming any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence, he does not cling to anything in this world.

SN 22.79 Khajjanīya Sutta also has some interesting things to say about the aggregates.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 4:29 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

This is what I've been saying -- the sutta which defines saupādisesa nibbānadhātu refers to the faculties, not the aggregates. The suttas in the Saṃyuttanikāya which describe the Buddha's experience of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, etc., refer to the faculties, not the aggregates. I'm not interested in hanging my hat on any thesis based on the omission of the aggregate scheme in these contexts, but it's worth noting.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 4:45 am

Title: Re: Phassa (contact)

Content:

Yes it's possible. MN 28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta:

Now if internally the eye is intact but externally forms do not come into range, nor is there a corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. If internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, but there is no corresponding

engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, and there is a corresponding engagement, then there is the appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

For sensory consciousness to "arise" there needs to be samannāhāra: "corresponding engagement." This is generally considered to be attention (manasikāra). Someone can be lost in thought, or reading a book, or meditating, and not hear nor see things presently occurring around them, because there is no corresponding engagement or act-of-attention.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 5:10 am

Title: Re: Phassa (contact)

Content:

We've been touching (pun intended) upon this in the Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering? thread. The terms used in the Bāhiya Sutta are: merely the seen (diṭṭhamatta), merely the heard (sutamatta), merely the sensed (mutamatta), merely the known (viññātamatta).

From a suttanta perspective, when all acquisitions have been released (i.e. sabbūpadhipaṭinissagga) there is no need to designate "contact." Udāna 2.4 (Ud 12):

Contacts make contact

Dependent on acquisition.

Where there is no acquisition,

What would contacts contact?

The abhidhamma schools however, explain all cognitions in terms of contact -- including supramundane cognitions. The necessity of attention and apperception in the cognitive process is one of the reasons why most abhidhamma schools (except for the Yogācāra) only allow for one of the six types of consciousness to occur at any given time. Thus, even if one's eyes and ears are "open," most of what one experiences occurs through mental-consciousness (manoviññāṇa). This is the case even when engaging a visible form or a sound or a tactual object, etc. There is a momentary occurrence of the bare object via the corresponding sense consciousness, and then the mind adverts to mental consciousness to ascertain the characteristics of what is being perceived. But this doesn't mean that the eye-faculty stops functioning and one cannot see.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 5:35 am

Title: Re: Phassa (contact)

Content:

I think this is an accurate assessment.



All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 6:46 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

I have no time for you bud. Is that not clear? I have zero interest in discussing anything else with you. Your views on virtually every subject are so far out there that they don't even remotely resemble the Buddhadhamma. To point out and clarify each of your interpretive errors in this thread alone would take far more time and effort than I'm willing to invest. You're entirely free to invent your own religion and call it whatever you like, but I'm not interested.

There's a reason why I don't visit Sujato's blog or Brahmavamso's forum or Daniel Ingram's forum: I have no interest in what these people are presenting as "dhamma."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 7:36 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

A PM which was an exact copy of this post, with the reason for sending it: in case the post was deleted by the mods due to my choice of language.

At any rate, you may be a fine lawyer but the dhamma isn't an adversarial system. I'm not interested in your version of sutta interpretation, just as I'm not interested in Sujato's version or Brahmavamso's version or Daniel Ingram's version. It's nothing personal, I'm simply not interested.

Be well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 6:59 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Yes.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 10, 2011 7:21 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

SN 12.61 Assutavantu Sutta: "But what's called 'mind,' 'intellect,' or 'consciousness' by day and by night arises as one thing and ceases as another. Just as a monkey, swinging through a forest wilderness, grabs a branch. Letting go of it, it grabs another branch. Letting go of that, it grabs another one. Letting go of that, it grabs another one. In the same way, what's called 'mind,' 'intellect,' or 'consciousness' by day and by night arises as one thing and ceases as another."

When the underlying tendencies and outflows have been eliminated upon awakening there is gnosis of elimination (khayeñña). After this there are no underlying tendencies associated with an arahant's mind-stream.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 12, 2011 2:31 am

Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?

Content:

It's also something of a leap to suggest that all of the people practicing or teaching within any one tradition are on the same page. "Traditions" are conceptual frameworks engaged by individual mental continuums.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 12, 2011 5:04 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Yikes. Thickets of views by any other name. . . .

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 12, 2011 5:12 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Nibbāna isn't a "state."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 12, 2011 9:34 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Nonsense. Nibbāna is explicitly and clearly defined in the canon as the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion. SN 38.1 Nibbānapañhā Sutta:

“‘Nibbāna, nibbāna,’ friend Sāriputta, it is said. What now is nibbāna?”

“The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this, friend, is called nibbāna.”

And the nibbāna component with fuel remaining (saupādisesa nibbānadhātu) is defined in exactly the same terms in Itivuttaka 2.44 Nibbānadhātu Sutta:

And what is the nibbāna component with fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose outflows have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, ended the fetter of existence, and is liberated through right gnosis. His five sense faculties still remain and, owing to their being intact, he is cognizant of the agreeable and the disagreeable, and experiences pleasure and pain. His elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion is termed the nibbāna component with fuel remaining.

Nothing whatsoever to do with a "state" or "pitch-black emptiness."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 12, 2011 10:06 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

The Pāli of the first sentence is: so neva taṃ abhisaṅkharoti na abhisañcetayati bhavāya vā vibhavāya vā.

bhava: existence

vibhava: non-existence

vā: or

The translation is mine. Compare the sense of the above with Ud 3.10 Loka Sutta:

Although becoming otherwise, the world is held by existence,

Afflicted by existence, yet delights in that very existence.

Where there is delight, there is fear.

What it fears is unsatisfactory.

This holy life is lived for the abandoning of that existence.

Whatever ascetics or brāhmaṇas say that emancipation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not liberated from existence, I say.

And whatever ascetics or brāhmaṇas say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

Some translators translate bhava as "becoming," which highlights the point that existence is a process without any fixed entity. There is nothing wrong with translating it as such, but I prefer to translate the term as "existence." As the 10th link of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda) bhava is clearly defined in a number of suttas as the three realms: sensual existence, form existence, and formless existence (kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, arūpa bhava).

The forward sequence of conditioned arising is always a description of deluded cognition and the consequence of deluded cognition, which is unsatisfactoriness (dukkha). As DN 22 explains, craving sensual pleasure (kāma taṇhā), craving existence (bhava taṇhā), and craving non-existence (vibhava taṇhā) are the origin of unsatisfactoriness (dukkha samudaya), and the cessation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkha nirodha) is the elimination of that very craving.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 3:26 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Ven. Bodhi is following Ven. Ñāṇamoli's use of "being" in the translated edition of the Middle Length Discourses. In his subsequent translation of the Connected Discourses of the Buddha Ven. Bodhi translates bhava as "existence."

The point that I was trying to make in the last post was that deluded cognitions always conceive in terms of existence or non-existence, and that this is part of the problem which creates and re-creates a "world" and a "self." It's due to craving existence and grasping that consciousness is established and comes to growth. Of course, craving non-existence isn't acceptable either. Both of these mistaken compulsions are entwined within thickets of views which reify a self and objectify a world. In short, we are held captive by our infatuation with the very things that captivate us.

As MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta explains, an arahant doesn't form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence:

One does not form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence. Not forming any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence, he does not cling to anything in this world.

It's in this way that there is no clinging with regard to anything in the world. Ud 3.10 Loka Sutta: Whatever ascetics or brāhmaṇas say that emancipation from existence is by means of existence, all of them are not liberated from existence, I say.

And whatever ascetics or brāhmaṇas say that escape from existence is by means of non-existence, all of them have not escaped from existence, I say.

Conceiving in ontological terms is ineffective and only reinforces underlying tendencies.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 3:53 am

Title: Re: DO not depending on avijja and sankhara?

Content:

This is still where the main action is -- where "the rubber meets the road" so to speak. Feeling is the link in the standard forward sequence of conditioned arising where we can readily access and begin to apply the applications of mindfulness in order to begin to understand the four noble truths and orient our practice accordingly (Cf. M i 270, page 360 of MLDB). The writings of Ven. Ñāṇananda are really just a corrective for a few common sidetracks.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 3:58 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Are you suggesting that deluded cognitions conceive things in terms other than existence or non-existence?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 9:45 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

The way to get there is the noble eightfold path, which is to be developed. The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion is the fruition of the path, which is to be realized. "Nibbāna" is a figurative term relating to this elimination using the metaphor of fire and fuel. Both the path and the fruition are sufficiently defined and explained in the canonical teachings. Thus, in the context of the realization of nibbāna there's really no need for appeals to ineffability.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 9:52 am

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

This is the type of analysis which has no basis in the canon, and which leads to your problematic version of "The Unconditioned." The classical Mahāvihāra two truth hermeneutic is deeply flawed -- resulting in either an eternalistic or nihilistic view. We see numerous variations on these extremes playing out all over this forum and amongst many Theravāda teachers as well. The aggregate scheme is mere designation (paññattimatta). The aggregates are not to be taken as "the ultimately existent given." With the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion the mind is measureless (appamāṇacetasa). There is no criterion or measurement (pamāṇa) which can be used as a reference point to define a measureless cognition.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 1:58 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

Yep. When defilements arise I'm aware of them. I'm also not adverse to calling a spade a spade. Sometimes it helps clear the air.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 7:43 pm

Title: Re: Do arahants discard vipaka/suffering?

Content:

With care and introspection. Of course, being blunt should be the exception, not the rule. It should go without saying that it's generally far more appropriate to remain genteel or opt for silence.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 13, 2011 8:00 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

It's the reification of "The Unconditioned" which leads to these appeals of ineffability. But this has been discussed previously at length.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 14, 2011 3:16 am

Title: Re: The Dhyani Buddhas?

Content:

While you're awaiting replies from the sister site, here is a bit of background from an old post. The notion(s) of buddhahood in Mahāyāna is itself a rather diverse subject.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 14, 2011 3:59 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

The suttas define and describe the goal in sufficient terms. The difficulty in this discussion relates to whether one accepts what the canon states about the fruition of the path, or alternatively, accepts much later commentarial interpretations of the "path-moment" and "fruition-moment" as re-interpreted by a few 20th century Burmese monks. Without sufficient common ground for discussion there isn't much possibility of meaningful dialogue.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 14, 2011 5:13 am

Title: Re: The Dhyani Buddhas?

Content:

Yes, Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche is a reliable source.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 15, 2011 1:57 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

The gnosis of the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion is known. It's called the gnosis of nibbāna (nibbāna ñāṇa), the gnosis of elimination (khaññāṇa), the gnosis and vision of liberation (vimuttiñāṇadassana), and so on.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 17, 2011 12:08 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Here is how the path is developed according to the canon: dissatisfaction (dukkha) → faith (saddhā) → gladness (pāmojja) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → pleasure (sukha) → meditative composure (samādhi) → gnosis & vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañāṇadassana) → disenchantment (nibbidā) → dispassion (virāga) → liberation (vimutti) → gnosis of elimination (khaññāṇa).

No need for "pitch-black emptiness." No need for "non-experience." And certainly no cause for thinking that "pitch-black emptiness" is the goal of the noble path. Your nihilistic view is no more sustainable than the eternalistic view held by the "nibbāna is the luminous mind" people, or the "nibbāna is a truly existing transcendental realm" people.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 17, 2011 7:36 am

Title: Re: Is there an order I should be studying this material?

Content:

These are all quite good:

- 1) In the Buddha's Words
- 2) Mindfulness in Plain English
- 3) Beyond Mindfulness in Plain English
- 5) Living Dharma

I would also suggest The Teachings of Ajahn Chah.

It's a good idea to get an understanding of these before the Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma.

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 18, 2011 2:15 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

This was written by Patrick Kearney who considered himself fit to criticize Jack Kornfield's A Path with Heart. I'm guessing that Kearney thinks that this "blackout emptiness" he's peddling is "dhamma."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 5:23 am

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

Yes, non-percipient attainments (*asaññasamāpatti*) are wrong *samādhis* entered by worldlings, either intentionally, due to misunderstanding the dhamma, or unintentionally. It's a mistake to equate this type of non-percipient state with the noble paths and fruitions. Moreover, if one were to die while experiencing this non-percipient attainment the only possible result of this would be rebirth as non-percipient being (*asaññasatta*) without any functional mind or mental faculties. This is considered to be an inappropriate and inopportune plane (*akkhaṇa bhūmi*), because there is no possibility of practicing dhamma either within the non-perceptive absorption or as a non-percipient being reborn in such a realm. Both as a practice and a *saṃsāric* realm it arrests any possibility for mental development (*bhāvanā*).

The Pāḷi Tipiṭaka explicitly states -- in both the Suttapiṭaka and Abhidhammapiṭaka -- that the noble path and fruition cognitions must include perception (*saññā*). Therefore this notion of the noble paths and fruitions being devoid of perception is not the Pāḷi dhamma. It is the path of a deficient vehicle (*hīnayāna*) which should be avoided.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 5:57 am

Title: Re: Sotapanna: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

The Pāḷi Tipiṭaka explicitly states that the noble path and fruition cognitions must include perception (*saññā*). Therefore any notion of the noble paths and fruitions being devoid of perception is not the Pāḷi dhamma. It is the path of a deficient vehicle (*hīnayāna*) which should be avoided.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 6:55 am

Title: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

In The Development of Insight Patrick Kearney states:

In practice, what happens is that the meditator is practicing, every aspect of his meditation is subtle, clear and bright, and then suddenly there is a sense of falling-into (knowledge of insight leading to emergence) and then the lights go out. There is a momentary sense of nothingness, and then the lights come on. If the meditator checks the watch, he realises some time has passed - depending on the strength of his concentration, this could be anything from a few minutes to a few days and he has "awoken" suddenly into a situation in which the practice is continuing, but the experience is much less subtle than before. The meditator is now in the knowledge of arising and passing away (udayabbaya-nana).

What happened? Has he fallen asleep? No, because of the suddenness and clarity of the beginning and end of the experience of unconsciousness, and because there has been absolutely no physical movement. What the meditator has experienced is the total cessation of the mind-body process. He did not "know" this while it was happening., because there was no sense of a mind to know it. [Emphasis added.]

Unfortunately, what Kearney is advocating here as the noble path and fruition of stream-entry is actually just a non-percipient attainment (asaññasamāpatti). A non-percipient attainment is a state devoid of perception entered by worldlings who mistakenly attempt to realize nibbāna by stopping perception and stopping the mind. In the Theravāda commentaries it is considered to be non-Buddhist, and dying while experiencing such a state is said to result in rebirth as a non-percipient, unconscious being (asaññasatta) without any functional mind or mental faculties. It is also considered to be an inappropriate and inopportune plane (akkhaṇa bhūmi), because there is no possibility of practicing dhamma either within the non-perceptive absorption or as a non-percipient being reborn in such a realm. Both as a practice and a saṃsāric realm it arrests any possibility for mental development (bhāvanā).

This mindless, unconscious path that Kearney is advocating does not represent the teachings of the Pāḷi Dhamma. The Pāḷi Tipiṭaka explicitly states that the noble path and fruition cognitions must include perception (saññā). Therefore this notion of the noble paths and fruitions being devoid of perception is not the Pāḷi dhamma. It is the teaching of a deficient vehicle (hīnayāna) which should be avoided.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 8:48 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

There is no possibility of entering a noble path or noble fruition without the presence of the path and fruition consciousness pertaining to that noble path and fruition. Moreover, the noble paths and fruitions are only entered through the attainment of supramundane jhāna. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppāḍakaṇḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā explains the supramundane dhammas occurring at the time of attaining the noble path via supramundane jhāna and abiding in that path attainment via resultant supramundane jhāna. It explicitly states that the jhāna factors must be present; the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, meditative composure, and discernment must be present; and perception must be present in each case. Without the presence of these dhammas there can be no noble path or fruition. The Paṭisambhidāmagga Ñāṇakathā can only be correctly understood with reference to the Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppāḍakaṇḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā. Ven. Ñāṇārāma has correctly understood that the supramundane path-consciousness of stream-entry is supramundane jhāna which must include the presence of the jhāna factors, and so on. In his Seven Stages of Purification & the Insight Knowledges he states:  
At whatever moment he attains the supramundane path, that path-consciousness comes to be reckoned as a jhāna in itself, since it has some affinity with the factors proper to jhānas, such as the first jhāna. What are known as transcendental meditations in Buddhism are these supramundane levels of concentration within the reach of the pure insight meditator.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 8:58 am

Title: Re: Patrick Kearney is not teaching the Pāḷi Dhamma

Content:

Kearney is free to teach whatever he wants, and you're free to follow what he's teaching. I have no interest in following what he is advocating. According to DN 16 anyone following the Buddha's dispensation should reject any teaching by any teacher which are not in accord with the dhammavinaya:

In such a case, bhikkhus, the declaration of such a bhikkhu is neither to be received with approval nor with scorn. Without approval and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses and verify them by the Discipline. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Discipline, one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is not the Blessed One's utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' In that way, bhikkhus, you should reject it.

It's time to begin stating things for what they are. We have people here on Dhamma Wheel advocating exactly this sort of unconscious attainment that is being taught by Kearney as the noble path. This represents a significant misunderstanding of the Pāḷi dhamma. Following this sort of teaching could result in rebirth as an unconscious being, thus seriously retarding one's development of the path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 9:10 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī presents the path factors which occur at the time of entering a noble path or fruition. There is nothing barring this from happening when someone was listening to the Buddha teach. But for those of us who weren't there when the Buddha was teaching, it's important to understand what the compilers of the Pāli Tipiṭaka considered to be important and necessary dhammas which must be present and functional for attainment of the noble path. In short, there can be no path without perception.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 9:39 am

Title: Re: Patrick Kearney is not teaching the Pāli Dhamma

Content:

Whatever you are sensing is the product of your own perception. I've given the reason why what he is teaching should be rejected. DN 16:

In such a case, bhikkhus, the declaration of such a bhikkhu is neither to be received with approval nor with scorn. Without approval and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses and verify them by the Discipline. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Discipline, one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is not the Blessed One's utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' In that way, bhikkhus, you should reject it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 9:45 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

No contradiction. Show us one sutta which states that the noble path is attained without perception, or that this attainment is devoid of joy, non-carnal pleasure, directed thought, evaluation, and singleness of mind, at the minimum.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 11:08 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

His teachings haven't been misrepresented. He explicitly states:

He did not "know" this while it was happening, because there was no sense of a mind to know it.

If Kearney want's to align what he is teaching with the Pāli Dhamma then he should publicly retract this pernicious view. He should also have The Development of Insight removed from Buddhanet.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 11:36 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

According to the commentarial scheme the entry into the supramundane path can happen after exiting and reviewing a mundane jhāna. But the review of the path and fruition happens post-supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 12:45 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

It seems that U Ba Khin's student was aware of what he was experiencing as he was experiencing it. This would be one difference.

But more to the point, "pitch-black emptiness" is neither an adequate nor reliable indication of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādakaṇḍa Lokuttarakusala Suddhikapaṭipadā describes the dhammas which are present when attaining the first noble path (or fruition) as follows:

When at a certain time one develops supramundane jhāna, which leads out, which goes to decrease (of rebirth), to abandonment of wrong views, to the attainment of the first stage (i.e. sotāpattimagga), quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion, and with difficult practice and slow acquisition of gnosis, then at that time there is contact, there is feeling, there is apperception, there is volitional intention, there is directed thought, there is evaluation, there is joy, there is pleasure, there is singleness of mind, there is the faculty of faith, there is the faculty of energy, there is the faculty of mindfulness, there is the

faculty of concentration, there is the faculty of discernment, there is the mind-faculty, there is the joy-faculty, there is the life-faculty, there is right view, there is right resolve, there is right effort, there is right mindfulness, there is right concentration, there is the strength of faith, there is the strength of energy, there is the strength of mindfulness, there is the strength of concentration, there is the strength of discernment, there is the strength of conscience, there is the strength of shame, there is no greed, there is no hate, there is no delusion, there is no avarice, there is no aversion, there is right view, there is conscience, there is shame, there is bodily calm, there is mental calm, there is bodily lightness, there is mental lightness, there is bodily pliability, there is mental pliability, there is bodily workableness, there is mental workableness, there is bodily proficiency, there is mental proficiency, there is bodily uprightness, there is mental uprightness, there is mindfulness, there is full awareness, there is samatha, there is vipassanā, there is exertion, there is non-distraction.

The same dhammas, with the appropriate emendations, are said to be present when attaining the noble path (or fruition) via the second, third, or fourth supramundane jhānas. Moreover, the only criterion which is both an adequate and reliable verification of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions is gnosis of the termination of specific fetters in one's mind-stream. This cannot happen without the presence of perception (saññā) and discernment (paññā). The cessation of the five sense faculties doesn't indicate anything.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 12:57 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Thus, "pitch-black emptiness" is neither an adequate nor reliable indication of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions. The only criterion which is both an adequate and reliable verification of stream entry or any of the other paths and fruitions is gnosis of the termination of specific fetters in one's mind-stream. The cessation of the five sense faculties doesn't indicate anything.

Of course, none of this is relevant to this thread. What is relevant to this thread is Kearney's assertion that the noble path is an:  
experience of unconsciousness

Wherein there is no discernment or gnosis:

What the meditator has experienced is the total cessation of the mind-body process. He did not "know" this while it was happening., because there was no sense of a mind to know it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 1:03 pm

Title: Re: Sotappana: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

[quote="rowyourboat"]It could be -but there is a fatal flaw in that definition of nibbana: it does not account for the cessation of arising and passing away, which is the definition of the unfabricated. [quote]

Actually, the flaw is in your analysis of what "not-fabricated" means in the context of the noble paths and fruitions. But this has already been pointed out to you numerous times, to no avail.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 1:15 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

The noble path is not a "non-experience." This is a gross misrepresentation of the dhamma. Even the mention of such an absurd proposition would be laughable if not for the fact that there are people in this world teaching that unconsciousness is the noble path. Moreover, all sorts of yogis have used non-perceptive attainments to support all sorts of non-Buddhist views. One can easily come across numerous such views in the long history of the Indian yoga traditions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 2:09 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

How can one be teaching the dhamma while completely misunderstanding the noble eightfold path?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 2:18 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

There is a spectrum of meditative states which can aid in one's development. But unconscious, non-perceptive states are neither the noble paths nor noble fruitions. When it comes to the noble path, if we don't rely on the canonical teachings, then we end up with the likes of Ingram, et al, maintaining that arahants can experience lust. And Ingram has apparently had plenty of experience with non-perceptive states. It's time to raise the bar.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 5:44 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Kearney states:

If the meditator checks the watch, he realises some time has passed - depending on the strength of his concentration, this could be anything from a few minutes to a few days and he has "awoken" suddenly into a situation in which the practice is continuing, but the experience is much less subtle than before.... What the meditator has experienced is the total cessation of the mind-body process. He did not "know" this while it was happening., because there was no sense of a mind to know it. [Emphasis added.]

This can only be a non-perceptive attainment. And the gravity of the issue at hand, aside from Kearney obviously misrepresenting the dhamma, is this: If someone were to follow this advice about the noble path and enter into such a non-perceptive attainment, and were to die while remaining in this non-perceptive attainment, the only possible result would be rebirth as an unconscious being. There is nothing "incidental" about advocating such a path as the noble path of the dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 20, 2011 5:48 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

The Pāḷi canon is the authoritative source regarding the Pāḷi dhamma.

If one has no idea how to get to one's destination, then there's a good chance that one will never arrive there. But even more problematic is the case where one follows an inept guide with a faulty map. In this situation one may arrive somewhere and be told by their guide that this is indeed the destination they were looking for, only to find out later that it isn't the right destination at all.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 5:18 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:



I'm not suggesting that one has to enter the paths from jhāna. The Paṭisambhidāmagga indicates that one can attain the first noble path without prior mastery of jhāna. What I'm saying is that, according to the ābhidhammika analysis, the noble paths and fruitions are supramundane jhāna, complete with all of the concomitant jhāna factors, other path factors, and so on.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 5:33 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

I don't know. I suspect that it isn't Kearney's invention. I think you can probably appreciate the historical developments here though. First the noble path gets squeezed into exactly one mind-moment, then "The Unconditioned" gets doctrinally reified more and more until it is so totally "Other" that this monolithic black blankness can't even be concomitant with consciousness and perception. As a result, even the poor old one-mind-moment path gets squeezed out of the picture -- it's now an unconscious one-mindless-moment path! And the noble truth of the cessation of unsatisfactoriness is no longer the elimination of craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence, it too is now a mindless blip of non-existence.

And even though there is absolutely zero canonical basis for any of this, now we are told that this unconscious one-mindless-moment path-blip is the exclusive panacea for eliminating all fetters, defilements, underlying tendencies and mental outflows. As I mentioned previously, the absurdity of this would be laughable if not for the fact that there are people in this world who are actively promoting this nonsense.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 2:09 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

I agree. It's issues regarding aspects of what is being taught which are in question, not the person. Anyway, back to the issues....

In Still Crazy after all these Years: Why Meditation isn't Psychotherapy, Kearney presents a scathing and sustained critique of the ideas and teachings of Jack Kornfield, Jeffrey Rubin, and Mark Epstein. In the conclusion of the paper Kearney states that we as practitioners should not fool ourselves or anyone else into believing that we are following the teachings of the Buddha when following a practice which cannot be established as the Buddha's teaching, and that we should be clear about whose teachings we are faithfully following:

Let's not try to fool ourselves or anyone else that we are practising the teachings of the Buddha when we follow any of these ersatz forms of Buddhism. Let's be clear whose teachings we are

putting our faith in.

I agree with this call to diligent inquiry. And I think that this investigation should extend to the ideas which Kearney himself attributes to the Buddha. Anything less would be, well, insufficient.

And upon investigation, I don't see how anyone who diligently and openly scrutinizes Kearney's notion of the noble path, as quoted in the OP of this thread, can in any way shape or form place Kearney's ideas of this very important aspect of Buddhist soteriology, in the lap of the Buddha or the redactors of the Pāḷi canon. There is simply no trace of what he is telling us in the canonical Pāḷi dhamma.

And if this weren't enough cause for concern, the Pāḷi commentaries tell us that this "experience of unconsciousness" wherein there is "no sense of a mind to know" is actually just a non-percipient attainment (*asaññasamāpatti*). The commentaries warn against this type of practice in no uncertain terms, explicitly stating that this type of practice can result in rebirth as an unconscious being (*asaññasatta*). In the context of Buddhist liberation, this consequence would be extremely undesirable, seriously impeding one's ability to develop the noble path.

Therefore I have concluded that what Kearney is presenting in this context is just another "ersatz form of Buddhism." And one with serious deficiencies which should not be overlooked by anyone wishing to follow the Pāḷi dhamma. What he is advocating as the attainment of the noble path, upon critical investigation, can only be characterized as the teaching of a deficient vehicle (*hīnayāna*); a harmful mental state which should be avoided.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 2:10 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Yet, you now consider this same line of critical inquiry to be somehow "disparaging," and even replete with "atimāna." Do you consider Kearney's scathing and sustained critique of Kornfield, Rubin, and Epstein (linked to above), where he concluded by dismissing their ideas and teachings as "ersatz forms of Buddhism," to be somehow "disparaging," and displaying "atimāna"?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 2:41 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

According to the Pāḷi dhamma the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) is only correctly engaged by non-returners and arahants, who are not

susceptible to rebirth as an unconscious being. Anyone other than a non-returner or arahant will only be able to attain a non-percipient attainment (*asaññasamāpatti*), which is considered to be an inappropriate absorption for the reasons already mentioned in this thread. The development of the *ālayavijñāna* theory isn't directly related to this soteriological issue.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 3:48 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

The development of discernment pertaining to the four noble truths requires a far more precise and complete experiential understanding and path of training than is generally acknowledged by the advocates of the "one-mind-moment" or "one-mindless-moment" noble path. Discerning that "everything which arises is subject to cessation" is just the beginning of discernment, and anyone who can observe the occurrence of a thought can readily begin to see this: a thought arises, remains for a certain duration, and then ceases.

What is also necessary for discernment to actually develop into liberating gnosis is a sustained, dedicated, experiential penetration of the origin of unsatisfactoriness. Specifically, craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence (*kāmatanḥā*, *bhavatanḥā*, and *vibhavatanḥā*). And what is further required in order to develop an intimate understanding of how craving actually operates, is the experiential understanding and discernment of volitional intention (*cetanā*). Not merely a theoretical understanding -- what is required is clearly seeing how these fabrications function in real time in our mind-stream: How do craving and volitional intention interact? How do these processes result in unsatisfactoriness? How can I begin to develop disenchantment and dispassion pertaining to the various things which trigger craving? How can I begin to ease up on and let go of this insatiable infatuation with the propagation of creature comforts, habitual emotions, and self-confirming thought patterns? In short, how can I skillfully develop all of the constituents of the noble eightfold path in order to realize the cessation of craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence?

And IMO, the only way to do this is to rely on the actual teachings of the Buddha. This includes the integral development of ethical conduct, meditative composure, and discernment as described in the discourses. And we can't develop this precise, experiential discernment of the four noble truths with a momentary "lights out" path, or any other one moment path. And it's quite likely that we can't develop this precise, experiential discernment of the four noble truths by merely engaging in the observation of change through a conceptual filter of "radical momentariness." Such notions of the path are an anemic and pale substitute for the noble eightfold path of the Pāḷi dhamma. We shouldn't be content with claims of any momentary "blip" panaceas resulting in *ariya* attainment. A far more comprehensive view and practice is required.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 7:40 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Nice try. How about this: Let go of infatuation with momentary blip blackouts and craving non-existence and learn the Pāḷi dhamma as taught in the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka? Then you'll have no need to ask these questions. And BTW, I still can't quite comprehend your unwillingness to accept the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's enumeration and definition of dhammas which occur at the time of attaining the noble paths and fruitions? Do you think that the compilers of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī were mistaken?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 21, 2011 10:51 pm

Title: Re: Viññāna-dhatu vs Viññāna-khandha

Content:

I think that Kee Nanayon would be the only one to answer that in the context of what she was teaching. Good teaching though!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 3:39 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

No I'm not saying that.

Your turn: Why do you remain unwilling to accept the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's enumeration and definition of dhammas which occur at the time of attaining the noble paths and fruitions?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 6:45 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

No it isn't. But at any rate, let's not get sidetracked by what is not relevant to the topic at hand

Sylvester. The point is this: According to ābhidhammika analysis the noble path arises via supramundane cognition. And supramundane cognition is accompanied by mental factors.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 6:51 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Yes.

Your turn: Why do you remain unwilling to accept the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's enumeration and definition of dhammas which occur at the time of attaining the noble paths and fruitions?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 12:31 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

This is all that is relevant to this discussion. Followers of the Mahāsi Sayādaw method maintain that the Mahāsi approach is based on the Visuddhimagga, as well as the Theravāda commentaries, sub-commentaries, and other treatises. Hence, your qualm about Theravāda interpretation of the Dhs. isn't relevant to the topic at hand.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 1:17 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

All cognitive processes are fabricated. All cognitions are fabricated. All gnoses are fabricated.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 22, 2011 3:55 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

As I've already replied to you at least twice on this point, I will refresh your memory one last time. I said: One could designate it as mental-consciousness (*manoviññāṇa*), as per MN 38: "[W]hen consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness." This is what the early *ābhidhammikas* have decided.

The phrase "unestablished consciousness" was merely a designation used in relation to the phrase "When that consciousness is not established...." Thus, it was simply a designation for a fabricated cognition. No need to try to draw out inferences and consequences which were neither stated nor implied. Now please, quit the attempts to divert attention with red herrings. If you are interested in successfully navigating between the interpretive frameworks of the traditional Theravāda *Ācariyas*, Ven. Ñāṇananda, Ven. Ñāṇavīra, etc., then I would suggest studying their respective works in detail. It may yield a bit of dialectical flexibility. If you're not interested, then don't bother.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:25 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

It looks like we've discovered the source of Kearney's and Ingram's unconscious path attainment. According to the *Visuddhimagga* there can be no path attainment without a perceiving mind and its concomitant mental factors. Robert has previously pointed out that Mahāsi Sayādaw's teachings fall short when trying to articulate the subtler points in the *Visuddhimagga*, and it seems that here we can see another example of why Mahāsi's teachings have created much controversy and criticism in Burma. That said, I don't think that Mahāsi Sayādaw himself is saying that the noble path attainment is an unconscious, non-path, non-attainment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:42 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

I can understand why someone like yourself who seems to be attracted to extremist views would find it difficult to navigate between different interpretive frameworks. And it isn't surprising in the least that someone who is attracted by the idea of the most radically extreme comprehensionless *samādhi* might also find the most radically extreme notion of an unconscious noble path appealing as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 23, 2011 12:44 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

There is no need to read this sutta as indicating some sort of absolute reality or any other type of absolute "otherness." The terms refer to the reverse sequence of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda): not-born (ajāta) = cessation of birth (jātinirodha), not-become (abhūta) = cessation of becoming (bhavanirodha), not-made (akata) = cessation of craving and cessation of clinging (taṇhānirodha & upādānanirodha), not-fabricated (asaṅkhata) = cessation of volitional fabrications (saṅkhāranirodha), which refers to the the calming of all specific fabrication and volitional intention mentioned in MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

One does not form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence. Not forming any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence, he does not cling to anything in this world. Not clinging, he is not excited. Unexcited, he personally attains complete nibbāna. He discerns that, 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here.'

Thus, with the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of volitional fabrications; with the cessation of volitional fabrications there is the cessation of craving and clinging; with the cessation of craving and clinging there is the cessation of becoming; with the cessation of becoming there is the cessation of birth. Such is the cessation of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 12:54 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Of course the Mahāsi method and Kearney's text must be measured against the post-canonical materials and the commentarial interpretation of the canon. In his text Kearney explicitly acknowledges that his presentation is supposedly based on these post-canonical sources: This complex construction of 16 nanas is not found in the Tipitaka, the early Buddhist texts. They seem to be an invention of the medieval Theravada tradition, and you can find a complete analysis of them in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 7:54 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

If you think that the contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassī) means unconsciousness then good luck with that. If you think that any of the factors of awakening are meant to induce unconsciousness then good luck with that too.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 12:18 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

All you are displaying is a misunderstanding of the sequential stage model of the vipassanāñāṇas as presented in the Visuddhimagga, and in Mahāsi Sayādaw's Visuddhiñāṇakathā and Kearney's text. In recent threads you have displayed similar misunderstandings of Ñāṇananda's teachings and Ñāṇavīra's teachings. I don't know if this is intentional or not, but it can't seriously be considered to accurately reflect the intended meaning of what Kearney is saying.

Kearney lists and describes each of the first 14 ñāṇas in sequential order, then, according to you, when he gets to stage 15, the maggaphalañāṇa, he mysteriously decides to not describe this stage, but to describe a completely unrelated experience instead.

Sorry, but your interpretation can't be taken seriously. If it's intentional, then it's just another attempt to muddy the waters.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 12:26 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana taught by the Buddha

Content:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 1:28 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:



Sorry, but this has nothing whatsoever to do with East vs. West. The compilers of the Abhidhammapiṭaka were Indians. Ven. Buddhaghosa was an Indian. Ven. Ñāṇārāma was a Sri Lankan. I have repeatedly provided quotations from these sources to explain the principles of how the supramundane path is attained. You are certainly free to dismiss these sources, but that means dismissing well over a third of the Pāḷi Tipiṭaka, as well as the Theravāda commentarial tradition in its entirety.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 1:29 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

No it isn't.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 1:59 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

No. It can be classified as either a path attainment or fruition attainment samādhi, both of which include the presence of perception and concomitant jhāna factors.

The cessation of perception and feeling, on the other hand, isn't classifiable as mind (citta), mental factors (cetasikā), form (rūpa), or nibbāna. This is why it isn't included in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's enumeration of dhammas, nor in the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha's enumeration of 89 and 121 types of consciousness and concomitant mental factors, which includes all types of worldly and supramundane cognition.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 8:11 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana taught by the Buddha

Content:

Actually, I was agreeing with him. I guess a doesn't really make that clear.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 9:23 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

It's stated in Visuddhimagga Chapter 23:

Herein, (i) What is the attainment of cessation? It is the non-occurrence of consciousness (citta) and its concomitants (cetasikā) owing to their progressive cessation.

(ii) Who attains it? (iii) Who do not attain it? No ordinary men, no stream-enterers or once-returners, and no non-returners and Arahants who are bare-insight workers attain it. But both non-returners and those with cankers destroyed (Arahants) who are obtainers of the eight attainments attain it.

The attainment of cessation (nirodhasamāpatti) is the same as the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpatti). It is only non-returners and arahants who can attain the eight attainments (the four jhānas plus the four formless attainments) who can properly engage in the cessation attainment. This chapter also differentiates between the fruition attainments of the noble paths (phalasamāpatti) and the cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti). It then goes on to say that the attainment of cessation is neither supramundane (lokuttara) nor not-fabricated (asaṅkhata).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 9:51 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Probably better to err on the side of caution.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 24, 2011 10:06 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana taught by the Buddha

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 4:04 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

When discussing the stage model of 16 vipassanā gñoses there is no other authority than the commentaries. If it isn't supported by the Visuddhimagga -- which is the authoritative source of the presentation that they're claiming to follow -- then it's just another example of wild west dhamma. In his paper Still Crazy after all these Years: Why Meditation isn't Psychotherapy, Kearney himself says that the bar should be raised:

Let's not try to fool ourselves or anyone else that we are practising the teachings of the Buddha when we follow any of these ersatz forms of Buddhism. Let's be clear whose teachings we are putting our faith in.

As I've already said, I agree with this call to diligent inquiry. And I think that this investigation should extend to the ideas which Kearney himself attributes to the Buddha. And upon investigation, I don't see how anyone who diligently and openly scrutinizes Kearney's notion of the noble path, as quoted in the OP of this thread, can in any way shape or form place Kearney's ideas of this very important aspect of Buddhist soteriology, in the lap of the Buddha or the redactors of the Pāḷi canon. There is simply no trace of what he is telling us in the canonical Pāḷi dhamma or the Visuddhimagga, which, again, is the source of the stage model 16 vipassanā gñoses.

If Kearney was trying to describe the path and fruition stages -- which he most certainly was -- then he utterly failed. Why? Because there is no mention of any of the indicators of a supramundane path and fruition cognition in his description. Zero. None. This is a pretty glaring omission regarding the climax stage of the entire presentation written by someone who has "trained extensively in the Mahāsi approach to insight meditation." On the contrary, there is every indication in his description that he had fallen into the bhavaṅga and then mistaken this non-percipient state for nibbāna.

Kearney then uses this misguided nihilistic experience to inform his nihilistic view and then accuse teachers like Kornfield of misrepresenting Buddhism. Sorry, but this type of nihilistic extremism is just another example of wild west dhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 5:20 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Nonsense. I only ever posted there a handful of times and haven't been there in years. As for the rest of your assertions, they're also without merit but are completely off topic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 7:04 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

I learned quite some time ago that if you're going to discuss a text, a Buddhist school, or a tenet system, that you do so within the framework of that text, Buddhist school, or tenet system. It's utterly ridiculous to suggest that Kearney's text be exempt from critical analysis according to the authoritative source of the 16 insight gnoses presented in the Visuddhimagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 7:11 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Thanks Robert. I knew this thread would be somewhat contentious. I've remained silent on this issue for some time. It is an important one, and should be aired.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 2:06 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

More utter nonsense. It's obvious that you have no way of stepping outside of your conceptual box in order to appreciate the subtleties of what I have said on the issue of consciousness or any other. There is no point in trying to communicate with you. I hope your straightjacket serves you well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 6:11 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

The cognitive processes of supramundane cognitions are only clearly described in the Abhidhamma and Visuddhimagga. It's your choice to refuse to accept what these sources have to say. But then you're dismissing the entire Theravāda to adhere to a mistaken view.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 6:12 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Sometimes it seems worth it to try to clarify some of the more subtle aspects of the dhamma. Other times it seems pointless to bother saying anything at all. But some things do need to be said. As always, it's a question of balance.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 9:11 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

That doesn't make it wrong, or inconsistent with what he did teach. Of course, if one wants to look at the suttas have to say about stream-entry that's fine too. There isn't any trace of Kearney's unconscious path attainment there either.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 9:16 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Here is a summary of some of what I have been saying: Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha:

1. The First Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
2. The Second Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
3. The Third Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
4. The Fourth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness,
5. The Fifth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

These are the five types of Sotāpatti Path-consciousness.

So are the Sakadāgāmi Path-consciousness, Anāgāmi Path-consciousness, and Arahatta Path-consciousness, making exactly twenty classes of consciousness. Similarly there are twenty classes of Fruit-consciousness. Thus there are forty types of supra mundane consciousness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 10:42 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Sure. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī and so on, are merely additional tools.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 10:59 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

This thread pertains to issues concerning 20th century interpretations of a commentarial teaching which postdates the suttas by almost 1000 years Dave. In the sutta strata of the canon this issue doesn't even exist. Thus, the source materials relevant to this discussion are the Abhidhamma and Visuddhimagga.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 25, 2011 11:28 pm

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Unfortunately there is at least one member here who wants to read into the suttavinaya this idea of nibbāna -- the not-fabricated (asaṅkhata) -- as being a blackout-nothingness or a state of unconsciousness. Thus, it may be prudent to demonstrate that the Theravāda Abhidhamma and main commentaries never held such a notion. It may also very well be excessive. But it's sometimes less palatable to say nothing than to say something. Especially as this member in question is trying to play the role of a meditation instructor here on DW.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 4:14 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Why should you care?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 4:47 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Bringing this issue out into the light of day is enough. There isn't anything to be gained here by naming more names. When ppl are informed they can make informed decisions for themselves.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 4:57 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Seriously. Give it a rest.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 5:02 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Ok. Understood. But I'm the one who should answer. It's unfortunate that this is an issue at all. The motivation for creating this thread in the first place was to point out that Rowyourboat is posting here on DW with this mistaken view, all the while playing the role as a meditation instructor. Kearney's paper just served as an explicit reference to this type of view of nibbāna. Plus, I read Kearney's other paper where he tried to crap all over Kornfield and I figured that he was worthy of being on the receiving end.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 5:37 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Yeah, well, it's the same view. And it was the view which I was criticizing. I have no problem with using Kearney's words to make the point.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 5:45 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

You wanted names. So there we have it.

I've said what I had to say. And I stand behind what I've said. Kearney's words were used, but not misrepresented.

I have no time for Sylvester.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 6:51 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

As I said, if you would take the time to check the source materials, the knowledge of insight leading to emergence occurs before the path and fruition knowledge. The "lights out" part is his version of path and fruition knowledge. He further qualifies this lights out as "unconsciousness" and "the total cessation of the mind-body process. He did not 'know' this while it was happening, because there was no sense of a mind to know it. All he 'knows' about the experience is his reflection on what has just happened."

This is a description of falling into the bhavaṅga, which he mistakes for nibbāna. There is no perception nor concomitant jhāna factors of supramundane cognition in a state described as "the total cessation of the mind-body process" wherein "he did not know this while it was happening."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 6:58 am

Title: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

Visuddhimagga Chapter 23:

Herein, (i) What is the attainment of cessation? It is the non-occurrence of consciousness (citta) and its concomitants (cetasikā) owing to their progressive cessation.

(ii) Who attains it? (iii) Who do not attain it? No ordinary men, no stream-enterers or once-returners, and no non-returners and Arahants who are bare-insight workers attain it. But both non-returners and those with cankers destroyed (Arahants) who are obtainers of the eight attainments attain it.

The attainment of cessation (nirodhasamāpatti) is the same as the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpatti). It is only non-returners and arahants who can attain the eight attainments (the four jhānas plus the four formless attainments) who can properly engage in the cessation attainment. Other arahants cannot. Thus, it cannot be equated with nibbāna as the not-fabricated (asaṅkhata). Moreover, this chapter then goes on to explicitly state that the attainment of cessation is neither supramundane (lokuttara) nor not-fabricated (asaṅkhata).



If you're going to discuss a text, a Buddhist school, or a tenet system, that you do so within the framework of that text, Buddhist school, or tenet system.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 26, 2011 7:00 am

Title: Re: Concerning Kearney's "Development of Insight"

Content:

I just did: here.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 12, 2011 2:47 am

Title: Re: suttas and the kasinas(vishudhimagga)

Content:

In the later strata of commentaries a distinction is made between an "unprepared, unmade" kasiṇa, such as a large plowed field, and a "prepared, made up" kasiṇa, which is the circular disk (maṇḍala), made out of soil or clay. In the Vimuttimagga (circa ~100 CE) both types of kasiṇa are described in detail. Later still, in the Visuddhimagga (circa ~500 CE), the unmade kasiṇa is briefly mentioned, but is no longer considered a suitable object for development unless one had already developed this practice in previous lives. Thus, the Visuddhimagga only describes the made up circular disk type of kasiṇa. And then due to semantic shift, the term kasiṇa began to be identified as this type of circular disk.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 12, 2011 5:11 am

Title: Re: Requesting Forgiveness From the Dhamma Wheel Community

Content:

Hi all,

I would also like to take a moment to ask for forgiveness if any of my more provocative statements and use of language have caused hurt feelings on the part of fellow DW members. May we as dhamma practitioners have enough wisdom to see our shared unity, and may this lead us to acknowledge and respect our shared diversity.

Happy, at rest, may all beings be happy at heart. Whatever beings there may be, weak or strong, without exception, long, large, middling, short, subtle, blatant, seen & unseen, near & far, born & seeking birth: May all beings be happy at heart.

Mettā,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 12, 2011 8:56 am

Title: Re: Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ=unestablished consciousness=nibbana?

Content:

Indeed, this is what is important.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 12, 2011 9:18 am

Title: Re: Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ=unestablished consciousness=nibbana?

Content:

Both expressions arrive at the same place: consciousness not being established in relation to passion, aggression, or delusion. It seems to me that what Ven. Ñāṇananda is getting at is that the object-basis of supramundane consciousness isn't some sort of "Unconditioned Realm" existing somewhere outside of time and space. Rather, it is a cognition which perceives the absence of specific fetters.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 12, 2011 10:38 am

Title: Re: Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ=unestablished consciousness=nibbana?

Content:

I can't speak for Ven. Ñāṇananda, but it seems to me that he is just borrowing a page from Nāgārjuna to demonstrate that nibbāna isn't an ultimately existing unconditioned realm (an idea that has gained currency in Theravāda circles).

There is a long history in Mahāyāna exegesis of pointing out the selflessness of phenomena (dharmanairātmya) and thereby describing consciousness as appatitṭha (Skt. apratiṣṭha) and anidassana (Skt. anidarśana). (Cf. Kāśyapaparivarta Sūtra, Sarvadharmāpravṛttinirdeśa Sūtra, Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra, Ratnagotravibhāga Śāstra, etc.. Also, Nāgārjuna quotes the passage from DN 11 in his Ratnāvalī.)

Similarly, Ven. Ñāṇananda describes supramundane consciousness as "seeing through the object" (i.e. realizing the essencelessness of concomitant mental phenomena). But where Ñāṇananda differs from Nāgārjuna, et al, is that Ñāṇananda explicitly rejects the possibility of any post-mortem continuum for an arahant.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 13, 2011 1:21 am

Title: Re: Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ=unestablished consciousness=nibbana?

Content:

If you're interested then you can read what he has to say in detail here: [The Mind Stilled: 33 Sermons on Nibbāna](#).

IMO any speculation regarding the postmortem status of an arahant -- either pro or con -- is counterproductive. MN 72 Aggivacchagotta Sutta informs us that any view regarding the postmortem existence or non-existence of an arahant is a fetter of view (diṭṭhisamyojana) which doesn't lead to direct gnosis, to awakening, to nibbāna:

The view that after death a tathāgata exists is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by dissatisfaction, distress, despair, and fever. It does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calmness, direct gnosis, full awakening, nibbāna.

The view that after death a tathāgata does not exist is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by dissatisfaction, distress, despair, and fever. It does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calmness, direct gnosis, full awakening, nibbāna.

The view that after death a tathāgata both exists and does not exist is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by dissatisfaction, distress, despair, and fever. It does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calmness, direct gnosis, full awakening, nibbāna.

The view that after death a tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist is a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a vacillation of views, a fetter of views. It is accompanied by dissatisfaction, distress, despair, and fever. It does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calmness, direct gnosis, full awakening, nibbāna.

When the mind is completely awake and fully aware there is no urge to project or speculate about a hypothetical future. An arahant has realized that there is absolutely nothing whatsoever to be grasped at or clung to. And when the moment of death arrives he or she meets it with consciousness not established (appaṭiṭṭha viññāṇa).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 13, 2011 1:36 am

Title: Re: The Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing

Content:

Yes, understanding which is not dependent on others. Gnosis and vision which is individually known (paccatta veditabba).

Looking into the world  
I see alone a chrysanthemum,  
Lonely loneliness,  
And death approaches.  
Abandoned by guru and friend,  
I stand like the lonely juniper  
Which grows among rocks,  
Hardened and tough.  
Loneliness is my habit—  
I grew up in loneliness.  
Like a rhinoceros  
Loneliness is my companion—  
I converse with myself.  
Yet sometimes also  
Lonely moon,  
Sad and Happy  
Come together.

Do not trust.  
If you trust you are in  
Others hands.  
It is like the single yak  
That defeats the wolves.  
Herds panic and in trying to flee  
Are attacked.  
Remaining in solitude  
You can never be defeated.  
Do not trust,  
Trust is surrendering oneself.  
Never, never trust.

But be friendly,  
By being friendly towards others,  
You increase your non-trusting.  
The idea is to be independent,  
Not involved.  
Not glued, one might say, to others.  
Thus one becomes ever more  
Compassionate and friendly.  
Whatever happens, stand on your own feet  
And memorize this incantation:  
Do not trust.

—Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

And by all means, do not trust Trungpa.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 14, 2011 5:19 am

Title: Re: Emptiness (Suññatā)

Content:

And entire commentaries on emptiness. For example, Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññatākathā (excerpts):  
What is emptiness in [relation to] change?

Born, form is empty of self-nature (sabhāvena suñña); disappeared, form is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling is empty of self-nature; disappeared, feeling is both changed and empty.

Born, perception is empty of self-nature; disappeared, perception is both changed and empty.

Born, fabrications are empty of self-nature; disappeared, fabrications are both changed and empty.

Born, consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, consciousness is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye is empty ... the ear is empty ... the nose is empty ... the tongue is empty ... the body is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, forms are empty ... sounds are empty ... odors are empty ... flavors are empty ... tactile sensations are empty of self-nature; disappeared, they are both changed and empty.

Born, visual consciousness is empty ... auditory consciousness is empty ... olfactory consciousness is empty ... gustatory consciousness is empty ... tactile consciousness is empty ... mental consciousness is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, eye-contact is empty ... ear-contact is empty ... nose-contact is empty ... tongue-contact is empty ... body-contact is empty ... mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, feeling born of eye-contact is empty ... feeling born of ear-contact is empty ... feeling born of nose-contact is empty ... feeling born of tongue-contact is empty ... feeling born of body-contact is empty ... feeling born of mind-contact is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, perception of forms is empty ... perception of sounds is empty ... perception of odors is empty ... perception of flavors is empty ... perception of tactile sensations is empty ... perception of mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, volitional intention pertaining to forms is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to sounds is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to odors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to flavors is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... volitional intention pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, craving for forms is empty ... craving for sounds is empty ... craving for odors is empty ... craving for flavors is empty ... craving for tactile sensations is empty ... craving for mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, directed thought pertaining to forms is empty ... directed thought pertaining to sounds is empty ... directed thought pertaining to odors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to flavors is empty ... directed thought pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... directed thought pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, examination pertaining to forms is empty ... examination pertaining to sounds is empty ... examination pertaining to odors is empty ... examination pertaining to flavors is empty ... examination pertaining to tactile sensations is empty ... examination pertaining to mental phenomena is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye sensory sphere is empty ... the form sensory sphere is empty ... the ear sensory sphere is empty ... the sound sensory sphere is empty ... the nose sensory sphere is empty ... the odor sensory sphere is empty ... the tongue sensory sphere is empty ... the flavor sensory sphere is empty ... the body sensory sphere is empty ... the tactile sensation sensory sphere is empty ... the mind sensory sphere is empty ... the mental phenomena sensory sphere is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the eye element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the visual consciousness element is empty ... the ear element is empty ... the sound element is empty ... the auditory consciousness element is empty ... the nose element is empty ... the odor element is empty ... the olfactory consciousness element is empty ... the tongue element is empty ... the flavor element is empty ... the gustatory consciousness element is empty ... the body element is empty ... the tactile sensation element is empty ... the tactile consciousness element is empty ... the mind element is empty ... the mental phenomena element is empty ... the mental consciousness element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, the sensual desire element is empty ... the form element is empty ... the formless element is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

Born, ignorance is empty ... fabrications are empty ... consciousness is empty ... name and form are empty ... the sixfold sensory spheres are empty ... contact is empty ... feeling is empty ... craving is empty ... grasping is empty ... becoming is empty of self-nature; disappeared, it is both changed and empty.

What is supreme emptiness?

This dhamma is supreme, this dhamma is superior, this dhamma is excellent: the calming of all fabrications, the release of all acquisitions, the exhaustion of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna. This is supreme emptiness.

What is internal emptiness?

Internally the eye is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is internal emptiness.

What is external emptiness?

Externally form is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally sound is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally odor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally flavor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally tactile sensation is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally mental phenomena are empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is external emptiness.

What is emptiness both ways?

Internally the eye and externally form are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear and externally sound are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose and externally odor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue and externally flavor are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body and externally tactile sensation are both empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind and externally mental phenomena are both empty of a self or that which belongs

to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is emptiness both ways.

What is the ultimate meaning (paramattha) of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware?

Here, through renunciation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of sensual desire; through nonaggression one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of aggression; through perception of light one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of dullness and drowsiness; through nondistractedness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of agitation; through understanding phenomena one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of doubt; through knowledge one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of ignorance; through gladness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of boredom.

Through the first jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the hindrances; through the second jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of directed thought and examination; through the third jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of rapture; through the fourth jhāna one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of pleasure; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite space one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perceptions of form, perceptions of resistance, and perceptions of diversity; through the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite space; through the attainment of the sphere of nothingness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of infinite consciousness; through the attainment of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-nonperception one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of perception of the sphere of nothingness.

Through the contemplation of impermanence one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of permanence; through the contemplation of unsatisfactoriness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of satisfactoriness; through the contemplation of not-self one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of self; through the contemplation of dispassion one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of delight; through the contemplation of fading away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of greed; through the contemplation of cessation one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of arising; through the contemplation of relinquishment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of grasping; through the contemplation of decay one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of compactness; through the contemplation of fall one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of accumulation; through the contemplation of change one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of the perception of everlastingness; through the contemplation of signlessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of signs; through the contemplation of desirelessness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of desire; through the contemplation of emptiness one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation; through the clear seeing of phenomena that is higher discernment one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to grasping at a core; through gnosis and seeing one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to delusion; through the contemplation of [the] danger [of fabrications] one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to reliance [on fabrications]; through the contemplation of reflection one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of non-reflection; through the contemplation of turning away one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of misinterpretation due to bondage.

Through the stream-entry path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of defilements



associated with wrong view; through the once-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of gross defilements; through the non-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of secondary defilements; through the arahant path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of all defilements [i.e. ignorance].

Or through the nibbāna element (nibbānadhātu) without any grasping remaining for one who is fully aware this occurrence of eye ends and no further occurrence of eye arises; this occurrence of ear ends and no further occurrence of ear arises; this occurrence of nose ends and no further occurrence of nose arises; this occurrence of tongue ends and no further occurrence of tongue arises; this occurrence of body ends and no further occurrence of body arises; this occurrence of mind ends and no further occurrence of mind arises.

This is the ultimate meaning of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware.

Paṭisambhidāmagga Vimokkhakathā (excerpts):

Monks, there are these three liberations (vimokkha). What three? Emptiness liberation, signlessness liberation, and desirelessness liberation. These, monks, are three liberations.

What is emptiness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no misinterpretation [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through emptiness. This is emptiness liberation.

What is signlessness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no signs [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through signlessness. This is signlessness liberation.

What is desirelessness liberation?

Here, monks, a monk, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty place, reflects: 'This is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self.' In this way he construes no desire [regarding phenomena], therefore it is liberation through desirelessness. This is desirelessness liberation.

Knowledge from contemplation of the impermanence of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being permanent.

Knowledge from contemplation of the unsatisfactoriness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being satisfactory.

Knowledge from contemplation of the selflessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being a self.

Knowledge from contemplation of the signlessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these

phenomena] as having signs.

Knowledge from contemplation of the desirelessness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from misinterpreting [these phenomena] as being desirable.

Knowledge from contemplation of the emptiness of form ... feeling ... perception ... fabrications ... consciousness ... etc., is emptiness liberation because it liberates from all misinterpretation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 14, 2011 5:21 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

There's plenty of emphasis on emptiness in the Theravāda canon. There are entire discourses on emptiness:

MN 121 Cūḷasuṇṇatā Sutta

MN 122 Mahāsuṇṇatā Sutta

MN 122 Mahāsuṇṇatā Sutta & Commentary

SN 35.85 Suṇṇa Sutta

SN 22.95 Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta

And entire canonical commentaries on emptiness, such as the Paṭisambhidāmagga Suṇṇatākathā.

And also entire discourses on teaching by the middle (majjhena dhamma):

SN 12.17 Acelakassapa Sutta (Also SN 12.15, SN 12.35, SN 12.48, SN 22.90, etc.)

There's also beautiful visionary devotional passages in the Theravāda Tipiṭaka, such as the Buddhāpadāna of the Khuddakanikāya.

And the bodhisatta path is also part of the Theravāda tradition: A Treatise on the Pāramīs by Ācariya Dhammapāla.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 14, 2011 6:43 am  
Title: Re: The Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 14, 2011 6:44 am  
Title: Re: suttas and the kasinas(vishudhimagga)  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 14, 2011 6:54 am  
Title: Re: Approaches taken in the contemporary discourse on Buddhism  
Content:  
Given the definitions of each category given by the author, methinks the option of "None of the above" should be added to the survey.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 14, 2011 1:49 pm  
Title: Re: Why such a difference?  
Content:  
Indeed. And it shouldn't be that difficult for anyone to see how these devotional practices and aspects of visionary narrative (e.g. Buddhāpadāna, Jātakas, etc.) were used by the Indian religious imagination as skillful means which eventually formed the structural elements of Mahāyāna Sūtras and Vajrayāna Sādhanaś.

As an aside, I've had the good fortune to spend enough time with different Asian Buddhist communities -- Thai, Cambodian, Chinese, and Tibetan -- to see that while the outer forms and appearances may differ, the qualities of devotion, kindness, and joy (as well as less noble qualities such as gossip and so on) are all quite present and genuine.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 14, 2011 3:56 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Why do you want to focus on this particular sūtra Kirk? Firstly, the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra is a composite text. And secondly, if you were to actually read this sūtra, and others which present the idea of buddha nature, you would discover that they explicitly state that the teaching on buddha nature is an expedient means used to calm the minds of people who are still not comfortable with anattā as well as to dispel notions of religious superiority. It's a bodhisattvayāna pedagogic tool -- a skillful means (upāyakauśalya).

For these and other reasons, most Tibetan lamas would not consider the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra to be a definitive teaching. It requires interpretation to be correctly understood.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 4:16 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

In the context of the Tibetan traditions, the teaching on buddha nature is pointing to this: Every moment of percipient consciousness has a very basic and quite unremarkable quality of cognitive clarity. This lucid clarity in and of itself is a naturally occurring disposition (prakṛtisthagotra) of selfless, non-referential cognition, while all afflictions and defilements are adventitious, meaning that they can be removed from this basic awareness. This awareness is likened to a clear crystal, which is utterly transparent, but when it's placed on a red cloth the crystal appears to be red, when placed on a blue cloth the crystal appears blue, when placed on a black cloth it appears black, etc.. But the crystal itself is not red nor blue nor black. Similarly, the mind has the capacity to reflect whatever presents itself to awareness, but the lucid clarity of awareness itself remains the same regardless of the contents of that awareness.

If we can calm the mind and recognize this basic quality of knowing, and then learn to sustain this basic recognition by developing dispassion towards the objects of awareness, then this naturally occurring knowing is where we can rest, without grasping externally nor withdrawing internally nor dwelling anywhere in-between. Some people call this basic knowing "poo roo" (Thai), some people call it "lingzhi" (Chinese Chan), some people call it thamal shepa (Tibetan Chagchen), some people call it "rigpa" (Tibetan Dzogchen), etc.. In the Pāli suttas the Buddha called it the measureless mind, the luminous mind, and so on. It will accompany one all the way to awakening.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 4:30 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

What part of this do you fail to understand Dave:

In the context of the Tibetan traditions, the teaching on buddha nature is pointing to this: Every moment of percipient consciousness has a very basic and quite unremarkable quality of cognitive clarity. This lucid clarity in and of itself is a naturally occurring disposition (prakṛtisthagotra) of selfless, non-referential cognition, while all afflictions and defilements are adventitious, meaning that they can be removed from this basic awareness. This awareness is likened to a clear crystal, which is utterly transparent, but when it's placed on a red cloth the crystal appears to be red, when placed on a blue cloth the crystal appears blue, when placed on a black cloth it appears black, etc.. But the crystal itself is not red nor blue nor black. Similarly, the mind has the capacity to reflect whatever presents itself to awareness, but the lucid clarity of awareness itself remains the same regardless of the contents of that awareness.

If we can calm the mind and recognize this basic quality of knowing, and then learn to sustain this basic recognition by developing dispassion towards the objects of awareness, then this naturally occurring knowing is where we can rest, without grasping externally nor withdrawing internally nor dwelling anywhere in-between. Some people call this basic knowing "poo roo" (Thai), some people call it "lingzhi" (Chinese Chan), some people call it thamal shepa (Tibetan Chagchen), some people call it "rigpa" (Tibetan Dzogchen), etc.. In the Pāli suttas the Buddha called it the measureless mind, the luminous mind, and so on. It will accompany one all the way to awakening.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 11:06 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Some people call this basic knowing "poo roo" (Thai), some people call it "lingzhi" (Chinese Chan), some people call it "thamal shepa" (Tibetan Chagchen), some people call it "rigpa" (Tibetan Dzogchen), etc.. In the Pāli suttas the Buddha called it the luminous mind, the measureless mind, and so on. In the Abhidhammapiṭaka it is simply called mind. You can call it whatever you wish, or refuse to. But the various designations don't affect this benign little quality present in every moment of awareness one bit.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 11:28 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Opinions don't affect this quality of knowing either, although they can obscure it. In fact, when one can rest in the knowing, all opinions fall away. Practice becomes clear and utterly simple.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 11:52 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Sure. We can drop the adjective and simply call it "citta."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 12:17 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Or we can call it "viññāṇa." MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

There remains only consciousness, pure and bright. What does one cognize with that consciousness?

One cognizes pleasure. One cognizes pain. One cognizes neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

Which can lead to a "measureless mind," as explained in MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta:

On seeing a form with the eye, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On hearing a sound with the ear, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On smelling an odor with the nose, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On tasting a flavor with the tongue, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On touching a tactual object with the body, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On cognizing a phenomenon with the mind, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain attached to it. As he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain attached to it, delight in feelings ceases in him. With the cessation of delight, the cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, the cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence, the cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 12:42 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

It should be obvious by now, but in case it isn't I'll be more explicit: I couldn't care less.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 12:51 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Here is where all opinions and all other baggage can be dropped: right here.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 3:22 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

No need for "relativism." The only Theravāda teachers worth listening to are Ajahn Chah, and Ajahn Sumedho. There are a few others who are okay, but they are few and far between.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Yes.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 15, 2011 6:58 pm

Title: Re: suttas and the kasinas(vishudhimagga)

Content:

I think it's workable. For example, one can learn to take the entire visible sphere as the object, or any of the other sensory spheres as they arise in awareness, and contemplate the recognition of aniccā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 16, 2011 3:46 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Āryadeva's Catuḥśatikā:

Thinking about the impermanence and uncleanness of the body,

Understand the faults of attachment to it.

Make effort to achieve unsurpassable enlightenment

And give up pride in both "I" and "mine."

Candrakīrti's Bodhisattvayogācāracaṭuḥśatakaṭīkā:

The five aggregates, beginning with form, originate in dependence upon causes and conditions. Since they have an origin, they are impermanent. Whatever is impermanent is certainly painful because impermanence injures its nature. Whatever is painful is always impure because it produces disgust. Whatever is impure is not a self because it is wrong to generate "I" and "mine" toward a thing that must be rejected, and wrong to embrace egotism and selfishness. Since an ordinary thing appears different from what it is due to such an illusion, it is only after understanding that it must be repudiated that Buddhahood will be attained.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 16, 2011 6:25 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

The Dharma is fully present and accounted for in the Mahāyāna sūtras and commentaries. A few more examples may help elucidate this. The Kāśyapaparivarta Sūtra (from the Mahāratnakūṭa):

The four applications of mindfulness cure clinging to body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. One who practices the dharma and contemplates the body as it really is will not be trapped by the view of a real self. One who contemplates feelings as they really are will not be trapped by the view of a real



self. One who contemplates the mind as it really is will not be trapped by the view of a real self. One who contemplates phenomena as they really are will not be trapped by the view of a real self. These four applications of mindfulness, therefore, cause one to abhor the body, feelings, mind, and all phenomena, and thereby open the door to nirvāṇa.

The Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra:

Furthermore, Subhūti, the bodhisattva, mahāsattva, who is engaged in the practice of perfection of wisdom, examines this very body as it truly is, from the soles of the feet up and the tips of the hair down, bounded [on the outside] by nails, body hair, and skin, and filled [on the inside] with many kinds of impurities. He observes this body as it truly is and that in it there are the following: (1) hair of the head, (2) hair of the body, (3) fingernails and toenails, (4) teeth, (5) skin, (6) skin irritations, (7) flesh, (8) tendons, (9) blood, (10) bones, (11) marrow, (12) heart, (13) kidneys, (14) liver, (15) lungs, (16) spleen, (17) large intestine, (18) small intestine, (19) mesentery, (20) stomach, (21) urine, (22) feces, (23) tears, (24) sweat, (25) fat, (26) saliva, (27) nasal mucus, (28) pus, (29) bile, (30) phlegm, (31) watery body fluid, (32) oily body fluid, (33) impurities, (34) brain matter, (35) cerebral membrane, (36) mucous discharge of the eye, and (37) ear secretions.

For example, Subhūti, if a person with seeing eyes were to open a farmer's sack filled with different kinds of grain, such as sesame, mustard seed, lentils, mung beans, barley, wheat, and rice, he would know, "This is sesame," "This is mustard seed," "This is lentils," "This is mung beans," "This is barley," "This is wheat," and "This is rice." Likewise, Subhūti, a bodhisattva, mahāsattva, examines this very body as it truly is, from the soles of the feet up and the tips of the hair down, bounded [on the outside] by nails, body hair, and skin, and filled [on the inside] with many kinds of impurities.

And from the same sūtra:

Furthermore, Subhūti, when the bodhisattva, mahāsattva, who is engaged in the practice of perfection of wisdom, has gone to a charnel ground and sees many different kinds of corpses that have been discarded in that charnel ground, abandoned in that place for dead bodies, which have been dead for one, two, three, four, or five days, which are swollen, dark blue, putrid, worm-infested, partially eaten, or dismembered, he should compare his own body with them in the following way: "This body also has the same quality. It is of the same nature, and it has not gone beyond that condition." O Subhūti, this is how the bodhisattva, mahāsattva, who is engaged in the practice of perfection of wisdom, dwells watching the body in relation to an outer body.

And again, from the same sūtra:

Furthermore, Subhūti, the bodhisattva, mahāsattva, who is engaged in the practice of perfection of wisdom, examines this very body as it truly is, in relation to its constituent elements. [In so doing, he observes,] "In this body, there is the earth element, water element, fire element, and air element." For example, Subhūti, consider how a skillful cow-butcher or cow-butcher's apprentice might slaughter a cow with a sharp knife. After slaughtering it, he might then divide it into four quarters. Then, after dividing it into four quarters, while either standing or sitting, he might examine it. In just this way, the bodhisattva, mahāsattva, who is engaged in the practice of perfection of wisdom, also examines this very body as it truly is, in relation to its constituent elements.

The Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā Sūtra:

Realizing that sufferings are endless, the mild-mannered abandon their evil course of conduct. You too should apply yourself always to the good course, lest afterwards you have regrets.

You for whom the Buddha is dear, as well as the noble assembly, and the qualities of moral training and ascetic discipline, apply yourself constantly in this way, relinquishing reputation, profit, fame, and renown.

It won't be long before everything valued is lost; there is nothing permanent in this world.

The Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā Sūtra also adds:

These women are beautiful and pleasing only on the surface. On account of its impurities, I have no interest in this contraption of sinews and bones. Oozing of excretions — blood, urine, and excrement — how can I delight in what are surely only suitable for a cemetery?

I would not listen to song nor would I take up instrumental music; such pleasures are like dreams, bewildering to the ignorant. The ignorant, attached to false discrimination, end up in ruin. Why should I be like a foolish person who is a slave to his defilements?

When frost appears, all of these trees and creepers will no longer be enjoyable as trees are in the forest. Impermanence destroys all beauty. Am I out of delusion to give myself up to wantonness in this unsteady life?

The mind is insatiable like the ocean. Desire is repeatedly attached to the continuation of craving. Looking at the world where people kill one another out of passion, I will be as unshakable here as Mt. Meru is by the wind.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 4:29 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Just to add a bit of perspective on "buddha nature." From among the hundreds of Indian Mahāyāna sūtras there are less than ten which deal with the tathāgatagarbha notion and related ideas. And there was only ever one Indian commentary written on the subject, which was translated into Chinese in approx. the 5th century CE (there are two other Chinese commentaries on this subject which claim to have been written in India by Indians, but for a number of reasons, likely weren't). Anyway, after being translated into Chinese, traditional histories say that this Indian commentary disappeared from the Indian Mahāyāna scene for nearly half a millennium until it was rediscovered by Maitrīpāda in the 11th century. In the interval, the vast majority of significant Indian Mahāyāna authors say nothing on the subject until at least the 8th century, and even after that little is said outside of Vajrayāna contexts. Thus, there's every indication that the tathāgatagarbha theory wasn't a pressing concern for most of the major Indian Mahāyāna commentators.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 8:30 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Human beings in general like a good story, and the bodhisattva ideal makes for a good story within both universal and personal contexts. It's also quite possible that without the appearance of self-identified bodhisattva political rulers existing in different places at different times, all forms of Buddhism, including the Theravāda, might have disappeared from this planet as living traditions a long time ago. Buddhism would now be nothing more than an academic curiosity and collections of museum pieces. This board wouldn't exist and this conversation wouldn't happen.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 9:10 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

It seems that the bodhisattva vehicle was initially a series of movements which arose in opposition to sedentary, institutionalized Buddhism with all of it's worldly trappings and potential for complacency and personal misconduct. Things that, in the eyes of these early bodhisattva aspirants, the historical Buddha would have also opposed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 10:08 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

It's quite likely that this development was a two way street. The early bodhisattva aspirants were clearly critical of the sedentary monks who they considered to be *sāmaṇas* in name only, and thus not true *bhikkhus*. No doubt this criticism resulted in counter-criticisms from the mainstream monastic institutions, including disparaging the early bodhisattva vehicle texts in no uncertain terms. Then the back and forth really gets going, and with the bodhisattva aspirants still being small in number and without significant patronage, their perceived position of vulnerability led to even more vehement criticisms and rallying cries, eventually resulting in wholesale criticism of the mainstream schools. Unfortunate but inevitable. And now we are left with the full record of bodhisattvayāna criticisms of the mainstream schools, as inserted into the bodhisattvayāna sūtras, but we don't have a full record of the counter-criticisms leveled by their mainstream opponents. I suspect that these counter-attacks were every bit as biting as anything written in the bodhisattvayāna sūtras.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 10:19 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Given that the Theravāda bhikkhuni lineage did die out, and that the bhikkhu lineage came mighty close to dying out on more than one occasion, it certainly didn't hurt to have every possible source of political patronage and aspiration working to try to sustain it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 10:28 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Doubtful. One only has to look at the many posts denigrating Mahāyāna values and practices here on DW to see this counter-criticism in action.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 10:53 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

There's no shortage of accusations from every corner -- we just don't have a full historical record of the actual words used by the Indian mainstream opponents. And the mahāyānikas are certainly not to be excused either. If you remember, it wasn't all that long ago that a few mahāyānikas got all worked up when I pointed out some of these same historical developments on the Dharma Wheel board.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 1:24 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Ugly is ugly, no matter the source; which is why it's far more preferable to be a practitioner with no dog in the hunt.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 1:45 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

And FTR, I've sat and listened to it coming out of the mouths of monks from both "sides" in the real world as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 9:16 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

You can start by reading up on some of the ugliness that occurred between the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagirivihāra, and the Jetavanavihāra in Sri Lanka, including book burnings, the razing of monastery buildings, forced banishment of monks from the island, and murders. Some of this was over accusations regarding conduct, but much of it was over the Abhayagirivihāra's liberal attitude towards Mahāyāna ideas and acceptance of Mahāyāna sūtras and the use of Sanskrit. This is by far the most complete historical record of interactions between rival monastic groups during the formative period of Mahāyāna ideas, even if it is a one-sided version of the story. Due to the demise of Buddhism on the Indian mainland, the textual records kept by Indian vihāras which were not specifically related to canonical texts have not survived. (It was primarily the canonical vinaya, sūtra, abhidharma texts and abhidharma commentaries which were deemed most important by the early Indian missionary monks to China and which were translated and still exist.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 17, 2011 10:24 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

It's a summary of a full story. Anyone can read up on it in more detail if they wish. And it demonstrates that mainstream conservatives were not sitting around placidly tolerating Mahāyāna ideas. They were actively denouncing them and they made sure that in the end no trace of Abhayagirivihāra sūtras, abhidharma texts or abhidharma commentaries survived for posterity. This is the complete opposite of the Chinese and Tibetans who did their best to preserve all sorts of diverse doctrinal teachings.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 5:35 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

There were two councils convened (the first sometime between 214-36 CE and the second between 253-66 CE) after it came to the attention of the Mahāvihāra monks that the Abhayagirivihāra had accepted and were using Vaitulyavāda texts (a derogatory term used by the Mahāvihāra with regard to all Mahāyāna ideas). Both times the councils, which were comprised of Mahāvihāra monks, concluded that the texts were heretical and they were burned and the Vaitulyavāda monks denounced. After the second council a large number of monks were expelled, and 60 of them gathered in southern India. It is only after their later return to Sri Lanka that there is any mention of reprisals carried out by the so-called heretics.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 9:51 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

From Buddhism in Sri Lanka:

About two centuries after the formation of the Dhammaruci sect at the Abhayagiri-vihāra, in the days of King Vohārika Tissa (214–36 CE), the monks of the Abhayagiri-vihāra adopted the Vaitulyavāda. Thereupon the monks of the Mahāvihāra, having compared it with their own texts, rejected the Vaitulya doctrines as being opposed to traditional doctrine. The king, who had them examined by a learned minister named Kapila, burnt them and suppressed the Vaitulyavādins.

Despite the suppression by Vohārika Tissa, the Vaitulyavādins began to assert themselves again and a few years later, in the time of King Gothābhaya (Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya, 253–266 CE), the Dhammaruci monks of Abhayagiri again accepted Vaitulyavāda. When this happened, about three hundred monks left the Abhayagiri-vihāra to reside at the Dakkhinavihāra, founding a new sect known as Sāgaliya. The king, having assembled the bhikkhus of the five great monasteries of the Theriya Nikāya (Mahāvihāra Nikāya), had the Vaitulya books examined, ordered the books to be destroyed, and expelled the Vaitulya monks. Sixty of them left for the Chola country in South India.

Walpola Rahula, David Kalupahana, and others have indicated that Vaitulyavāda is a reference to Mahāyāna sūtras, based on a survey of various sources, including the writings of Buddhaghosa and so on. This time period (214-266 CE) corresponds with the first major period of the formation and dissemination of Mahāyāna sūtras and the writings of Nāgārjuna. Thus, we have here a rare historical record of an early encounter between the mainstream conservative establishment and formative Mahāyāna ideas. The Abhayagirivihāra accepted these ideas, while the Mahāvihāra denounced them as well as the monks who accepted them, and made sure that the texts were destroyed and the

monks expelled. This same scene could have very easily played out anywhere on the Indian mainland.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 10:40 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Institutional rivalries over political patronage and power occurred throughout India. These two particular incidents specifically concerned doctrine -- two early encounters between the establishment and the emerging Mahāyāna ideas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 12:20 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

There's no need to argue. This is merely a discussion of the historical development of Buddhist ideas and related incidents. If you're not interested in Buddhist history then don't read the discussion. Quite simple really.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 2:03 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

No worries Dan. I think that in the context of asking "Why such a difference?" between Theravāda and Mahāyāna it's informative to explore a few relevant issues, such as the historical development of Mahāyāna ideas, the actual contents of early Mahāyāna texts, and the early encounters between the monastic establishments and these ideas.

A related issue, possibly tacitly implied in the above question, is the notion that the Theravāda and Mahāyāna are somehow so different that there is no possibility of appreciating both in any meaningful, practical way. And that the idea of actually engaging in the practice of both is out of the question. These sorts of notions have also been propagated by a number of people in modern Theravāda discourse and published texts.

But if we look at the historical records we see that, although there were times of discord between the Theravāda and Mahāyāna, notably early on in Sri Lanka, there were also many times throughout history where the two co-existed peacefully. And even beyond simply co-existing, there were many fully ordained Theravāda monastics who accepted the Pāli Tipiṭaka and who also accepted the Mahāyāna teachings.

For example, the Chinese monk Xuanzang (7th century CE) met Mahāyāna Sthaviras at Bodhgayā (1000 monks in one monastery), at Kāliṅga (500 monks in 10 monasteries), at Bhārukaccha (300 monks in 10 monasteries), and at Surāṣṭra (about 3000 monks in 50 monasteries). Those at Bodhgayā were living in a monastery built by an early king of Sri Lanka. He also described the Abhayagirivihāra of Sri Lanka as being a Mahāyāna Sthavira monastery.

And so the historical development of Buddhist ideas is quite dynamic, much more so than is often commonly acknowledged.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 18, 2011 3:49 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Indeed.

Just as our search for an original set of Buddha's definitive words failed, and all we were left with were provisional versions, in the same way a search for the Buddha's definitive meaning fails too. What we have are traditions of interpretation. But that's not the kind of authority we imagine when we claim sectarian primacy. Sectarian authority claims assume solid essentialist ground. That type of ground is just not there.

All teachings are provisional expedients. This is the beauty of the Buddhadhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 19, 2011 9:41 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

There are a number of early Mahāyāna sūtras which don't use such language at all. And there are other Mahāyāna sūtras which are highly critical of both śrāvakas and bodhisattvas who are considered to be improperly engaged in worldly dharmas. And there were eventually many monastics -- including Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda -- who accepted the Mahāyāna sūtras. In History of Buddhism in Ceylon, Walpola Rahula describes the Abhayagiri monastics as follows: They were liberal in their views, and always welcomed new ideas from abroad and tried to be progressive. They studied both Theravāda and Mahāyāna and widely diffused the Tripiṭaka. The



Abhayagiri monks, therefore, appeared in the eyes of the Mahāvihāra to be unorthodox and heretic.

As already mentioned, if we look at the historical records we see that, although there were times of discord between the Theravāda and Mahāyāna, notably early on in Sri Lanka, there were also many times throughout history where the two co-existed peacefully. And even beyond simply co-existing, there were many fully ordained Theravāda monastics who accepted the Pāli Tipiṭaka and who also accepted the Mahāyāna teachings.

The Chinese monk Xuanzang (7th century CE) met Mahāyāna Sthaviras (Pāli: Theras) at Bodhgayā (1000 monks in one monastery), at Kāśī (500 monks in 10 monasteries), at Bhārukaccha (300 monks in 10 monasteries), and at Surāṣṭra (about 3000 monks in 50 monasteries). Those at Bodhgayā were living in a monastery built by an early king of Sri Lanka. He also described the Abhayagirivihāra of Sri Lanka as being a Mahāyāna Sthavira monastery.

And so there is no impenetrable barrier; nor any line in the sand. The historical development of Buddhist ideas is quite dynamic, much more so than is often commonly acknowledged.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 19, 2011 11:09 am

Title: Re: Download DN, MN and SN for free!

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 19, 2011 7:37 pm

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

The first part of this sentence makes the latter conclusion disingenuous.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 12:13 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Okay, this is what happened: The Mahāyāna was accepted by increasingly more and more people, including monks and nuns from every ordination lineage. Eventually the bodhisattva ideal was even absorbed into the conservative Mahāvihāra Theravāda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 12:55 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

This is simply not true Tilt. It may be the case for people who don't care about the Theravāda or the other early schools, but there's not much that can be done about that. Whoever isn't willing to sit down at the table and engage in constructive dialogue is quite free to carry on oblivious to the realities of Pāli Buddhism. It's their loss.

I'm just one person. All that I can do is share information from reliable sources so as to promote mutual understanding and dispel mistaken assumptions. This is the result of years of learning on each side of the fence; appreciating both the similarities and respecting the differences. I'm not interested in some sort of ahistorical homogenous gunk which fails to fully represent and articulate the beauty and wisdom of the Pāli dhamma. But I have no more time for "us-versus-them" excuses. It's petty and unnecessary, and time is better spent displaying the three jewels in the light that they deserve.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 1:08 am

Title: Re: Download DN, MN and SN for free!

Content:

It isn't his website. It was set up and run by John Bullitt. And it too, costs \$\$\$ to run. Internet publishing is a revolution in sharing information and resources. But paper texts are still invaluable (at least for aging people like me). And without large publishers publishing books at reasonable prices -- which they can do because of their large sales market -- we'd end up having to pay much more for all published books of translated materials published by small publishers such as PTS. This higher cost per text would result in less translations available in public libraries and universities, and so on.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 1:14 am

Title: Re: Download DN, MN and SN for free!

Content:

Have you ever published a site on a free webhost? They're notorious for having downtime. ATI is well worth the cost, and well worth supporting with \$\$\$.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 3:30 am

Title: Re: Why such a difference?

Content:

Yes. Many are aware of this. I know of at least two major Tibetan lineages running large scale international teaching and training programs which have moved away from using the term *hīnayāna*, opting for *Śrāvakayāna* instead, or the English terms "Individual Vehicle" or "Foundational Vehicle." There are also Zen teachers who are sensitive to this issue and have made similar adjustments. This doesn't mean that there isn't still more to be done, but it's a start. And with websites like ATI and DW anyone who's interested and can read English can begin to learn what Theravāda is about. This is all to the good.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 20, 2011 3:44 am

Title: Re: Download DN, MN and SN for free!

Content:

Indeed. It's right livelihood. And not only does this make for lowering the cost of publications, it also makes for much higher quality books. Editing and so on, are all specialized skills. I sometimes have to order texts from Indian publishers, and the quality of the materials as well as the editing is often lacking. We should rejoice in the high quality books being produced by publishers such as Wisdom Publications. Now where's Ven. Bodhi's *Aṅguttaranikāya* translation???

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 01, 2011 10:14 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

This is a good definition of wrong samādhi.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 02, 2011 2:58 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

It wasn't meant to be an argument. I've already pretty much said all that I ever intended to say on this subject as well as other subjects (1 year and 812 posts on DW should be more than enough!). The path remains open. I have little interest in re-posting any of it again in detail. (There are at least 3 PhD dissertations currently being written by scholar-monastics which support everything I've said on the textual analysis of jhāna.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 02, 2011 6:55 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Yes, this is accurate.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 03, 2011 12:07 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Yes, you are quite correct. AN 4.12 informs us that singleness of mind can be maintained and the five hindrances suppressed while walking, standing, sitting, or reclining.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 03, 2011 2:28 am

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Of course. Abandoning the hindrances requires the maintenance of ethical conduct and the development of sense restraint and other skillful qualities.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 03, 2011 2:32 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Mental consciousness (*manoviññāṇa*) can take the body sensory sphere as an object. Moreover, SN 47.6 *Sakuṇagghi Sutta* explicitly differentiates between the five strands of sensual pleasure (*kāmagunā*) and the four applications of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhānā*), and so neither the body nor the breath are strands of sensual pleasure. Thus, all of this is really a moot point.

But if one really wants to split hairs, in commentarial terms the form portion of the "whole body" (*sabbakāya*) experienced in *jhāna* is mind-produced form which pervades the physical body. The *Dīghanikāyaṭṭikā*:

Mind-produced form (*cittajarūpa*) suffuses every area where there is kamma-produced form (*kammajarūpa*).

The *Vimuttimaggā*:

Just as the bath-powder when inside and outside saturated with moisture, adheres and does not scatter, so the body of the meditator in the first *jhāna* is permeated with joy and pleasure from top to bottom, from the skullcap to the feet and from the feet to the skullcap, skin and hair, inside and outside. And he dwells without falling back. Thus he dwells like a Brahma god.

[Q.] Joy (*pīti*) and pleasure (*sukha*) are said to be formless phenomena (*arūpa-dhamma*). How then can they stay permeating the body?

[A.] Name (*nāma*) depends on form (*rūpa*). Form depends on name. Therefore, if name has joy, form also has joy. If name has pleasure, form also has pleasure.

Again, form born from joy causes tranquility of body, and when the entire body is tranquillized there is pleasure due to the tranquility of form. Therefore there is no contradiction.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 03, 2011 3:35 pm

Title: Re: Tha jhana debate

Content:

Yes. Specifically, for one engaged in ānāpānassatisamādhī the object-support is the mental representation (nimitta) of the breath cognized via mental consciousness.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 04, 2011 10:21 am

Title: Re: How Insistent Are You in Observing Your Fifth Precept?

Content:

A. Not even a sip of alcohol, but allow it to be used as supplementary ingredient in cooking

Not that I very often have the opportunity to eat the type of cuisine which would include alcohol as an ingredient, but I wouldn't be worried if I were offered a meal which did.

Also, no marijuana or other narcotic drugs.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 04, 2011 9:53 pm

Title: Re: Path Of Thoughts

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 07, 2011 3:29 am

Title: Re: Theravāda vs Mahāyāna view of objective reality

Content:

Karunadasa explicitly states that he considers the commentarial interpretation of abhidhamma to be realist. I was merely paraphrasing what he said himself:

What emerges from this Abhidhammic doctrine of dhammas is a critical realism, one which (unlike idealism) recognizes the distinctness of the world from the experiencing subject yet also distinguishes between those types of entities that truly exist independently of the cognitive act and those that owe their being to the act of cognition itself.

But this interpretation isn't the only game in town, and it certainly doesn't accurately characterize the canonical Abhidhamma.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Jun 07, 2011 5:24 am  
Title: Re: Theravdan vs Mahayana view of objective reality  
Content:  
This is my inclination as well.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Jun 07, 2011 6:55 am  
Title: Happy Birthday Modus.Ponens!!!  
Content:  
Happy birthday Modus.Ponens!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Jun 07, 2011 8:52 am  
Title: Re: Formal Refuge  
Content:  
Yes. Also learned to recite the Sanskrit version of refuge and the five & eight precepts when training at a non-Theravāda monastery for a couple of years (as a resident layperson).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Jun 07, 2011 10:52 am  
Title: Re: Theravdan vs Mahayana view of objective reality  
Content:  
"Everything exists" is an extreme. As far as I'm concerned, whatever there may be independent of the 89 & 121 types of cognition isn't classifiable as dhammas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 08, 2011 2:06 am

Title: Re: Dependent Origination Going In The Opposite Direction

Content:

I don't recall the context in which this was mentioned in Broken Buddha but the conditioned arising of the path is not a rarely taught model in the canon, where the path is entirely a developmental model. This is most fully presented in a number of suttas in the Dīghanikāya and Majjhimanikāya. It's also found in the Saṃyuttanikāya, the Aṅguttaranikāya, the Vinayapiṭaka, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Vibhaṅga, and the Paṭisambhidāmagga.

Here is how the path is developed according to SN 12.23 Upanisa Sutta:

dissatisfaction (dukkha) → faith (saddhā) → gladness (pāmojja) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → pleasure (sukha) → meditative composure (samādhi) → gnosis & vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañāḍassana) → disenchantment (nibbidā) → dispassion (virāga) → liberation (vimutti) → gnosis of elimination (khayeñña)

This developmental model is also given in AN 11.1 Kimatthiya Sutta, AN 11.2 Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta, and in the Vinayapiṭaka, such as Vin. 5.366. It's also embedded within the standard seven factors of awakening:

mindfulness (sati) → dhamma-investigation (dhammavicaya) → energy (viriya) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → meditative composure (samādhi) → equanimity (upekkhā)

And the seven factors of awakening are embedded within the developmental model of the four jhānas. The path cannot be developed without committed and sustained cultivation of all these conditioned factors of awakening.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 08, 2011 7:55 am

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

I prefer "disenchantment," for the reasons that Retro gave. See also Buddhadharma: The Practitioners Quarterly Dharma Dictionary: Nibbida by Andrew Olendzki.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 08, 2011 1:24 pm



Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

The Pāḷi term nibbidā is related to nibbindati, which is derived from the negative prefix nis-, meaning “not,” and the verb root vindati, meaning “to find.” And so nibbindati means “without finding,” and carries the connotations of “becoming weary of” and “turning away from.” When we clearly see each and every experience as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty, we no longer find satisfaction in fabricated things. We grow weary of trying to propagate and seek delight in worldly comforts and worldly concerns. This sense of weariness is expressed in Dhammapada 277-279:

‘All fabrications are impermanent.’

Seeing this with discernment

One grows weary of unsatisfactoriness.

This is the path to purity.

‘All fabrications are unsatisfactory.’

Seeing this with discernment

One grows weary of unsatisfactoriness.

This is the path to purity.

‘All phenomena are not-self.’

Seeing this with discernment

One grows weary of unsatisfactoriness.

This is the path to purity.

This weariness with what is unsatisfactory is disenchantment, which arises due to knowing and seeing things as they are. We begin to feel the hollowness of engaging in affairs which aren’t directly related to the development of the path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 08, 2011 5:18 pm

Title: Re: Dependent Origination Going In The Opposite Direction

Content:

The Upanisa Sutta has already been quoted in full in this thread by Bodom, and referenced by myself.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 4:50 am

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 5:21 am

Title: Re: Linda Clair - claims of being enlightened?

Content:

Toss 'em in the pond and see if they float, or see if they weigh the same as a duck.... Oh sorry, that's to find out if they're a witch.

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 5:56 am

Title: Re: Linda Clair - claims of being enlightened?

Content:

LOL... If someone were waiting for my \$200 they'd be waiting for a very long time. In the meantime, they will have a place reserved on THE LIST.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 9:59 am

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

Of course. That's unbalanced dhamma-lite. And the other extreme -- unbalanced asceticism -- can lead to repression, bitterness, misogynistic attitudes, and so on.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 2:33 pm

Title: Re: Sue Hamilton -- anyone read her work?

Content:

I read about half of it and put it on the shelf. I found it to be rather irrelevant and meandering. Her first book, Identity and Experience: The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism is better. I would recommend it. It offers a pretty good survey of all the relevant sutta passages relating to the aggregates. However, her analysis is still a bit lacking in a few places. The problem is that she's not a practitioner, and it shows in both books. She's standing as a Western academic completely outside of the living tradition.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 8:09 pm

Title: Re: Sue Hamilton -- anyone read her work?

Content:

Yeah, it's the published version of her doctoral dissertation. When I was looking for a link to the book to add to my previous reply I noticed that it's out of print according to Amazon. Hopefully you can find a copy somewhere. At any rate, it's probably the best book length survey of the sutta strata passages on the aggregates. In this regard it's better than Mathieu Boisvert's dissertation on the aggregates, which relies quite heavily on commentarial interpretation (but still worth reading).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 09, 2011 8:22 pm

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

Elsewhere he translates nibbidā as "disenchantment." In fact, he's probably the one who first used "disenchantment" as a translation of the term. "Estrangement" is fine too, although the analysis he offers for how he came to this choice is a bit convoluted. Horner has translated the term as "turns away from." This works too. As does "revulsion." The only qualm I would have with "revulsion" is that it has somewhat too narrow of a meaning. Olendzki comments on nibbidā as follows:

There is a story in the texts that usefully illustrates the meaning of this important term. A dog stumbles across a bone that has been exposed to the elements for many months and has been therefore bleached of any residual flesh or marrow. The dog gnaws on it for some time before he finally determines that he is "not finding" any satisfaction in the bone, and he thus turns away from it in disgust. It is not that the bone is intrinsically disgusting; it is rather the case that the dog's raging desire for meat just will not be satisfied by the bone. He is enchanted by the prospect of gratification as he scrapes away furiously at the bone, but when he finally wakes up to the truth that the bone is empty of anything that will offer him satisfaction, he becomes disenchanted and spits it out in disgust.

At any rate, it's always helpful to have access to the work of multiple translators. No single translation is going to convey the full meaning of every passage and every term in every context.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 10, 2011 3:32 am

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

Yes, it's important to understand that nibbidā is a mature stage of practice. The long term developmental sequence is given in SN 12.23 Upanisa Sutta (and elsewhere):  
dissatisfaction (dukkha) → faith (saddhā) → gladness (pāmojja) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → pleasure (sukha) → meditative composure (samādhi) → gnosis & vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañāḍassana) → disenchantment (nibbidā) → dispassion (virāga) → liberation (vimutti) → gnosis of elimination (khayeñña)

Faith & confidence in the dhamma and a genuine, deeply felt motivation to actually practice arises out of the recognition of dukkha -- that things aren't right with the world. This is a beginning. By the time a noble disciple reaches the point of knowing and seeing things as they really are there has already been considerable integration of skillful mental qualities such as joy, tranquility, meditative composure, and equanimity. These are necessary factors of awakening:  
mindfulness (sati) → dhamma-investigation (dhammavicaya) → energy (viriya) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → meditative composure (samādhi) → equanimity (upekkhā)

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 10, 2011 3:49 am

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

The available translations are fine. The point which I would emphasize is that there has to be balance in our practice. The integral developmental path presented in the suttas includes developing both the cognitive and affective aspects of ourselves in order to confront and begin to skillfully work with the deep seated habitual tendencies which manifest as conflicted emotions. Through the development of clear seeing (vipassanābhāvanā) we begin to work on our self-limiting cognitive barriers. And through the development of calm (samathabhāvanā) we begin to confront and work on our emotional hindrances. These conflicting emotional reactions include aversion and aggression just as much as passion and lust.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 10, 2011 7:33 am

Title: Re: Video: Meditation: Suttas vs Commentaries

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 10, 2011 12:02 pm

Title: Re: "disenchantment" or "revulsion"?

Content:

Disenchantment arises from clearly seeing the futility of worldly concerns and the unreliability of all fabricated phenomena. This leads to dispassion. Thus, dispassion is even more fruitful than disenchantment. Dhammapada 273:

The best of dhammas is dispassion.

The experience of dispassion is visceral, deep, and profound. Discernment at this stage of the path is fully present and naked. There is a directness and clarity of understanding which engenders confidence. We become confident that our practice won't be easily shaken by any unexpected bumps on the road. We are able to handle situations which previously created emotional upheavals and moments of uncertainty or hesitation. And when difficult situations do arise we know that we have the necessary insight and skills to work with whatever presents itself.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 8:10 am

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

"Jhāna" as it occurs in the suttas can refer to either (i) jhāna which scrutinizes an object-support (ārammaṇūpanijjhāna) or (ii) jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna). The former is also called samatha jhāna and the latter is also called vipassanā jhāna. Mahāsi Sayādaw, The Wheel of Dhamma:

Jhāna means closely observing an object with fixed attention. Concentrated attention given to a selected object of meditation, such as breathing for tranquility concentration, gives rise to samatha jhāna, whereas noting the characteristic nature of mind and body and contemplating on their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality brings about vipassanā jhāna.

Jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna) occurs during any moment of the development of vipassanā (vipassanābhāvanā), as well as during any path or fruition attainment. As Sayādaw U Pandita explains in In This Very Life: The Vipassanā Jhānas, vipassanā jhāna can occur with the jhāna factors of each of the four jhānas, and therefore fulfill the criteria of the standard jhāna formula.

But even with regard to jhāna which scrutinizes an object-support (ārammaṇūpanijjhāna), attending to a mental representation (nimitta) in jhāna doesn't require that all the five senses are totally shut down. There is a difference between attending to a mental representation via mental consciousness, and the formless attainments wherein the mind is totally isolated from the five sense faculties.

In commentarial terms, attending exclusively to a cognitive representation already occurs at the stage of access samādhi. Thus, the engagement is exclusively that of the recognition of the counterpart representation via mental consciousness. The difference between access samādhi and

and the first jhāna is the degree of stability of the jhāna factors. The difference between the first jhāna and the formless attainments is indicated in both the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga when they discuss the formless attainments and mention Aḷāra Kālāma not seeing or hearing the five-hundred carts passing by when abiding in a formless attainment.

Sensual pleasures (kāma) are either objects or defilements which arise in dependence upon those objects. As Nettippakaraṇa 4.22 states:

The five strands of sensual pleasure are the proximate cause (padaṭṭhāna) of passion for sensual pleasure. The five faculties with form are the proximate cause of passion for form. The sixth sense sphere is the proximate cause of passion for existence.

Thus, if one is not attending to the five strands of sensual pleasure (kāmaguṇā) there is no proximate cause for the occurrence of passion for sensual pleasure (kāmarāga) with regard to any of those five strands of sensual pleasure. The five faculties (eye-, ear, nose-, tongue-, and body-) don't serve as a proximate cause for the occurrence of sensual pleasure. Moreover, the five faculties (pañcindriyāni) are not shut off in jhāna, as they are the proximate cause for attachment to rūpāvacara phenomena.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 1:09 pm

Title: Re: Video: Meditation: Suttas vs Commentaries

Content:

I only ever read what he has to say on the subject briefly, but I would agree with Mike's assessment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 1:45 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

It would be good to drop the condescending attitude and acknowledge that other members may have just as much or more experience in these matters than you do.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 2:27 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

Anyone who denies the efficacy of classical vipassanābhāvanā without rūpāvacarajjhāna and modern Burmese vipassanā jhāna is asserting that they -- and the select few that agree with them -- are right, and anyone who doesn't agree with them is necessarily wrong. This not only represents a dismissive, extreme agenda, the entire premise is nonsensical on the face of it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 3:31 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

And the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Sautrāntika Ācariyas explicitly state that you don't. I see no good reason whatsoever to dismiss what they have to say on the subject.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 5:07 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

Indeed. The purpose of developing jhāna is to refine sati and sampajāna. This is clearly evident from the Peṭakopadesa's analysis and enumeration of the jhāna factors of each of the four jhānas, which accords well with the suttas:

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 11, 2011 5:55 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

In addition to what was quoted here, there is AN 4.41 Samādhībhāvanā Sutta, which instructs us on how to develop meditative composure which leads to mindfulness and full awareness:

And what, monks, is the development of meditative composure that, when developed and cultivated, leads to mindfulness and full awareness? Here, monks, feelings are known to a monk as they arise, known as they are present, known as they disappear. Recognitions are known to him as they arise, known as they are present, known as they disappear. Thoughts are known to him as they arise,

known as they are present, known as they disappear. This, monks, is the development of meditative composure that, when developed and cultivated, leads to mindfulness and full awareness.

Note how the phrase "known to him as they arise, known as they are present, known as they disappear" also occurs in MN 111 Anupada Sutta which describes the clear seeing of phenomena one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā):

Now Sāriputta's clear seeing of phenomena one by one as they occurred was this:

Whatever phenomena there are in the first jhāna: directed thought, evaluation, joy, pleasure, singleness of mind, contact, feeling, recognition, intention, mind, desire, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention; he analyzed these phenomena one by one as they occurred. Known to him they arose, known they were present, known they disappeared.

Also, the jhāna factors of the four jhānas are embedded within the seven factors of awakening. The seven factors of awakening are one of the most commonly found developmental models in the Pāli dhamma. SN 46.71 Anicca Sutta informs us that sustained, dedicated practice of the recognition of impermanence will create the optimal conditions for the arising of all seven factors of awakening. SN 46.71 Anicca Sutta (abridged):

Here monks, a monk develops the awakening factor of mindfulness accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of meditative composure accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of equanimity accompanied by the recognition of impermanence, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go.

It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit. It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning. It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great good. It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great security from bondage. It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to a great sense of urgency. It is in this way that the recognition of impermanence is developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort.

The same is then said in SN 46.72 for the recognition of unsatisfactoriness in what is impermanent, and in SN 46.73 for the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory. All of these passages offer ample canonical support for Sayādaw U Pandita's teaching of vipassanā jhāna occurring with the jhāna factors of each of the four jhānas, and therefore fulfilling the criteria of the standard jhāna formula.

All the best,



Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 12, 2011 7:13 am

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

Certainly. The above passage is also repeated throughout the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā.

As you probably know, the most important factors for productive progress in meditation are the maintenance of appropriate ethical conduct, being committed to renunciation and a life of voluntary simplicity, engaging in either solitary or group retreats on a fairly regular basis, and being dedicated to sustaining a daily practice schedule. If these conditions are in place (and it can take time to develop these optimal conditions), then whatever method of instruction one relies on, and whatever primary meditation object one engages in, there will be significant progress.

This whole "samatha vs. vipassanā" debate where some parties are intent upon either tacitly criticizing or overtly attacking the meditation instructions of the Mahāsi Sayādaw tradition and the U Ba Khin tradition as not being the sammāsamādhi of the early teachings, is completely without merit. In both of these traditions the meditation instructions are conjoined samatha & vipassanā methods. Following these instructions can certainly lead to the attainment of the four jhānas as these are described in the canon.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 13, 2011 11:13 am

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

A hindrance is either present or absent. With the attainment of access samādhi the hindrances are abandoned for that duration. I'm pretty sure that the vipassanā teachers say the same about momentary samādhi, but it would seem that with momentary samādhi there is more opportunity for hindrances to manifest.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 13, 2011 1:40 pm

Title: Re: Linda Clair - claims of being enlightened?

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 13, 2011 3:55 pm

Title: Re: The Great Jhana Debate

Content:

Agreed. A workable cartography of meditative states should be inclusive enough to cover the canonical and commentarial presentations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 14, 2011 6:01 am

Title: Re: Avijjāpaccayā sankhārā - video on dependent origination

Content:

Good stuff Bhante.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 15, 2011 8:38 pm

Title: Re: Sati and the mind-made body

Content:

Just to clarify: The endnotes in Bhante G.'s PDF are not numbered correctly. The footnotes should be numbered as follows:

23 MN. # 77, Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta, 17-18; MLDB by BÑ & BB 643

24 Parimukhaṃ satīṃ upaṭṭhapetvā

Thus, "perfection of direct knowledge" or "abide aiming perfect knowledge for emancipation" is not a translation of parimukhaṃ satīṃ upaṭṭhapetvā. Footnote 24 Parimukhaṃ satīṃ upaṭṭhapetvā refers to page 18 of the text:

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta gives us a very important word to remember. It talks of "Establishing Mindfulness in the present"24.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jun 16, 2011 11:47 pm  
Title: Re: Sati and the mind-made body  
Content:  
Indeed. Well said.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 17, 2011 12:18 am  
Title: Re: Sati and the mind-made body  
Content:  
Yes, of course. Mindfulness and full awareness are essential. Mindfulness is the awakening factor that is present at every stage of the noble path.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 18, 2011 2:11 am  
Title: Re: The Majjhima Nikaya: Why?  
Content:  
Probably. I think the first person to put forward this thesis was the Chinese scholar monk Yīnshùn Dǎoshī. If I remember correctly, he wasn't proposing that the entire SN was earlier than the DN, MN, & AN, rather that the first parts of the SN are earlier than any of the final collections.

However, this is an issue that is probably beyond the scope of text-critical analysis. The claim that some sutta materials are relatively late, such as some of the DN, is easier to support.

But the internal doctrinal consistency of all four main Nikāyas is remarkable. With this recognition, splitting hairs over what is the earliest strata of sutta is largely a waste of time.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 18, 2011 3:38 am  
Title: Re: The Majjhima Nikaya: Why?  
Content:

I agree with the consensus opinion that the Majjhimanikāya is a good place to start. I'd add that this is so because the MN contains a number of suttas which illustrate aspects of the gradual training. I would also recommend acquiring a good translation of the Dhammapada ASAP, as this is a collection of fairly straightforward verses to live by. And I've always found the Theragāthā & Therīgāthā deeply inspirational.

Dhammapada: The Dhammapada trans. by Gil Fronsda.

Theragāthā: Poems of Early Buddhist Monks trans. by K.R. Norman.

Therīgāthā: Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns trans. by C.A.F. Rhys Davids & by K.R. Norman.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 20, 2011 11:38 pm

Title: Re: Help with Theravada Research: Lojong?

Content:

Maybe something like: "How familiar are you with loving-kindness meditation (mettā bhāvanā)?"

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 21, 2011 2:44 am

Title: Re: Help with Theravada Research: Lojong?

Content:

Lojong is a specific set of texts and practices within Tibetan Buddhism, based on teachings by Atiśa and one of his teachers, Dharmarakṣita. These were then further developed by Kadampa Tibetan teachers such as Chekawa Yeshe Dorje, and others.

Lojong

Mind Training: The Great Collection (Library of Tibetan Classics)

Compassion meditation (karuṇā bhāvanā) would be an even more comparable practice to tonglen than loving-kindness meditation (mettā bhāvanā), but there are probably less Theravāda practitioners who regularly practice karuṇā bhāvanā than practice mettā bhāvanā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jun 23, 2011 8:21 pm  
Title: Re: Goenka: a bodhisatta?  
Content:  
Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Jun 23, 2011 8:29 pm  
Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?  
Content:  
Yes, the suddanta usage of singleness of mind and jhāna has a wider application and is more inclusive than samatha jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 12:16 am  
Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?  
Content:  
This is accurate and accords with the canonical sources.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 3:19 am  
Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?  
Content:  
It's helpful to have access to the works of various translators, as this allows for considering the teachings from different perspectives. No single translation is going to cover the full range of meaning of a Pāli term, phrase, or passage.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 3:26 am  
Title: Re: This one's for Alan and Dan74  
Content:  
Lovely pictures.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 4:39 am  
Title: Re: mindfulness vs concentration  
Content:  
Yes. And this is why the fourth jhāna includes the purity of mindfulness (satipārisuddhi).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 5:37 am  
Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?  
Content:  
I can understand the Aṭṭhakathā level of commentary, but commentarial Theravāda isn't a major focus or concern of mine. The canonical and para-canonical texts are.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 6:43 am  
Title: Jhāna: Buddhist or not?  
Content:  
Here is a paper by Keren Arbel: Buddhist or Not? Thinking Anew the Role of the Jhānas in the Path of Awakening.

Jhana - Buddhist-or-Not.pdf  
(100.03 KiB) Downloaded 693 times

Paper presented in "Buddhism in Asia." A Day Seminar with Prof. Jan Nattier and Prof. John McRae, Tel Aviv University.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 8:41 am

Title: Re: Jhāna: Buddhist or not?

Content:

Sammāsamādhi offers more than what is commonly presented as vipassanā jhāna. Awakening is not easy. The Pāli dhamma has a significant number of meditative practices which are effective for working directly with specific hindrances, and so on. Regarding these practices as unable to assist or induce insight isn't very helpful in the long run.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 9:18 am

Title: Re: Jhāna: Buddhist or not?

Content:

I'm all for the threefold training aggregations of ethical conduct, meditative composure, and discernment.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 3:07 pm

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

No Pāli sutta or treatise accords with your notion that "the will is shut down" in jhāna or that the aggregate of volition has disappeared. Cetanā and numerous other saṅkhāras are all present in each jhāna.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 4:38 pm

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

This discussion in this particular sub-forum necessarily includes discussion of jhāna as sammāsamādhi. Moreover, you're the one who brought this idea of volitionless jhāna into the

present discussion. Your interpretation of rise-and-fall has no canonical basis whatsoever.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 6:28 pm

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

The Vimuttimagga is less restrictive in its treatment of jhāna than the Visuddhimagga. However, I think Dr. Chu is primarily referring to the numerous non-Pāli commentaries, which are quite explicit in including vipassanā as a mental quality employed in jhāna. (When it comes to Nikāya school commentarial opinions and interpretations I don't see any reason to privilege what remains of Tāmaparnīya Theravāda over other Sthaviravāda schools. They were all basing their interpretations on very similar redactions of discourses.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 24, 2011 6:39 pm

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

The accepted standard is to support your assertions with canonical passages. This is both a common courtesy and a time-honored method of interpretive analysis.

The developmental path is about abandoning hindrances and eliminating outflows (āsavas). There is a spectrum of meditative states which can aid in this. But there is no good reason to maintain that jhāna is an entirely passive state. There is an important distinction to be discerned between the refinement of volitional intention and the absence of volitional intention. The former is much more conducive to developing and using an optimal samādhi at least until the attainment of the non-returner path. Inert meditative states are not ideal for training in heightened mind or heightened discernment. They all too easily become cocoons for zoning out.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 25, 2011 2:54 am

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

"Deeper" isn't necessarily "better." This has been explained here. An optimal samādhi for developing



insight (vipassanābhāvanā) necessarily includes perception (saññā), mental engagement (manasikāra) and volitional intention (cetanā). Cf MN 111. It also involves skill in the analytical understanding of phenomena (dhammapaṭisambhidā) -- which necessarily includes knowing and comprehending what is occurring as it occurs in one's mind-stream. Cf. AN 7.38.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 25, 2011 2:59 am

Title: Re: "Rise and Fall" How to practice it?

Content:

It's mainly a reference to the necessary distinction between unskillful non-perceptive attainments (asaññasamāpatti) and integral meditative composure (sammāsamādhi). Integral meditative composure is always a perceptive, functional state.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 25, 2011 8:11 am

Title: Re: Reading the suttas is fun!

Content:

A couple of my favorites....

AN 8.30 Anuruddha Sutta

Thag 18 Mahākassapaṭṭheragāthā

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 26, 2011 7:59 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday cooran ! ! !

Content:

Happy birthday Chris!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Jun 26, 2011 8:20 am  
Title: Re: What the Buddha did not teach - Christopher Titmuss  
Content:  
A pretty good summary.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Jun 26, 2011 9:12 am  
Title: Re: On the path to stream entry  
Content:  
See Path, Fruit, and Nibbāna by Ven. Kheminda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Jun 27, 2011 8:22 pm  
Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?  
Content:  
Ven. Ñāṇananda wrote a book largely dealing with the term papañca. Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought.

papañca: conceptual proliferation

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Jun 29, 2011 12:10 am  
Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?  
Content:  
Ven. Ñāṇananda discusses the commentarial developments related to papañca in Concept and Reality, pp. 120-126. Early sources such as the Mahāniddeśa and the Nettippakaraṇa accurately explain papañca as the proliferation of craving, conceit, and views. Later authors such as Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla get involved in questionable etymologies, resulting in interpreting papañca as "delay," that is, a delay which causes one to linger in saṃsāra.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 29, 2011 9:30 am

Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?

Content:

Ven. Ṭhānissaro's Introduction to MN 18 explains papañca quite well from a practical perspective. He also explains why he has now chosen to translate papañca as "objectification." This is an updated version of MN 18, as he used to have papañca translated as "complication" in this sutta and introduction.

[Note to members: Translation is not easy. One only has to look at the amount of experimentation Ven. Ñāṇamoli engaged in throughout his career as a translator to see the utility of trying different non-Pāli options. And while Ven. Bodhi's translations are probably the most reliable grammatically, there is still plenty of room for exploring alternate and more fitting translations of a wide variety of terms. As Lance Cousins says in his Review of The Middle Length Discourses:

Contrary to Bhikkhu Bodhi, I believe that it is most important at this stage to discourage the adoption of a standard misrendering; what is needed is much more creativity and variety among translators so as to facilitate the discovery of better ways of expressing the ideas of early Buddhism.

The translation of Buddhist texts into Western languages is still a work in progress, and in the Pāli tradition there is a very small number of scholars interested in these texts (e.g. compare with the large number of translators working in the Tibetan traditions). This can create the illusion that everything essential and fundamental is being conveyed by one or another translator. But this is not the case. I would recommend reading Lance Cousins complete Review of The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha to get a small taste for how someone knowledgeable about the many issues involved in hermeneutics and translation views such matters.]

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 29, 2011 1:32 pm

Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?

Content:

Objectification ensues from subjectivity. Ñāṇavīra has also missed the point.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 29, 2011 9:03 pm

Title: Re: What is 'objectification'?

Content:

Ah. As I'm largely uneducated in the Western philosophical tradition, I find Ñāṇavīra difficult to understand (and also disposed to pursuing unnecessary tangents).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 01, 2011 1:44 pm

Title: Re: Solely Anapanasati

Content:

The seven factors of awakening cover the same ground, progressing through more advanced stages of practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 07, 2011 5:15 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

As always, depends upon the context, as well as who you ask.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 07, 2011 11:53 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Well, you're missing about 1800 years of Indian commentarial development.

Firstly, for Buddhaghosa and all subsequent Theravāda commentators who follow his system, one cannot engage in vipassanā while abiding in form sphere jhāna, because the object-basis of a form sphere jhāna is not a paramattha dhamma. Therefore, a yogi must emerge from form sphere jhāna, then engage in vipassanā prior to entering the first noble path of stream-entry. Thus, form sphere jhāna is an optional pathway, and not essential for the attainment of the path of seeing.

And a number of Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra treatises also maintain that a śrāvaka can

attain the path of seeing via preparatory stage samādhi (anāgāmya-samādhi, which is the equivalent of access samādhi), without first developing form dhyāna (although, contrary to Buddhaghosa, et al, they all maintain that vipaśyanā can be engaged while abiding in dhyāna, if one has developed śamatha to that level).

Secondly, contemporary Theravāda is primarily an ordination lineage these days, with a diversity of different practice traditions. Not everyone accepts Buddhaghosa or even the entirety of the Abhidhammapiṭaka as being authoritative. And teachers from different practice traditions don't always agree with each other. This is somewhat akin to Tibetan Buddhism, where there is the common Mūlasarvāstivāda ordination lineage, and a number of different commentarial and practice traditions (Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, Gelug, etc.) which don't always agree.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 08, 2011 7:41 am

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Rinpoche is referring to the gradualist sūtrayāna system of Kamalaśīla which employs mādhyamaka reasonings as vipaśyanā, which are inferential. For Kamalaśīla, vipaśyanā is always conceptual (savikalpa), and for him this conceptual reasoning is necessary in order to realize non-conceptual gnosis (nirvikalpajñāna). But analytical meditation employing mādhyamaka reasonings has no parallel in Theravāda, and Theravādins do not regard their type of vipassanā as being inferential or conceptual.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 08, 2011 11:42 am

Title: Re: What the Buddha did not teach - Christopher Titmuss

Content:

I agree. Arguing "what the Buddha actually taught" based on grammatical structure is problematic, to say the least. K.R. Norman is one of the foremost scholars of Middle Indo-Aryan languages including Pāli, and is also a former president of the Pāli Text Society. In a paper titled "Pāli Philology and the Study of Buddhism," published in The Buddhist Forum, vol. 1, 1990, he says:  
It cannot be emphasized too much that all the versions of canonical Hīnayāna Buddhist texts which we possess are translations, and even the earliest we possess are translations of some still earlier version, now lost.

Also, Daniel Boucher, Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna:

The history of the transmission of Buddhism has also in many ways been the history of its translations. Regardless of which language the Buddha himself spoke, a source of ongoing scholarly debate, he certainly did not preach in any of the languages in which his purported sayings are

preserved. Although not frequently brought to the fore, our corpus of Indian Buddhist texts — be they Pāli, Gāndhārī, or Sanskrit — is a corpus of translations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 08, 2011 1:30 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

There continuities and discontinuities between Indian Mādhyamaka and East Asian Chan/Zen. But it would take this topic too far afield to bring this into the present discussion (there's already more than enough to try to discuss here!).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 08, 2011 4:31 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Well, sūtrayāna lamrim and anuttarayogatantra kyerim & dzogrim are different paths with different methods.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 08, 2011 9:23 pm

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Not only is there no benefit from publicly claiming ariya attainment, there is really no benefit from thinking oneself is an ariya. Far better to just practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 09, 2011 1:13 am

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

If you're interested in the classical Theravāda system of samathabhāvanā & jhāna according to Ācariya Buddhaghosa, et al, the best English language sources are Ven. Ñāṇamoli's translation of the Visuddhimagga, The Path of Purification, and Ven. Gunaratana's PhD dissertation, A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation. (I would recommend reading the latter before tackling the Visuddhimagga.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 09, 2011 10:56 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

It's not a very common practice, but some people do. I've used kasiṇa maṇḍalas in the past. It's a very effective method for inducing deeper samatha.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 10, 2011 12:15 am

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

It's a very ancient debate. One version of it is recorded right in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya. There were, and still are, sautrāntikas who maintain that the internal felt-sense of pleasure (sukha) experienced in jhāna is produced by internal winds within the body. The Abhidharmakośabhāṣya: In the state of absorption, the body is penetrated by a wind born of excellent mental samādhi; this wind is tangible which is agreeably felt (sukhavedanīya) and is called well-being. Hence there is produced a tactile consciousness.

IMO this is just another way of trying to describe the same experience as described in the above quotations.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 10, 2011 3:51 am

Title: Re: Prayers for SATTVA

Content:

May you be well Sattva.

Tadyathā oṃ bhaiṣajye bhaiṣajye mahābhaiṣajya samudgate svāhā.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 10, 2011 2:18 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

It's worth noting that according to this understanding where the proximate meditative stabilization is a form realm mind, the proximate meditative stabilization cannot be equivalent to the Theravāda access samādhi (upacārasamādhi) as Alan Wallace has asserted. According to Ledi Sayādaw's Ānāpāna Dīpani, access samādhi is still a sense-sphere meditation (kāmvācarabhāvanā), i.e. included within the desire realm plane. This means that a better equivalent for access samādhi is the ninth mental abiding, setting in equipoise (samādhāna, mnyam par 'jog pa), which is also a desire realm mind.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 10, 2011 8:16 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Sati includes the quality of remembrance ("bringing to mind"). Upekkhā includes the affective quality of equanimity ("mental evenness"). Vipassanā includes the cognitive qualities of recognition and discernment ("understanding"). With vipassanā one begins by primarily recognizing the impermanent characteristic -- the change or "becoming otherwise" -- of observed phenomena. This recognition becomes more subtle and pervasive as practice deepens.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 10, 2011 11:47 pm

Title: Re: Is matter (rupa) a denser vibrational form of energy?

Content:

Indeed.



Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 11, 2011 1:41 am

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Thanks Bill. I'd be interested in what he has to say.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 11, 2011 8:39 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Tilt and Bodom have already given some good quotations for momentary samādhi. Pīti and sukha are present in access samādhi, but there is more fluctuation with access samādhi than with fixed samādhi. See The Path of Freedom Chapter VIII, pages 79-80, and The Path of Purification Chapter IV, paragraphs 32 & 33, page 125.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 11, 2011 9:17 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

Well, worded differently, yes. See, for example, Contemplation of the Mind: Practicing Cittānupassanā by Ven. Khemavamsa (esp. page 8 and then touched upon throughout the text).

What you are referring to was developed within Indian Sautrāntika and Yogācāra Pramāṇavāda (Epistemology). It was also developed in somewhat different terms in the Kagyu treatises on co-emergent mahāmudrā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 11, 2011 9:39 pm

Title: Re: Shamatha In The Theravada Tradition

Content:

All extant Buddhist traditions agree that the object of samatha is a mental object cognized via the

sixth consciousness. However, schools such as the Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya also develop śamatha by using a visible object, such as a small stone, a piece of wood, or a buddha statue. There is no contradiction here because the specific object of focus is still individuated and engaged in by the sixth mental consciousness (which occurs concomitantly with visual consciousness according to the Yogācāra model of eight consciousnesses).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 12, 2011 2:00 pm

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Indeed. It can't be emphasized enough that the path is about relinquishing acquisitions, not about compiling a resume to try to impress others.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 13, 2011 12:37 am

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Discussing samathabhāvanā is no different from discussing vipassanābhāvanā or mettābhāvanā.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 13, 2011 12:40 am

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Indeed. Preferably with the focus on the texts and not personal experiences. This is standard Buddhist etiquette.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 13, 2011 11:42 am

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Buddhists discussing, debating, and disagreeing with other Buddhists on a variety of subjects is almost as ancient as Buddhism itself.

This particular subject of debate appears in the Kathāvatthu, where, for a number of reasons, the proposed resolution isn't very convincing. It also appears in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya in terms somewhat related to certain aspects of contemporary discussions of the subject. After presenting both sides of the debate, Vasubandhu concludes by saying the following:

A certain school maintains the system that has been presented, but the ancient masters (pūrvacāryas) are not in agreement on this. Consequently the point should be further examined.

If a learned Indian scholar monk of the caliber of Vasubandhu couldn't find a satisfactory resolution to the subtler points of disagreement, then we shouldn't be surprised or bothered by the fact that it is still a subject of debate 1600 years later.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 13, 2011 3:33 pm

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

And the fact that the discussion is still presently occurring at all is a very good thing. It's a sign of a healthy, vibrant, living tradition peopled by diverse individuals who are actually interested in practice. Otherwise, Buddhist meditation would be little more than an academic curiosity and the sutta records and classical meditation manuals just dusty museum pieces.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 14, 2011 6:27 am

Title: Re: Did anyone here attain jhana?

Content:

Of course. A point that isn't often mentioned is that a number of the most widely practiced Buddhist meditation lineages each practice different variations of mindfulness meditation. Not only Theravāda Vipassanā lineages, but also Sōtō Zen, Kagyu Mahāmudrā, and Nyingma Dzogchen are each a unique version of mindfulness meditation.

The only thing that I've ever taken issue with on this subject is the claim made by a few modern Theravādins who maintain that they've rediscovered the Buddha's actual "jhāna," and that everyone else, practicing khaṇikasamādhī mindfulness and so on, has got it all wrong.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 19, 2011 4:02 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday thereducto!

Content:

Happy Birthday!!!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 22, 2011 7:55 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Daverupa!

Content:

Happy birthday Dave!!!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 22, 2011 8:09 pm

Title: Re: Buddhaghosa on Visuddhimagga. Did he believe in it?

Content:

And not just the commentaries and Buddhaghosa, but the entirety of the canonical Abhidhamma as well. This wholesale rejection is misinformed and IMO is possibly the single greatest disconnect within contemporary Theravāda.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 30, 2011 4:37 am

Title: Re: Contemplation of the body

Content:

"Loathsomeness" isn't the best translation of asubha. "Unattractiveness" is better, for the reasons already given. In practice, it's the recognition (saññā) of the undesirable aspects of the human body. AN 10.60 Girimānanda Sutta:

Now what, Ānanda, is the recognition of unattractiveness (asubhasaññā)? Here, Ānanda, a monk reflects upon this body, from the soles of the feet upwards, from the hair of the head down, bounded by skin, and filled with manifold impurities: 'In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, and urine.' Thus, regarding this body he remains contemplating what is unattractive. This, Ānanda, is called the recognition of unattractiveness.

The Visuddhimagga offers a good method for breaking down the list of body parts into smaller lists of five or six items to be reflected upon at a time and memorized. The commentary on the Vibhaṅga recommends a six month program of intensive retreat to systematically learn this practice.

And as AN 7.49 informs us, the purpose of the practice is to develop equanimity or dislike regarding the body, and thereby abandon lust for sexual intercourse. AN 7.49 Dutiyasaññā Sutta:

'The recognition of unattractiveness, monks, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit; it merges with the death-free, has the death-free as its end.' Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said?

Monks, when a monk's mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of unattractiveness, his mind shrinks away from, recoils, pulls back, and is not drawn toward the attainment of sexual intercourse, and either equanimity or dislike are established. Monks, just as a cock's feather or a piece of tendon, when thrown into a fire, shrinks away, recoils, pulls back, and is not drawn in; in the same way, when a monk's mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of unattractiveness, his mind shrinks away from, recoils, pulls back, and is not drawn toward the attainment of sexual intercourse, and either equanimity or dislike are established.

If, monks, when a monk's mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of unattractiveness, his mind inclines toward the attainment of sexual intercourse, or if admiration continues, then he should know, 'I have not developed the recognition of unattractiveness, there is no stepwise distinction in me, I have not obtained the strength of development.' In that way he is fully aware there. But if, monks, when a monk's mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of unattractiveness, his mind shrinks away from, recoils, pulls back, and is not drawn toward the attainment of sexual intercourse, and either equanimity or dislike are established, then he should know, 'I have developed the recognition of unattractiveness, there is stepwise distinction in me, I have obtained the strength of development.' In that way he is fully aware there.

'The recognition of unattractiveness, monks, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit; it merges with the death-free, has the death-free as its end.' Thus it was said. And in reference to this it was said.

Equanimity (upekkhā) is the optimal mental quality to be developed by this practice, and dislike (pāṭikulyatā) is a stage leading to equanimity. Pāṭikulyatā is related to the term paṭikkūla (paṭi+kūla, lit. "against the slope") which has connotations such as "inclining away," "disagreeable," "impure," etc. The commentaries highlight the recognition of impurity (paṭikkūlasaññā) and attention to impurity (paṭikkūlamānasikāra).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 01, 2011 5:42 am

Title: Re: Did the buddha continue to practice meditation?

Content:

MN 122:

"But there is this (mental) dwelling discovered by the Tathagata where, not attending to any themes, he enters & remains in internal emptiness. If, while he is dwelling there by means of this dwelling, he is visited by monks, nuns, lay men, lay women, kings, royal ministers, sectarians & their disciples, then — with his mind bent on seclusion, tending toward seclusion, inclined toward seclusion, aiming at seclusion, relishing renunciation, having destroyed those qualities that are the basis for mental fermentation — he converses with them only as much as is necessary for them to take their leave."

DN 16:

"Now I am frail, Ananda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ananda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathagata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ananda, only when the Tathagata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the signless concentration of mind, that his body is more comfortable."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 01, 2011 5:54 am

Title: Re: Did the buddha continue to practice meditation?

Content:

Specifically, an arahant would frequently practice aññāphala samādhi, also called supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 01, 2011 9:58 am

Title: Re: Did the buddha continue to practice meditation?

Content:

Also, from Ven. Bodhi's Introduction to The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, pp. 22-23: Again, despite the absence of any systematic account, the Majjhima offers a sufficient number of cameo portraits of the Buddha for us to obtain, with the aid of information provided by other sources, a fairly satisfactory picture of his daily activities and annual routine during the forty-five

years of his ministry. A commentarial text shows the Buddha's daily schedule as having been divided between periods of instructing the bhikkhus, giving discourses to the laity, and secluded meditation, during which he usually dwelt either in the "abode of voidness" (MN 121.3, MN 122.6) or in the attainment of great compassion. The day's single meal was always taken in the forenoon, either received by invitation or collected on almsround, and his sleep was restricted to a few hours per night, except in the summer, when he rested briefly during the middle of the day (MN 36.46). The annual routine was determined by the Indian climate, which divided the year into three seasons - a cold season from November through February, a hot season from March through June, and a rainy season from July through October. As was customary among the ascetics of ancient India, the Buddha and his monastic community would remain at a fixed residence during the rainy season, when torrential rains and swollen rivers made travel almost impossible. During the rest of the year he would wander through the Ganges Valley expounding his teachings to all who were prepared to listen.

The Buddha's main seats of residence for the rains retreat (vassa) were located at Savatthi in the state of Kosala and Rajagaha in the state of Magadha. At Savatthi he would usually stay at Jeta's Grove, a park offered to him by the wealthy merchant Anathapindika, and accordingly a great number of Majjhima discourses are recorded as having been given there. Occasionally at Savatthi he would reside instead at the Eastern Park, offered by the devout lay-woman Visakha, also known as "Migara's mother." In Rajagaha he often stayed at the Bamboo Grove, offered by the king of Magadha, Seniya Bimbisara, or for greater seclusion, on Vulture Peak outside the city. His wanderings, during which he was usually accompanied by a large retinue of bhikkhus, ranged from the Angan country (close to modern West Bengal) to the Himalayan foothills and the Kuru country (modern Delhi). Occasionally, when he saw that a special case required his individual attention, he would leave the Sangha and travel alone (see MN 75, MN 86, MN 140).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 06, 2011 12:34 am

Title: Re: Hahayana?

Content:

If we based the veracity of any tradition on the opinions of the "average" practitioner of that tradition, we'd all be screwed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 08, 2011 4:26 am

Title: Re: Hahayana?

Content:

Indeed. It's a foolish idea.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 08, 2011 4:30 am

Title: Re: Assessing ones progress

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 08, 2011 7:36 am

Title: Re: Visuddhi Magga on Access To Insight

Content:

Good stuff Zom.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 5:20 am

Title: Re: little lies, big lies

Content:

This sounds like the big lie of scientific materialism to me.....

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 5:58 am

Title: Re: little lies, big lies

Content:

How about the Buddhist view? AN 5.57:

I am the owner of my actions (kamma), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir...

To the extent that there are beings — past and future, passing away and re-arising — all beings are the owner of their actions, heir to their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and live dependent on their actions. Whatever they do, for good or for evil, to that will they fall heir.

All the best,

Geoff



Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 6:37 am

Title: Re: little lies, big lies

Content:

From a Buddhist point of view this is only one aspect of who we are and how we became what we are. We are the product of our kamma. And kamma begins with volitional intention. The body and the brain only comprise one of the five aggregates -- important, yes -- but not the most important.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 6:40 am

Title: Re: HAPPY BIRTHDAY Prasadachitta!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 7:28 am

Title: Re: Ancient Buddhists

Content:

Yes, both "Buddhist" and "Buddhism" are modern terms.

In Pāli the term most frequently used to refer to the Buddhist religion is *sāsana*, meaning the "doctrine" or "teaching" (lit. "message"), or *Buddhasāsana*, meaning the "doctrine/teaching of the Buddha."

In Chinese the term for the Buddhist religion is *fo jiao* (佛教), meaning the "teaching of the Buddha."

In Tibetan the term for the Buddhist religion is  *nang pa'i chos* , meaning the "dharma of the insiders," and a Buddhist is called a  *nang pa* , meaning "insider."

All of these terms (i.e. *sāsana*, *fo jiao*,  *nang pa'i chos* ) are commonly translated into English as "Buddhism."

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 8:22 am

Title: Re: mind that breathes in is not the same mind that breathes out

Content:

This idea is found in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā:

Sign (nimitta), in-breath, out-breath, are not the object of a single mind;

One not knowing these three dhammas does not obtain development.

Sign, in-breath, out-breath, are not the object of a single mind;

One knowing well these three dhammas can then obtain development.

From the perspective of designation (paññatti), since the in-breath, out-breath, and gap between breaths are not the same object, the mind attending to each of these objects is nominally distinct.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 2:22 pm

Title: Re: little lies, big lies

Content:

Yeah, I've read a couple of short excerpts by Harris, but I don't know enough about him to offer an informed opinion on his views.

My view is that rationalism is important -- an essential psychological developmental stage -- but it isn't the ultimate panacea for all human problems (personal or societal). Which brings to mind Adam Curtis' The Trap: What Happened to Our Dream of Freedom?

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 3:17 pm

Title: Re: First Jhana...a description

Content:

Again, the canonical commentaries don't say this. You're relying on late post-canonical interpretations of these two terms. The canonical Dhammasaṅgaṇī gives the following two registers for vitakka and vicāra (the English equivalents here are those offered by Lance Cousins, who's done an exhaustive survey of all relevant Pāli sources):

vitakka:

1. takka 2. vitakka 3. saṅkappa 4. appanā 5. byappanā 6. cetaso abhiniropanā 7. sammāsaṅkappa

1. speculation 2. thought 3. thought formation 4. fixing 5. firm fixing 6. applying the mind 7. right thought formation.

vicāra:

1. cāra 2. vicāra 3. anuvicāra 4. upavicāra 5. cittassa anusandhānatā 6. anupekkhanatā

1. wandering 2. wandering about 3. repeated wandering about 4. frequenting 5. explorativeness of mind 6. constant examination.

And here's how the early para-canonical Peṭakopadesa defines and explains these two jhāna factors: Here, for fulfilling non-passion he thinks the thought of renunciation. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression he thinks the thought of non-aversion. Here, for fulfilling non-delusion he thinks the thought of harmlessness.

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he is secluded from sensual pleasures. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression and fulfilling non-delusion he is secluded from unskillful phenomena. And so he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

Directed thought: There are three kinds of directed thought, namely the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-aversion, and the thought of harmlessness.

Here, directed thought is the first instance while evaluation is the evaluation of what is thereby received. Just as when a man sees someone approaching in the distance he does not yet know whether it is a woman or a man, but when he has received [the recognition] that "it is a woman" or "it is a man" or that "it is of such color" or that "it is one of such shape," then when he has thought this he further scrutinizes, "How then, is he ethical or unethical, rich or poor?" This is examination. With directed thought he fixes. With examination he moves about and turns over [what has been thought].

And just as a winged bird first accumulates [speed] and then accumulates no more [speed when gliding], so too, directed thought is like the accumulation, and evaluation is like the outstretched wings which keeps preserving the directed thought and evaluation....

Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 11, 2011 7:19 pm

Title: Re: Ancient Buddhists

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Aug 12, 2011 7:47 pm

Title: Re: The mechanics of what we call "belief"

Content:

I think this is prudent -- I do the same. Having been around long enough to know, or at least infer, the

limits of my own understanding, this seems to be the most viable approach.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 13, 2011 11:52 pm

Title: Re: HAPPY BIRTHDAY LAZYEYE!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 14, 2011 5:12 am

Title: Re: Why are the sutta's so didactic?

Content:

Yeah, I think this is the reason why the suttas don't seem to have the same appeal as literary texts.

(I also vaguely remember learning somewhere that the custom of reading silently to oneself is a somewhat of a modern phenomenon. Historically, even books were generally read out loud.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 14, 2011 6:24 am

Title: Re: Why are the sutta's so didactic?

Content:

Yeah it's a good idea. It also doesn't hurt to memorize a few favorite passages or suttas and then recite them from memory as a regular part of one's practice.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 22, 2011 3:08 am

Title: Re: What's mind consciousness and why it's a magic show?

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 22, 2011 1:48 pm

Title: Re: Implications of Kurzweils Singularity on Buddhism

Content:

I think saṃsāra has always sucked and will always suck.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 23, 2011 9:40 am

Title: Re: Measureless mind

Content:

Thanks for the kind words Alan. Glad to hear that you have found it to be of some use. The site is still only about 50% completed. Maybe I'll be motivated to continue with it sometime soon....

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 23, 2011 10:33 am

Title: Re: Measureless mind

Content:

Yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 24, 2011 5:13 am

Title: Re: Measureless mind

Content:

Constructive feedback is valuable. I'd be interested to hear any suggestions for improving the content and/or navigation and/or design of the site. (Pls keep in mind that the content is only about 50% completed.)

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Aug 24, 2011 12:23 pm  
Title: Re: Measureless mind  
Content:  
Good eye Bhante! Thnx.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Aug 25, 2011 8:45 am  
Title: Re: Did the buddha continue to practice meditation?  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Sep 01, 2011 6:29 am  
Title: Re: Internal emptiness, external emptiness & the imperturbable  
Content:  
The Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññatākathā defines internal and external emptiness according to the twelve sensory spheres:  
What is internal emptiness?

Internally the eye is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the ear is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the nose is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the tongue is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the body is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Internally the mind is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is internal emptiness.

What is external emptiness?

Externally form is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally sound is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally odor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally flavor is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally tactile sensation is empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

Externally mental phenomena are empty of a self or that which belongs to a self or of what is permanent and everlasting and eternal and not subject to change.

This is external emptiness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 01, 2011 7:17 am

Title: Re: Internal emptiness, external emptiness & the imperturbable

Content:

Yes, I'd say that's accurate. In the suttas, the "imperturbable" usually refers to the fourth jhāna or the formless attainments. Cf. MN 106, endnote #1.

As samādhi deepens the main spheres of focus and mental engagement are the mind sensory sphere (manāyatana) and the mental phenomena sensory sphere (dhammāyatana). Insight at this stage consists of seeing the subtlest recognition of impermanence of the mind and concomitant mental factors present. This subtle level of change is indicated in SN 35.93 Dutiyadvaya Sutta:

The mind is impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise; phenomena are impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise. Thus this dyad is moving (calañceva) and wavering (byathañca), impermanent (aniccam), changing (vipariṇāmi), becoming otherwise (aññathābhāvi).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 02, 2011 6:49 pm

Title: Re: Pitch-black emptiness and Mahasi Sayadaw technique

Content:

No, that isn't what is being described. A non-perceptive attainment (asaññasamāpatti) and a non-percipient being (asaññasatta) are not the same as any of the four formless attainments nor the cessation of perception and feeling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 04, 2011 11:59 pm

Title: Re: Vasubandhu on "Momentary Dependent Origination"

Content:

The Abhidharmakośa & bhāṣya are not Mahāyāna texts Chris.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 05, 2011 5:31 am

Title: Re: Vasubandhu on "Momentary Dependent Origination"

Content:

Yeah, the root verses are Sarvāstivāda (Northern cousin of Theravāda), and the commentary (Abhidharmakośabhāṣya) is generally considered to be Sautrāntika. It's possible that the doctrine of radical momentariness that was to become a part of Theravāda through the writings of Ven. Buddhaghosa, originated amongst mainland Indian sautrāntikas.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 05, 2011 5:52 am

Title: Re: Vasubandhu on "Momentary Dependent Origination"

Content:

Like most things from the classical era it's a complex subject, and labels aren't always accurate. Basically, everyone during that period was thoroughly embedded in the abhidharma thought-world, including the so-called sautrāntika authors. The differences between authors included how much one criticized the Sarvāstivāda tenets, the methods of criticism, and so on. For example, at times the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya uses quotations from the sūtras to criticize some of the orthodox interpretations. This is similar to what we see being done these days by sutta oriented Theravāda authors like Ṭhānissaro & Ñāṇananda (who don't necessarily agree with each other even though they are both using a suddhāntika methodology).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 09, 2011 11:27 am

Title: Re: Is Theravada "Realist"?

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda has understood this deeper than most. All things are relational and merely established according to agreed upon conventions.

The Paradox of the Heap.

Far better to walk away from the whole language game, calm the mind, and then let go of even that.



Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Sep 10, 2011 1:56 pm  
Title: Re: The Digha Nikaya in Norwegian  
Content:  
Good stuff Kare!

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Sep 19, 2011 7:52 pm  
Title: Re: Goldstein, Kornfield and One Buddhism - what's missing?  
Content:  
Nice rant.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Sep 22, 2011 10:57 am  
Title: Re: Is Theravada "Realist"?  
Content:  
It looks like Gombrich's new book contains some decent analysis.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Sep 22, 2011 2:24 pm  
Title: Re: yathābhūtañāḍassana: "seeing things as they really are"?  
Content:  
At least a couple modern translators have suggested that a more accurate (less essentialist) translation of yathābhūtañāḍassana would be something like "knowledge and vision of things as they have become." The point is to emphasize the the process of becoming and not some sort of static reality. In the suttas, yathābhūtañāḍassana leads to disenchantment and dispassion.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Sep 22, 2011 10:36 pm  
Title: Re: yathābhūtañāḍassana: "seeing things as they really are"?  
Content:

I think so.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Sep 23, 2011 4:25 pm  
Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana  
Content:  
And the samaṇa Gotama.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Sep 23, 2011 7:40 pm  
Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana  
Content:  
Working through the subtleties of textual comparison to make the connections between the Pāli dhamma and appropriate Mahāyāna texts in order to discuss the continuities and discontinuities between the Theravāda texts, the Theravāda Thai forest tradition, and the dzogchen view, takes considerable effort on its own. There are very few people in this world sufficiently qualified in all of these areas. People like Amaro and Goldstein are trying to bridge the gap, but there is clearly still some way to go in order to communicate this level of practice.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Sep 23, 2011 8:02 pm  
Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana  
Content:  
Of course.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Sep 23, 2011 8:32 pm  
Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana  
Content:  
I agree. Teachers should always aspire to up their game. And FTR, I've been quite critical of the texts of a couple teachers from the Thai forest tradition in the past. Of course, the vast majority of monastics in the Thai forest tradition aren't scholars, and don't claim to be.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Sep 24, 2011 6:36 pm  
Title: Re: Mahayana Concept In Pali Text?  
Content:  
Indeed. Thanks Bhante.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Sep 26, 2011 12:01 am  
Title: Re: wondering if this is the right forum for me  
Content:  
Of course this is the right forum for you! If you don't see any topics currently being discussed that interest you, feel free to create a topic. There's the Lounge and Theravada for the Modern World, and so on.... With 4000+ members here, my guess is that someone will be interested in what you have to share.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Sep 26, 2011 12:12 am  
Title: Re: Sense of Urgency and Continuity of Practice  
Content:  
As Nicro has already mentioned, contemplating the uncertainty of the time of death, the precariousness of the conditions which sustain this precious human birth, and the suffering of all of saṃsāra, are excellent motivators to instill a sense of urgency.

As for developing continuity in practice it's very helpful to (1) set up a daily sitting practice schedule and then stick to it; (2) practice taking mindfulness and full awareness off the sitting mat and into all daily activities; (3) develop unrestricted loving-kindness and compassion for all beings (including yourself).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Sep 27, 2011 3:21 am  
Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana  
Content:  
Generally: Thai forest tradition [note lower case lettering] referring to those monks ordained in

Thailand, following the ascetic tradition of Ajahn Mun, etc.

More specifically: Western Forest Sangha in the lineage of Ajahn Chah, as in, for example: Abhayagiri Monastic Foundation. Morning and Evening Chanting (Pūjā), Reflections, and Suttas, as Used by Buddhist Monasteries and Groups Associated with the Western Forest Sangha in the Lineage of Venerable Ajahn Chah, 2004.

None of these are doctrinal traditions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 27, 2011 4:19 am

Title: Re: Unorthodox Vipassana

Content:

Sure. The same can be said for other group identities as well. The designation only goes so far.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 28, 2011 5:10 am

Title: Re: The ceasing of eye consciousness?

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 03, 2011 2:17 am

Title: Re: Precepts: Not eating after mid-day / Avoiding lofty beds

Content:

As others have already said, hunger goes away. Eating less is also beneficial for meditation retreat and for keeping the weight off if one lives a contemplative lifestyle long term.

A low bed is also not a problem, although the only boon I've noticed is that it makes for more spaciousness in one's bedroom, and moving from location to location is easier without having to move large beds.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 03, 2011 5:44 am

Title: Re: Mental Noting is Vipassana or Samatha meditation?

Content:  
LOL...

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Oct 04, 2011 9:59 am  
Title: Re: Precepts: Not eating after mid-day / Avoiding lofty beds  
Content:

A preoccupation with rules would also be counter-productive. Of course, some of us are uptight to begin with, and would do better to loosen up and relax. Others are sloppy, and would do better to clean things up a bit. Most of us are just unaware. But in every case, relating to renunciation as an aspect of voluntary simplicity -- a way to create some space in one's life -- is probably more helpful than trying to conform to external rules for their own sake.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Oct 07, 2011 6:56 am  
Title: Re: New translations of P.A. Payutto's classic Buddhadhamma  
Content:

Yes, very good. Thanks for posting the links Ajahn Gavesako.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:48 pm  
Title: Re: Dualism  
Content:

This blog post makes some rather sweeping generalizations which are not entirely accurate. This fellow's opinions should be taken with a few grains of salt. There are far better modern commentators available.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Oct 11, 2011 12:48 am  
Title: Re: Dualism  
Content:

Nyanananda, Gunaratana, Analayo, Gombrich, etc., come to mind. A Google search will yield links.

At any rate, the dhamma isn't dualism or monism or any other philosophical trip -- all of which are manifestations of mental proliferation. Understanding the four noble truths and developing the noble eightfold path puts an end to mental proliferation.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 11, 2011 5:36 pm

Title: Re: Comparative Study of the MN - Ven. Anālayo

Content:

Thanks Micha.

Best wishes,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 21, 2011 6:57 am

Title: Re: MN mp3 by B. Bodhi: disappeared?

Content:

I think they're all here Sacha: A Systematic Study of the Majjhima Nikaya. The site is at <http://bodhimonastery.com/bm/>.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 21, 2011 7:28 am

Title: Re: Paul Williams' On converting from Buddhism to Catholicism

Content:

Indeed.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 23, 2011 2:43 pm

Title: Re: MN mp3 by B. Bodhi: disappeared?

Content:

Thanks Chris. It's good to know that it wasn't a more serious problem.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 25, 2011 7:10 am

Title: Re: Which flavour should I choose?

Content:

No matter which tradition you choose to follow, if you commit to an authentic practice sooner or later you will be challenged to step outside of your comfort zone of habitual thoughts and (re-)actions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 25, 2011 7:50 am

Title: Re: What body or kaya is this?

Content:

Yes, and it's called a mind-made body (manomayakāya). There is a standard pericope description given in the suttas, such as DN 2:

With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to creating a mind-made body. From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, made of the mind, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties. Just as if a man were to draw a reed from its sheath. The thought would occur to him: 'This is the sheath, this is the reed. The sheath is one thing, the reed another, but the reed has been drawn out from the sheath.' Or as if a man were to draw a sword from its scabbard. The thought would occur to him: 'This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.' Or as if a man were to pull a snake out from its slough. The thought would occur to him: 'This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake is one thing, the slough another, but the snake has been pulled out from the slough.' In the same way — with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, the monk directs and inclines it to creating a mind-made body. From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, made of the mind, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

There is some further mention in the commentaries. For a modern academic survey of manomaya & manomayakāya in a Pan-Indian context as well as in the Pāli tradition see Sue Hamilton's *Identity and Experience: The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism*, pp. 138-68.

I can't remember off-hand if tradition specifically maintains that the Buddha employed a mind-made

body to ascend to the heaven and teach the Abhidhamma or not (IMO the story is mythological and not historical).

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 25, 2011 8:32 am

Title: Re: The Buddha's Guide to Mental Cultivation for Trainees

Content:

There are a number of similar lists found in the suttas, which are either called recognitions (saññā) or contemplations (anupassanā). For example:

Recognition of Impermanence (Aniccasaññā):

AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108)

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46)

AN 7.95 (PTS A iv 145)

SN 46.71 (PTS S v 132, CDB 1620)

Recognition of Unsatisfactoriness in what is Impermanent (Anicca Dukkhasaññā):

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46)

AN 7.96 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.72 (PTS S v 132, CDB 1620)

Recognition of Selflessness (Anattasaññā) or Recognition of Selflessness in what is Unsatisfactory (Dukkha Anattasaññā):

AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108)

AN 7.49 (ATI 7.46, PTS A iv 46)

AN 7.97 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.73 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1620)

Recognition of Decay (Khayasaññā):

AN 7.98 (PTS A iv 146)

Recognition of Passing Away (Vayasaññā):

AN 7.99 (PTS A iv 146)

Recognition of Dispassion (Virāgasaññā):

AN 10.60 PTS A v 108

AN 7.100 (PTS A iv 146)

SN 46.75 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1621)

Recognition of Cessation (Nirodhasaññā):



AN 10.60 (PTS A v 108):  
AN 7.101 (PTS A iv 146)  
SN 46.76 (PTS S v 133, CDB 1621)

Recognition of Release (Paṭinissaggasaññā):

AN 7.102 (PTS A iv 146)

A standard version in a practice context is the last tetrad of MN 118 Ānāpānassati Sutta:  
contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā), contemplation of dispassion (virāgānupassanā),  
contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassanā), contemplation of release (paṭinissaggānupassanā).

These lists were then further extended in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, where we find the mega-list of 18 insight-gnoses as they came to be called in the commentarial tradition. The eighteen insight-ñāṇa-s as presented in the Paṭisambhidāmagga are:

(1) contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassanā), (2) contemplation of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhānupassanā), (3) contemplation of selflessness (anattānupassanā), (4) contemplation of disenchantment (nibbidānupassanā), (5) contemplation of dispassion (virāgānupassanā), (6) contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassanā), (7) contemplation of release (paṭinissaggānupassanā), (8) contemplation of decay (khayānupassanā), (9) contemplation of passing away (vayānupassanā), (10) contemplation of change (vipariṇāmanupassanā), (11) contemplation of signlessness (animittānupassanā), (12) contemplation of desirelessness (apañihitānupassanā), (13) contemplation of emptiness (suññatānupassanā), (14) clear seeing of dhamma with heightened discernment (adhipaṇṇādharmavipassanā), (15) gnosis and vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañāṇadassana), (16) contemplation of misery/danger (ādinavānupassanā), (17) reflexive contemplation (paṭisaṅkhānupassanā), (18) contemplation of turning away (vivaṭṭanānupassanā).

This system is the one used in the Visuddhimagga and became the standard process model for the modern Burmese Vipassanā Meditation traditions.

All the best,

Geoff

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 25, 2011 9:44 am

Title: Re: The Buddha's Guide to Mental Cultivation for Trainees

Content:

Hmmm.... I think that they are meant to be instructions even at the Paṭisambhidāmagga stage of commentary. They are meant to be learned, then experientially contemplated and recognized, and then personally known. So developmentally we would have: contemplation (anupassanā) ⇌ recognition (saññā) → gnosis (ñāṇa).

This correlates to the more standard three stages of discernment (paññā): discernment obtained through hearing (sutamayā paññā), discernment obtained through reflection (cintāmayā paññā), and discernment obtained through meditative development (bhāvanāmayā paññā). The first two comprise theoretical levels of discernment where one hears the teachings and reflects on them. This

reflection is the beginning of internalizing the meaning of what has been heard. But for discernment to be liberating the process of internalization must deepen through meditative development. This level is direct experiential discernment.

AFAIK it's only in some of the modern Vipassanā texts where it's said that a student shouldn't learn the "stages of insight" prior to recognizing them on the sitting mat.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 9:44 am

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

Indeed. Sustained recognition of impermanence will eventually shred all philosophical views.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 10:32 am

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

Dhammas are mere designation (paññattimatta). The classical Mahāvihāra two truth hermeneutic is deeply flawed -- resulting in either an eternalistic or nihilistic view. We see variations on these extremes playing out all over this forum and amongst many Theravāda teachers as well. The aggregates are not to be taken as "the given." Nor is contact, etc. Nibbāna is the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion. End of story.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 11:09 am

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

It's pretty simple really: The basis for all designations is merely appearances as they appear to non-impaired cognitions. Therefore, conventions are accepted, but without any misguided attempt to ultimately establish or prove anything. And by learning to rest the mind in this absence of reification (by uniting samatha & vipassanā), one realizes the complete pacification of mental proliferation (nippapañca), which is synonymous with nibbāna (i.e. the total extinguishment of passion, aggression, & delusion).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 12:08 pm

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

We've already discussed this in detail here, and here, and here, etc., etc. In the first thread I quoted the relevant passages from Karunadasa's essay on the commentarial dhamma theory.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 1:53 pm

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

You're certainly free to invent your own version of a nominal two truth theory, but that basically negates the entire premise. At any rate, it's far easier to avoid this paramattha notion altogether. In this way one is less prone to tacitly condoning errant views -- views which you know still permeate much modern Theravāda discourse where the "big four" are taken as sacred cows. Ven. Ñāṇananda: If there is no sub-stance in any-thing, what is left is empti-ness. But many peo-ple are afraid of words like śūnyatā. They want to pro-tect their four.

And:

If one does not approach the com-men-tar-ial lit-er-a-ture with a crit-i-cal eye, one would be trapped. Unfor-tu-nately many are.

Word.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Oct 28, 2011 3:29 pm

Title: Re: Two truths theory. Did Buddha teach it?

Content:

The four so-called "paramattha dhammas" -- mind (citta), mental factors (cetasikā), form (rūpa), and nibbāna, considered as ultimate realities.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 30, 2011 4:52 am

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

Well, this query is bound up with these questions such as what is conceptual and what is real and so on. Indian Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike spent well over 1000 years debating and arguing over this issue.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 30, 2011 6:22 am

Title: Re: Body of a Buddha vs. Arahant in Abhidhamma

Content:

It's standard canonical Theravāda that a buddha has knowledge and abilities not shared by arahant disciples. The Paṭisambhidāmagga (a text contained in the Khuddakanikāya) lists the following:

- knowledge of the penetration of other beings' faculties
- knowledge of other beings' biases and underlying tendencies
- knowledge of the twin miracle\*
- knowledge of the attainment of great compassion
- omniscience & unobstructed knowledge

\*i.e. the ability to produce fire and water from various parts of the body, as well as walk amid an

aura of colors while a created image of his body sits or lies down, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 30, 2011 11:55 pm

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

This "breaking experience down into simpler bits" isn't a two truth notion per se. You're a pretty smart fellow Mike. I find it kinda hard to believe that you don't understand these distinctions, and don't see the problems and limitations of the commentarial two truth theory?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 12:02 am

Title: Re: 3 Bodies of the Buddha

Content:

It's probably a good idea to avoid making generalizations regarding the position of all vajrayanists.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 12:56 am

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

Let's be clear here. Ven. Ñāṇananda has explicitly referred to the commentarial era two truth theory as a "deviation from the original position at the commentarial level." He also calls the well-known commentarial verse quoted by Buddhaghosa in support of the two truth theory a "naïve defense" of said theory. Concept and Reality In Early Buddhist Thought:

[T]he word 'paramattha' in its earlier and non-technical usage, actually meant the Highest Goal as the object of realization, and any words tending towards that goal were called 'paramatthasamhita' (connected with the Highest Goal), irrespective of their precision or technicality. However, the Buddha, for his part, was content to treat all of them as 'sammuti'. For him, they were 'merely worldly conventions in common use, which he made use of, without clinging to them' (DN I 202, Poṭṭhapāda Sutta).

One wonders whether this simple though profound attitude of the Buddha towards concepts, has been properly handed down in tradition, when for instance one comes across the following verse quoted approvingly by Buddhaghosa (source unknown) in his commentary to the Anaṅgaṇa Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya:

Duvedaccāṇi akkhāsi, sambuddho vadatam varo;  
sammutim paramatthañca, tatiyam nūpalabbhati.  
Saṅketavacanam saccam, lokasammutikāraṇā;  
paramatthavacanam saccam, dhammānam bhūtakāraṇā.  
Tasmā vohārakusalassa, lokanāthassa satthuno;  
sammutim voharantassa, musāvādo na jāyati.

"The Fully Enlightened One, the best of those who speak, declared two truths, the conventional and the absolute; there can be no third.

"Words of symbolic nature are true by reason of their existence in worldly parlance. Words of absolute significance, are true by reason of the existence of the elements.

"Hence, even though the Lord of the World, the Teacher versed in worldly parlance, makes use of such conventional speech, there arises no offence of falsehood for him."

If one can appreciate the significance of the term 'nippapañca,' one might realize that the Buddha could magnanimously afford to dispense with such naïve defenses as the above, against any charges of his having violated the fourth precept.

And so this criticism of the commentarial hermeneutic -- which is what it is -- isn't just "an opinion" that's been fostered here on DW by a few fervent "sutta-only" types. It's been a part of the contemporary Theravāda discussion since the publication of C & R in 1971. It's a rather important issue occurring within contemporary Theravāda which probably shouldn't be dismissed lightly. And at some point a practitioner has to decide which interpretation of the dhamma they are going to use. In this particular case, I don't really see how one can have it both ways. To try to regard the two truth theory as merely a nominal distinction undermines the very purpose of the interpretation that it attempts to impose.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 1:03 am

Title: Re: 3 Bodies of the Buddha

Content:

Because not all vajrayanists will agree with your literal historical narrative.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 6:18 am

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

And this is the crux of the issue: Those "simpler bits" are also conventional and not ultimate things in any way, shape, or form. The entire path uses conventional designations from start to finish, and it's misguided to assume that those conventions represent a real substratum of experience (i.e. an "ultimate reality") independent of those conceptual categories themselves. The culmination of cognitive liberation occurs when those categories are also transcended during supramundane meditation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 9:57 am

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

After recently reading Ṭhānissaro's rather bizarre footnotes to MN 38, you'll have to forgive me for not sharing your optimism on this point.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 10:34 am

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

It's probably also worth mentioning that Buddhaghosa also gets it right, although not without a bit of waffling due to the cumbersome two truth hermeneutic. Relying on the path sequence outlined in the canonical Dhammasaṅgaṇī, he explains in Visuddhimagga, Chapter 21, the awakening factors, path factors, and jhāna factors of the path attainment for the first three types of practitioners, which develops from the stage of equanimity about fabrications:

According to governance by insight, the path arises in a bare-insight worker, and the path arises in one who possesses a jhāna attainment but who has not made the jhāna the basis for insight, and the path made to arise by comprehending unrelated fabrications after using the first jhāna as the basis for insight, are paths of the first jhāna only. In each case there are seven awakening factors, eight path factors, and five jhāna factors. For while their preliminary insight can be accompanied by happiness and it can be accompanied by equanimity, when their insight reaches the state of equanimity about fabrications at the time of emergence it is accompanied by happiness.

Ven. Ñāṇārāma also gets it. The path-cognition of stream-entry is a supramundane jhāna which must include the presence of the jhāna factors, and so on. In his Seven Stages of Purification & the Insight Knowledges he states:

At whatever moment he attains the supramundane path, that path-consciousness comes to be reckoned as a jhāna in itself, since it has some affinity with the factors proper to jhānas, such as the first jhāna. What are known as transcendental meditations in Buddhism are these supramundane levels of concentration within the reach of the pure insight meditator.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 1:41 pm

Title: Re: 7 Billionth Person Will Be Born Ahead Of Schedule

Content:

I was just told that today has been designated as the day we hit 7 000 000 000. I don't think I've ever written a number that large before....

Let's remember that there will be many, many, many who will be undernourished today. Many who will die of malnutrition and treatable diseases. The statistics are staggering. Saṃsāra can be ... nasty.

On a lighter note, Happy Halloween!

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 4:47 pm

Title: Re: The 3 Poisons: Another Name?

Content:

Sure. Also, as you probably know, in the context of meditation it's common to refer to the five hindrances (pañcanīvaraṇā: pañca - nīvaraṇā): (i) impulsive desire for sensual pleasure

(kāmacchanda), (ii) aversion (byāpāda), (iii) lethargy and drowsiness (thīnamiddha), (iv) restlessness and anxiety (uddhaccakukkucca), and (v) doubt (vicikicchā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 5:29 pm

Title: Re: Absorption of a thoroughbred man

Content:

The absorption of a thoroughbred man described in the first sutta is generally considered to refer to an arahant's fruition-gnosis samādhi (aññāphala samādhi).

What Ven. Ṭhānissaro translates as "themeless concentration of awareness" (animitta cetosamādhi) in MN 121 is related to the signless samādhi we discussed in that other "Concentration on the Signless" thread. And as I mentioned on that thread these vipassanā samādhis and supramundane samādhis aren't systematized in enough detail in the suttas to really have any indication of what they originally referred to. Therefore, it's prudent to rely on the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Abhidhammapiṭaka, and the commentaries to fill in the details. The commentary to MN 121 says that in this context animitta cetosamādhi refers to vipassanā samādhi (vipassanācittasamādhi) which is without any sign of permanence, etc. The commentary says that the next section of the sutta where the outflows are known to be abandoned refers to reflexive vipassanā (paṭivipassanā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 5:42 pm

Title: Re: 7 Billionth Person Will Be Born Ahead Of Schedule

Content:

Yes, and it's a challenge that has to be approached from many angles. It probably goes without saying that promoting better management of resources and fairer distribution is essential, as is promoting and funding education, education, education.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 5:55 pm

Title: Re: The anapana spot?

Content:

All of the different common instructions will work if applied. The most important point is to sit on your sitting mat or cushion -- regularly and repeatedly -- and apply the instruction that resonates with you.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 6:16 pm

Title: Re: too many paths & doors & bodies?

Content:

Thich Nhat Hanh's books have started many people on the path. But if you're interested in Theravāda practice you may like teachers such as Ajahn Chah and Ajahn Sumedho. The wonderful thing is that most of their translated teachings are available for free.

Teachings of Ajahn Chah

Teachings of Ajahn Sumedho

Forest Sangha Publications

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 6:46 pm

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

\*Sigh\* How is any word of that discourse paramattha Mike?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 31, 2011 7:56 pm

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

No need to apologize to me Mike. I think you're a pretty straight up guy. But for what it's worth, I'd suggest that your other possible reply is probably more accurate: there is no "paramattha" in the suttas in this sense...

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 01, 2011 2:04 am

Title: Re: Absorption of a thoroughbred man

Content:

Well, the thing is, there are a few instances of terminology where there isn't enough content in the suttas themselves to ascertain what the term or phrase is really referring to. As I mentioned on that other thread, this is the case for the mentions of the signless samādhi (animittā samādhi). For example, MN 121 is a one-off sutta. It contains passages and phrasing which are unique to this sutta alone. So either: (i) we set this apparently important sutta\* aside because we consider its use of the term animitta cetosamādhi in this context to be too obscure to understand in any usable sense; (ii) we interpret it willy-nilly to fit our fancy (the "wild west" scenario); or (iii) we look to other later canonical sources and the early commentaries to see what they have to say on the issue, and then determine as best we can if what they have to offer is reasonable in the context of what we do know from all other sutta sources on related or similar issues.

We know from MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta that the signless liberation of mind (animittā cetovimutti) is defined as follows:

What is the signless liberation of mind? There is the case where a monk, through not attending to all signs, enters and remains in the signless concentration of mind. Friend, this is said to be the signless liberation of mind.

This is all the info we get, and of course, this definition raises the obvious questions: What does it mean to "not attend to all signs"? How do I do this?



It's a free world and we are all free to choose whichever of the above options we consider viable in order to help us answer these questions. Personally, I consider the Paṭisambhidāmagga to be both reasonable and usable in this instance. For example, it offers the following:  
When he gives attention as impermanent his mind emerges from the sign; his mind enters into the signless.... Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness of form... feeling... recognition... fabrications... consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

And so here we learn that the signless deliverance, which is similar in wording to the "signless liberation of mind" defined in MN 43, is a samādhi resulting from the contemplation of impermanence, i.e. abandoning all signs of permanence as the commentary to MN 121 says. Okay, to me this seems reasonable and usable and gives meaning to a passage that would otherwise remain forever obscure.

\*It was definitely considered an important sutta for the Sarvāstivāda & Mūlasarvāstivāda because it was included in their Mahāsūtras.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 01, 2011 3:51 am

Title: Re: Absorption of a thoroughbred man

Content:

As you know, there are many suttas which list the four jhānas and then the four formless attainments and sometimes also the cessation of recognition and feeling. IMO this format is a standardized template. It allows for all possible variations in practice.

So with MN 121 for example, it first lists (i) the pre-jhāna practice of the recognition of wilderness; (ii) the jhāna practice of the recognition of earth, which can cover the development of all four jhānas; (iii) the practice of the four formless attainments which can be developed from the fourth jhāna; and (iv) the signless concentration, which according to the sources already quoted, refers to vipassanā. Here vipassanā can either be engaged from within any of the jhānas or first three formless attainments, or after emerging from any of the jhānas or formless attainments (depending on how you interpret the relationship between jhāna and vipassanā).

And so in practice, one doesn't have to follow the standardized template in a rigid linear order. The vipassanā practice resulting in the signless concentration can be engaged from the basis of any of the jhānas or first three formless attainments (again, depending upon the depth of your jhāna absorption), or after emerging from the fourth formless attainment.

In this way the standardized formulas of the suttas can be expanded horizontally to account for the dynamics of real life practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 01, 2011 7:47 am

Title: Re: Absorption of a thoroughbred man

Content:

I don't really know what you mean by uncertainty and discrepancy? Do you find the commentarial analysis unsatisfactory?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 01, 2011 9:10 am

Title: Re: Is there sutta basis for the modern bifurcation of jhanas?

Content:

I think there's enough diversity of practice instruction offered in the suttas and also enough lack of specifics to account for this as well as other interpretations.

Here's Ven. Anālayo's informative entry on samatha & vipassanā from the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism: Samatha & Vipassanā.

The bottom line is that as mental qualities, both samatha & vipassanā are indispensable.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 02, 2011 11:19 am

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

There will still be people reading, studying, translating, teaching, discussing, and debating the Visuddhimagga long after we're all dead, gone, and most likely forgotten (barring some sort of global or cosmic catastrophic event, that is).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 02, 2011 3:52 pm

Title: Re: anyone use the chair?

Content:

I sit on the floor, but with your knee problems by all means sit on a chair. You'll be able to develop a stable posture and keep your back straight without having to deal with knee problems. Consistency and patience are important. We practice with our mind and our whole body, not just with our knees.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 02, 2011 4:01 pm

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

Well... there's the whole theory of radical momentariness that informs those quotes, which is theoretical stuff sometimes mistaken as "the given" of insight meditation, but I'm not interested in discussing that here & now.

\*Singing\* "Gimme three steps, gimme three steps mister...."

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 02, 2011 4:47 pm

Title: Re: Jibber Jabber  
Content:  
Indeed one can.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 3:30 am  
Title: Re: anyone use the chair?  
Content:

This can be remedied for most people. As already mentioned, it's important to elevate your hips above your knees (when sitting in the cross-legged posture). When that is done, then it's a matter of adjusting the pelvis. The pelvis rotates forward and backward like a large flat bowl (with the bottom of the bowl analogous to the bottom of the pelvis bones). When the pelvis is in the correct position the spine will align like a slightly curved stack of coins (in a slight "S" curve with your body facing &lt;- way). Then the shoulders will also be aligned, and when it's just right, your skeleton will be well aligned, and your muscle mass will be full supported by your skeleton. Basically, all of your muscles will be able to relax like meat hanging on a rack. When the pelvis and spine and shoulders are correctly aligned then your body can deeply relax, which in turn, allows your mind to settle inwardly. (It's easier to work with someone in person to make these adjustments, but hopefully you can make the appropriate adjustments. It makes a world of difference.)

For most people who sit cross-legged on the floor the Japanese zafu & zabuton with a small support cushion for adjusting the zafu angle is by far the best technology ever invented. Preferably with a zafu stuffed with buckwheat hulls or something similar.

Note the very slight "z" curve of her lower spine.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 4:05 am  
Title: Re: dhammas  
Content:

Good eye Sylvester. To be sure, at least some of the Theravāda commentators made a conscious effort to avoid reification. In fact, Ācariya Ānanda's version of momentariness eliminated the sub-moment of duration.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 5:40 am  
Title: Re: dhammas  
Content:

Indeed. What we are talking about here is phenomenological description. And description is always going to be an approximation of (actual) non-conceptual experience. And so the issue is: What is the most accurate phenomenological description? There's no doubt that what we experience is

momentary. In sutta terms: moving (calañceva), wavering (byathañca), impermanent (aniccam), changing (vipariṇāmi), becoming otherwise (aññathābhāvi). When the scholar-monks began to articulate this in terms of theories of momentariness they came up with a few different descriptions of momentariness, e.g two different versions in Pāli Theravāda, plus those of their Sautrāntika and Yogācāra contemporaries.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 5:44 am

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

From a perspective which is probably only relevant to mādhyamikas this isn't accurate.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 6:04 am

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

I was trying to say that this particular issue doesn't pertain to Theravāda per se. For mādhyamikas ultimate truth (paramattha sacca) cannot be identical to conditioned dhammas. There are a number of ways to articulate the two truths according to Mādhyamaka, but in short, the two truths are neither the same nor different.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 10:11 am

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

For the Mādhyamaka the classical Theravāda version of the dhamma theory & the two truth theory cannot withstand analysis. Therefore, even if one accepts that an adherent of the classical Theravāda would consider the Mahāyāna critique of sabhāva, etc., to be largely irrelevant as Harvey suggests, for a mādhyamika this critique of the classical Theravāda version of the dhamma theory & the two truth theory would indeed be relevant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 1:19 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

In defense of the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the instruction it offers is merely a starting point for the profound practice of ānāpānassati. It's one way of beginning attention training, which can and should be developed further according to the sutta descriptions of whole body jhāna energy flow.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 1:24 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

MN 62 Mahārāhulovāda Sutta gives the standardized list of internal energies which have been elaborated upon in all Indian Buddhist and non-Buddhist yoga systems (and other systems such as those known to the Chinese, etc.):

What is the internal air element? Whatever internally, within oneself, that is air, airy, and clung-to, that is, upward moving winds, downward moving winds, winds in the stomach, winds in the bowels, winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else internally, within oneself, that is air, airy, and clung-to: this is called the internal air element.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 1:49 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

Nope. Not at all really.

I forgot to mention that the "downward moving winds" and the "winds of the bowels" are related to the occurrence of flatulence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 2:11 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

My suggestion: Keep practicing. Also keep in mind that we're roaming in the domain of ancient metaphor here.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 8:11 pm

Title: Re: Speed & amount of momentary cittas

Content:

Yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 03, 2011 8:49 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

This idea of "if it ain't explicitly stated in a Pāli sutta I ain't buying it" is naïve at best, and more often than not merely cognitive bullshit. Why? Because (1) the suttas weren't composed by the Buddha, and (2) the suttas were never intended to cover every aspect of practice in minute detail.

I understand the desire and the well-founded need for a certain degree of skepticism in this day and age, but you're a sharp fellow Dave, far too intelligent to be subjecting yourself to such self-limiting barriers. Skepticism can either be a helpful tool or a retarding impediment.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 1:58 pm

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

The easiest way to highlight the difference between classical Theravāda and Mādhyamaka is in terms of the two truths. As you know, the classical Theravāda considers designations such as person, house, cart, and computer to be examples of conventional truth. And for them, mind (citta), mental factors (cetasikā), form (rūpa), and nibbāna are elevated to the level of ultimate truth. But the Mādhyamaka, on the other hand, considers all of these to be conventional as well. The only ultimate truth for them is the so-called non-nominal ultimate -- "freedom from extremes."

\*That's "nominal" not "noumenal"!

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 6:23 pm

Title: Re: Is Bodhi's "Buddha's Words" A Good Overview?

Content:

I agree with Mike and Santa. It's a good, well translated anthology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 8:18 pm

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

Yes, of course. The Pāli suttas, as well as the Pāli Paṭisambhidāmagga and the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka are in complete accord with Mādhyamaka (with the possible exception of a few points in the Kathāvatthu). The difference concerns the classical Theravāda interpretation of these texts.

Numerous Indian and Tibetan mādhyamikas accept that an arahant fully realizes emptiness and eliminates superimposition, and that it's absurd to claim that they do not.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 9:32 pm

Title: Re: No rebirth

Content:

Without these aspects it isn't the Buddha's dhammavinaya anymore. At best it's some sort of cognitive therapy rooted in a view of scientific materialism. And some of the most salient features of the dhammavinaya, such as the goal to be realized, and the ten fetters to be eliminated, become rather pointless in such a context.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 9:45 pm

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

Come on, there's a whole forum for the Classical Theravāda, where the term is well defined in the Guidelines of the forum as referring to the "Abhidhamma and the classical Mahāvihāra understanding of the Dhamma." When I use the term "classical Theravāda" I'm specifically referring to the post-canonical commentarial literature.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 04, 2011 10:07 pm

Title: Re: dhammas

Content:

It's only one point within a larger context which he fails to fully appreciate. For a mādhyamika all dharmas are ultimately unestablished (apratīṣṭha). I doubt that Buddhaghosa would agree with that. But we can leave it there. I understand that Harvey's quote isn't the main subject of this thread.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 05, 2011 3:51 pm

Title: Re: "Common Sense" interpretation of the suttas

Content:

The suttas use common sense conventions from soup to nuts. But these conventions include phrases, figures of speech, and extended metaphors which may have been fairly easy to understand or learn in the social and cultural context of the Buddha's time and place, but are often quite opaque to the novice reader of today. And not only that, the path and the goal which they describe are quite uncommon in any time or place.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 08, 2011 2:38 pm

Title: Re: Two "truths"/"descriptions" and meditation in the suttas

Content:

Cf. Ven. Bodhi:

The commentarial method of explanation stipulates that the meditator emerges from the jhāna attainment and practices insight contemplation with a mind made sharp and supple by the jhāna. However, the suttas themselves say nothing about emerging from the jhāna. If one reads the suttas alone, without the commentaries, it seems as if the meditator examines the factors within the jhāna itself.

And Ven. Gunaratana:

The belief that one must come out of jhāna to gain supernormal knowledge (abhiññās) or to destroy defilements and attain enlightenment is based on an assumption that the concentrated mind becomes one with the object of meditation and is absorbed into that object. For this reason some people translate jhāna or samādhi as absorption concentration. If the mind is absorbed into the object then the mind is paralyzed and incapable of doing anything.

This may be true when the jhāna is gained without mindfulness. This is what happened to the teachers of the Bodhisatta Gotama. They were stuck in jhāna but they thought that they had attained enlightenment. This cannot happen when you practice jhāna with mindfulness. When we attain right jhāna, our mindfulness is pure, our equanimity is strong, our concentration is strong and our attention is sharp. Right concentration consolidates all the mental factors that the Buddha has listed in the Anupada Sutta. Concentration is one of the factors present in right jhāna. You are fully aware, without words or concepts, of the subtlest impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness that takes place in this state of samādhi. These are your direct experience, not philosophical or logical thoughts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 6:30 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra ābhidharmikas consistently define vitakka & vicāra as two types of "mental discourse" (manojalpa, lit: "mind-talk"). For example, Vasubandhu defines vitakka as "mental discourse which investigates" (paryeṣako manojalpa) and vicāra as "mental discourse which reflects" (pratyaśeṣako manojalpa). Vitakka is considered to be coarse (cittasyaudārikatā) and vicāra comparatively more subtle (cittasyasūkṣmatā). Compare with the Theravāda Peṭakopadesa, which gives a detailed word analysis of these terms in the context of the jhāna formula:

Vitakka is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Vicāra is like him simply contemplating it (anupassati). Vitakka is like non-comprehension (apariññā). Vicāra is like full comprehension (pariññā). Vitakka is the analytical understanding of language (niruttapaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of knowledge (paṭibhānapaṭisambhidā). Vicāra is the analytical understanding of dhamma (dhammapaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of meaning (atthapaṭisambhidā). Vitakka is the mind's skill in pleasantness. Vicāra is the mind's skill in endeavor. Vitakka is about this being skillful, this unskillful, about this to be developed, this to be abandoned, this to be verified. Vicāra is like the abandoning, the development, the verification.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 7:24 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

By keeping the mind on topic with the aids of appropriate effort (vāyāma) and mindfulness (sati) and plenty of consistent, repeated practice (bhāvanā). It's also worth noting that some meditation subjects (e.g. Buddhānussati, brahmavihārā, asubhasaññā, etc.) are more conducive to sustained mental repetition of phrases than others (ānāpānassati, paṭhavī kasiṇa, etc.).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 8:13 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

What do you think Ben: Would that silent mind fulfill the criteria for a "second jhāna"?



Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 8:38 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

Indeed. There are different ways of developing samatha. Buddhists have been using dhāraṇī and mantra repetition in combination with sūtra, sādhanā, & pūjā recitation for more than 1500 years to attain samādhi.

(I once saw a tourist's video of a Tibetan shaman putting himself and a group of devotees into an ecstatic trance by reciting a long mantra over and over. Not exactly Buddhadhamma!, but the spoken word is a powerful medium, even moreso when intoned with melody.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 8:45 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

And that is what I meant by "semantic relativity." The same terms can mean different things to different people. IMO the interview that Tilt supplied briefly addresses the historical situation accompanying the semantic development of these terms.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 9:00 am

Title: Re: Vitakka and Vicara in Jhana practice

Content:

Pretty standard Vism. definitions of the two terms.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 11:58 am

Title: Re: The Buddha and Occupy Wall Street

Content:

Sharon Salzberg and Jack Kornfield are included in the undersigned...

An Open Letter From Buddhist And Yoga Teachers In Support Of The Occupy Movement by Ethan Nichtern and Michael Stone.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 3:37 pm

Title: Re: The Buddha and Occupy Wall Street

Content:

You don't have to believe it if you don't want to Chownah. It's not a Nicene Creed. But for what it's

worth, a significant degree of social and cultural development and accommodation are necessary for the dhamma to flourish. Therefore, appropriate conditions are important. AN 8.29 Akkhaṇa Sutta informs us that if we are born into a region where there is no possible contact with the monastic sangha or lay disciples then that would be an unsuitable situation for practicing the dhammavinaya: Again, bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One, worthy, rightfully enlightened endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knower of the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, the Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed is born in the world. The Teaching leading to quietness and extinction, taught by the Well Gone One, is preached. This person is born to someone in the bordering states among not learned Barbarians, where bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, lay disciples male or female are not seen. Bhikkhus, this is the fifth unsuitable instance to lead the holy life.

Ordination would be impossible in such a situation and one would be without good friends and without access to dhamma texts and teachings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 09, 2011 7:07 pm

Title: Re: "Bodhisattvas protecting galaxies and worlds"

Content:

I'm wondering what it has to do with Buddhism???

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 10, 2011 4:02 pm

Title: Re: The Buddha and Occupy Wall Street

Content:

The dhammavinaya and ordained sangha can co-exist with egalitarian and collectivist principles and co-ops just as easily as they can with capitalist principles -- maybe even moreso. From a Buddhist perspective:

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 10, 2011 4:34 pm

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhata - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

In the context of the first noble truth, dukkha encompasses the following:

The unsatisfactoriness of pain (dukkhadukkhata):

birth (jāti)

aging (jarā)

illness (byādhī)

death (maraṇa)

sorrow (soka)

lamentation (parideva)

pain (dukkha)

unhappiness (domanassa)

despair (upāyāsā)

The unsatisfactoriness of change (vipariṇāmadukkhata):

association with what is unpleasant (appiyehi sampayogo)  
separation from what is pleasant (piyehi vippayogo)  
not getting what is wanted (yampiccha na labhati)  
The unsatisfactoriness of fabrications (saṅkhāradukkhatā):  
the five clinging-aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandhā)

Also the Nettippakaraṇa:

Herein, the world is, at one time or another, somewhat free from to the unsatisfactoriness of pain as well as the unsatisfactoriness of change. Why is that? Because there are those in the world who have little sickness and are long-lived. But only the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu) liberates from the unsatisfactoriness of fabrications.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:09 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Monkey Mind!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:59 am

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

An important Pāli text for sutta commentary and interpretation. It's been translated by Ven. Ñāṇamoli as The Guide.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 11:13 am

Title: Re: Sāriputta Thera and his analytical knowledge (paṭisambhidā)

Content:

Yes, good post. I was just looking at paṭisambhidā in the context of vitakka & vicāra the other day. The Peṭakopadesa analysis of these terms in the context of the jhāna formula includes the following:

Vitakka is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Vicāra is like him simply contemplating it (anupassati). Vitakka is like non-comprehension (apariññā). Vicāra is like full comprehension (pariññā). Vitakka is the analytical understanding of language (niruttipaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of knowledge (paṭibhānapaṭisambhidā). Vicāra is the analytical understanding of dhamma (dhammapaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of meaning (atthapaṭisambhidā). Vitakka is the mind's skill in pleasantness. Vicāra is the mind's skill in endeavor. Vitakka is about this being skillful, this unskillful, about this to be developed, this to be abandoned, this to be verified. Vicāra is like the abandoning, the development, the verification.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 8:27 pm

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

The noble paths and fruitions cannot be attained nor cognized without perception (saññā). Also, translating asaṅkhata as "the Unconditioned" can be very misleading. There is no Unconditioned Ground in the Pāli dhamma. SN 43.1:

And what, monks, is the not-fabricated (asaṅkhata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-fabricated.

And Vibhaṅga 184:

What, there, is the not-fabricated component (asaṅkhata dhātu)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-fabricated component.

The Pāli dhamma isn't a theistic religion or an essentialist philosophy. Therefore, there is no reason to capitalize terms such as nibbāna or asaṅkhata or the deathless (amata) or the dhamma (in the context of the teaching itself). The only terms which should be capitalized in English translation are proper nouns (personal names, place names, text names, sutta names) according to the conventions of the English language.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 8:58 pm

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

Indeed. I'm now using "not-fabricated" for asaṅkhata and "death-free" for amata. The latter is borrowed from Norman.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 9:10 pm

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

There is no need to read this sutta as indicating some sort of absolute reality or any other type of absolute "otherness." The terms refer to the reverse sequence of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda): not-born (ajāta) = cessation of birth (jātinirodha), not-become (abhūta) = cessation of becoming (bhavanirodha), not-made (akata) = cessation of craving and cessation of clinging (taṇhānirodha & upādānanirodha), not-fabricated (asaṅkhata) = cessation of volitional fabrications (saṅkhāranirodha), which refers to the the calming of all specific fabrication and volitional intention mentioned in MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

One does not form any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence. Not forming any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence, he does not cling to anything in this world. Not clinging, he is not excited. Unexcited, he personally attains complete nibbāna. He discerns that, 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, done is what had to be done, there is nothing further here.'

Also, Visuddhimagga, Chapter 16:

[Q] Is the absence of present [aggregates] as well nibbāna?

[A] That is not so. Because their absence is an impossibility, since if they are absent their non-presence follows. [Besides, if nibbāna were absence of present aggregates too,] that would entail the

fault of excluding the arising of the nibbāna element with result of past clinging left, at the path moment, which has present aggregates as its support.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 11, 2011 11:04 pm

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

They are impermanent and fabricated. They become otherwise and fall apart.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 12, 2011 5:33 am

Title: Re: Sāriputta Thera and his analytical knowledge (paṭisambhidā)

Content:

The Pāli term is paṭisambhidā, which like most things, has been analyzed in considerable detail by the Theravāda commentators! For example, the first chapter of Ven. Kusalaguṇa's dissertation

Catupaṭisambhidā In Theravāda Buddhism looks at the term paṭisambhidā in two ways:

‘Paṭisambhidā’ is primarily a combination of four elements, namely ‘paṭi’, ‘saṃ’, ‘vbid’ and ‘ā’. ‘Paṭi’ is a prefix meaning ‘separately, individually’ (visuṃ); ‘saṃ’ is also a prefix meaning ‘completely, thoroughly, well’ (sammā). The root ‘vbid’ means ‘to break, to categorize, or to divide’, and ‘ā’ is a feminine noun-forming suffix. Thus, ‘paṭisambhidā’ literally means ‘thoroughly separate category’....

The term ‘paṭisambhidā’ can be formed by two ways—one is, as described above, from the prefixes ‘paṭi’ and ‘saṃ’, the root vbid and the noun-forming suffix ‘ā’, the other is from the primary noun ‘paṭisambhidā’ and the secondary noun-forming suffix ‘a’. In other words, ‘paṭisambhidā’ is both a primary noun (kita-nāma) and a secondary noun (taddhita-nāma)....

The other issue involved is the meaning of the secondary noun ‘paṭi-sambhidā’. According to the Pāli grammatical rule related to the formation of a secondary noun, when the secondary noun-forming suffix ‘a’ is added to a primary noun, the formed word signifies a branch of ‘study, knowledge of, knowing’. Under the present circumstance, since the primary noun ‘paṭi-sambhidā’ means ‘category or division’ (pabhedā), the secondary noun should be understood as ‘knowledge capable of categorizing, dividing, breaking or even analyzing phenomena separately and thoroughly’.

Thus, paṭi-sambhidā can be translated as "analytical knowledge," "analytical insight," "discriminating knowledge," or "discrimination." Ven. Ñāṇamoli translated the title of the Paṭisambhidāmagga as "The Path of Discrimination."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 13, 2011 5:50 am

Title: Re: Saṅkhāradukkhatā - Suffering due to Volitional Formations

Content:

Well said Bhante.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 13, 2011 6:06 am

Title: Re: Sāriputta Thera and his analytical knowledge (paṭisambhidā)

Content:

I think that if you take a close look at the first 1000+ years of Indian Buddhism (all schools and yānas) you'll be hard pressed to find commentarial literature which advocates any kind of non-logical, anti-rational thought processes. The Indian Buddhists were pretty rigorous in their use of reasoning, as well as logic and epistemology as they understood these disciplines. IMO this should be our standard as well, regardless of which tradition we follow and practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 13, 2011 3:15 pm

Title: Re: Sāriputta Thera and his analytical knowledge (paṭisambhidā)

Content:

"Analysis of qualities" is Ven. Ṭhānissaro's translation of dhammavicaya -- dhamma investigation -- which as you know, is the second of the seven factors of awakening. In the Abhidhamma the seven factors of awakening are all considered to be present at the time of attaining the noble path -- hence "awakening." This demonstrates the integrated processes involved in awakening. And of the seven factors, dhamma-investigation is singled out as synonymous with both the faculty of discernment, and vipassanā. And in the Mahāniddeśa, dhamma-investigation is said to be synonymous with bodhi. Also, from the Milindapañha:

"By how many factors does one awaken to the truth?"

"By one, dhamma-investigation, for nothing can be understood without that."

These sources are all highlighting the point that awakening is a cognitive act of discernment (paññā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 14, 2011 5:43 am

Title: Re: Sāriputta Thera and his analytical knowledge (paṭisambhidā)

Content:

Yeah, I'd prefer to avoid making any over-generalizations. I've attended some Chan and Zen retreats over the years, and have had mostly good experiences. The quality of the dharma talks can vary but the sitting practice itself is well maintained and practiced. I've also met Chan monks who've practiced the dhutanga austerities of one meal per day and sleeping while sitting upright for the past 30 or 40 years. Very dedicated Buddhist yogis who aren't easily taken in by irrational flights of fancy. So there is real Zen and then there is "Zen-lite." The latter is more popular in many Western circles than the former.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 17, 2011 11:45 am

Title: Re: Difficult Points In Buddhism

Content:

Where's the link?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 17, 2011 12:05 pm

Title: Re: Difficult Points In Buddhism

Content:

Ah, thanks Ben.

I already did a bit of a search. The following excerpt from this Interview with Alex Bunardzic leads me to think that the author doesn't really know much about the subject matter he is trying to criticize (emphasis added).

My book is about certain difficult points in Buddhism. There appears to be a fairly large body of confusion about what is Buddhism, what is the fundamental Buddhist teaching and practice, and how can Buddhism fit into our daily lives. Upon closer inspection of the contemporary Buddhist literature available on the market today, it turns out that many of the books dealing with the topic are actually not discussing Buddhism at all. They're mostly Brahmanism, Taoism, or other Absolutist religions disguised as Buddhism.

I have a library of 100s of books and have had access to a Buddhist monastic library containing almost every significant book and translation published in English on the subject of Buddhism over the past 50 years, and I have seen very little evidence of books being published where "Brahmanism, Taoism, or other Absolutist religions [are being] disguised as Buddhism."

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 18, 2011 6:30 pm

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

While the storyline here is mythical, I'd suggest that the idea of someone in the distant future (or distant past) somewhere in the universe (re-)discovering the 4NT and noble path is within the realm of possibility.

Also FTR, all of this stuff was standard mainstream Indian Buddhism and predates any "Mahāyāna." (I'm sure you're aware of this Kare, I only add it for general context.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 19, 2011 12:08 am

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

The OP of this thread is based on a false premise. The Mahāyāna isn't an ordination lineage and has never "split" from any ordination lineage. There are three existing ordination lineages: Mūlasarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, and Theravāda. All three are descended from the ancient Sthaviravāda. And of the three, the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Dharmaguptaka lineages are comprised of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen who are also mahāyānikas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 19, 2011 12:33 am

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

Yes. The bhikṣuṇīs who I know within the Tibetan tradition have all ordained in the Dharmagupta lineage. I'm not up to date on the vinaya technicalities of the modern Theravāda bhikkhunis.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 19, 2011 12:41 am

Title: Re: Tantric Theravada?

Content:

Good stuff Ajahn Gavesako.

South Asian and S.E. Asian Buddhism contains a number of diverse practices.

Here's a copy of the (now quite dated) English translation of a Pāli and Sinhalese Yogāvacara Meditation Manual.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 20, 2011 4:05 am

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

Just to add: From what we actually know of the Indian Mahāyāna based on the archaeological and epigraphical evidence of donative inscriptions discovered at ancient Indian cave temples and so on, the Mahāyāna was largely connected to the lineages of Indian monastic Buddhism. Gregory Schopen states in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, p. 32:

[T]he Mahāyāna figures [pertaining to the quantitative numbers of donative inscriptions] are particularly significant. We know on the basis of these figures that, from its first appearance in inscriptions, the Mahāyāna was a monk-dominated movement, and that it continued to be so until the thirteenth century, the date of our last known Mahāyāna inscription.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 20, 2011 11:20 pm

Title: Re: Satipatthana: The direct path to realization

Content:

A couple of definitions from the Pāli texts may help inform the discussion. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* offers the following:

The mindfulness which on that occasion is recollecting, calling back to mind; the mindfulness which is remembering, bearing in mind the opposite of superficiality and of obliviousness; mindfulness as faculty, mindfulness as power, right mindfulness.

The *Milindapañha* explains sati as follows:

“What, Nāgasena, is the characteristic mark of mindfulness?”

“Noting and keeping in mind. As mindfulness springs up in the mind of the recluse, he repeatedly



notes the wholesome and unwholesome, blameless and blameworthy, insignificant and important, dark and light qualities and those that resemble them thinking, 'These are the four foundations of mindfulness, these the four right efforts, these the four bases of success, these the five controlling faculties, these the five moral powers, these the seven factors of enlightenment, these are the eight factors of the noble path, this is serenity, this insight, this vision and this freedom.' Thus does he cultivate those qualities that are desirable and shun those that should be avoided."...

"How is keeping in mind a mark of mindfulness?"

"As mindfulness springs up in the mind, he searches out the categories of good qualities and their opposites thinking, 'Such and such qualities are beneficial and such are harmful'. Thus does he make what is unwholesome in himself disappear and maintain what is good."

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 21, 2011 12:58 am

Title: Re: Tantric Theravada?

Content:

A couple of more papers on this subject for anyone interested:

Tantric Theravāda: A bibliographic essay on the writings of François Bizot and other literature on the Yogāvacara Tradition by Kate Crosby.

Aspects of Esoteric Southern Buddhism by Lance Cousins.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 22, 2011 9:01 am

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

It's been quite a while since I read the article, but if I remember correctly the author seems to imply that since there were multiple streams of transmission of the early discourses evolving into different redactions in different Indic languages, that therefore, the earliest (proto-)Mahāyāna sūtras should be considered just as ancient as the Gāndhārī and other Indic language discourses that are similar in style and content to the Pāli discourses. But this is too much of a leap. All of the earliest discourses (Pāli, Gāndhārī, etc.) differ considerably in both style and content from the earliest (proto-)Mahāyāna sūtras. For these and other reasons, the latter simply can't be placed in the mouth of the historical samaṇa Gotama.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 8:58 am

Title: Re: Difficult Points In Buddhism

Content:

Actually, all I see here is your lack of understanding of Buddhist Mādhyamaka. I'd like to be more charitable, but you've demonstrated no meaningful attempt to understand what you are criticizing.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 1:30 pm  
Title: Re: Happy Birthday acinteyyo!  
Content:  
Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 1:38 pm  
Title: Re: Late origin?  
Content:  
Right view will eliminate dogmatism (sooner or later). But practice without understanding is generally not very helpful.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 2:18 pm  
Title: Re: Difference between Buddha and Arahant  
Content:  
Yes, it is a good answer Laurence.

Just to add: A buddha has knowledge and abilities not shared by arahant disciples. The Paṭisambhidāmagga lists the following:  
knowledge of the penetration of other beings' faculties  
knowledge of other beings' biases and underlying tendencies  
knowledge of the twin miracle\*  
knowledge of the attainment of great compassion  
omniscience & unobstructed knowledge

\*i.e. the ability to produce fire and water from various parts of the body, as well as walk amid an aura of colors while a created image of his body sits or lies down, etc.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 2:30 pm  
Title: Re: Metteya Bodhisatta Tusita Second-to-Last Birth?  
Content:  
Indeed, the aspiration to meet the future buddha has been an inspiration for many practitioners since ancient times. For example:  
By the power of these meritorious deeds, without falling into the four hells, may I seek the Bodhisatta Metteyya in the Tāvātimsa heaven and enjoying divine happiness, and going from there to Ketumatī City, eradicating the defilements, may I receive the peace of liberation from the Buddha Metteyya.

Here's a number of aspirations to meet the future buddha from Theravāda sources: Aspirations to Meet Buddha Ariya Metteyya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 3:03 pm

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

The problem is when you reify some sort of hypothetical monolithic "Mahāyāna" and then set out to attack this illusion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 5:30 pm

Title: Re: Mahayana split

Content:

I don't know who your Mahāyāna teachers are, but the teachers I've had would never accept nor teach a "sloppy anything goes approach." Quite the opposite.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 5:34 pm

Title: Re: Tantric Theravada?

Content:

Thanks again Bhante.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 5:40 pm

Title: Re: Difference between Buddha and Arahant

Content:

The source is the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ñāṇakathā. I'm not aware of any earlier Theravāda source that explicitly addresses this issue.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 11:08 pm

Title: Re: Difference between Buddha and Arahant

Content:

Early enough to be included in the canonical Theravāda Tipiṭaka. I don't see any good reason to dismiss the idea that the Buddha was the most exceptional person to ever live in this world system. It can be inferred from various suttas, which include passages on the 32 marks of a great man and so on. These teachings on the Buddha's excellence have been mainstream Buddhist teachings since antiquity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 23, 2011 11:50 pm

Title: Re: Difference between Buddha and Arahant

Content:

All Buddhist schools maintain that it is different. IMO it's worthwhile acknowledging this historical point of view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 25, 2011 2:57 am

Title: Re: Tantric Theravada?

Content:

The list of Pāli Yogāvacara texts from the Reference Table of Pāli Literature compiled by Ven.

Nyanatusita:

Vidarśanā pota, Vidarśanā bhāvanā pota, Dhyāna pota, Samasatalis karmasthānadhyānabhāvanā, Bambaragalē Pota, Vipassanā Niddesa (Pāli–Sinh. C. Compiled by Rambukavāllē Ratanajoti on advice of Siamese theras, 18th c. Different versions? Beg: Okāsa vandāmi bhante... Eng. trans.: Manual of a Mystic. The material of this and the below entries is similar.) N 6601(6; 7; 23; 43 i & ii, 50; 76), LCM 699–702, SH 236.

Parikammabhāvana (C? Pāli. Beg: Upāda uppajjantu...) N 6601(23iii).

Kasinabhāvanāpota, Cattālisakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli–Sinh. Beg: Ahaṃ yācāmi uggahanimmitaṃ...) N 6601(6 & 64).

Kasinabhāvanāpota, Cattālisakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli–Sinh. Beg: Okāsa accayo no bhante accagamā...) N 6601(51).

Ratanaamatākaravaṇṇanā, Amatākaravaṇṇanā, Yogijanakantavimuttimagga (Pāli verse. 18th c.? Beg: Niccaṃ kilesamalavajjitadehadhāriṃ. The title Vimuttimaggauddāna is arbitrary according to Somadasa in N.) N 6601(85i), SH 236, LCM 687, L.

Samathavipassanabhāvanavākkapprakaraṇaṃ, Dvidhāvuttakammaṭṭhāna (Pāli prose. Beg: Vanditvā sirasā buddhaṃ ... Okāsa okāsa bho sabbaññu Gotama sitthakadīpa... The 13 ch. titles are same as in Amatākaravaṇṇanā with which it is found in the same MS bundle. Maybedvi dhā refers to the verse text followed by the prose text. Cf prec. and next entries. N 6601(85ii).

Duvidhakammaṭṭhāna, (C? In same entry as Kammaṭṭhānasaṅgaha in L. Beg: Vanditvā... Okāsa sabbaññu Gotama sitthakadīpa... 4 chapters.) N 6601(23ii), SW, L.

Kammaṭṭhānasaṅgaha (C, Sāriputta, 12th c. Maybe identical with the preceding entry.) SW, Ps, HP 144.

Kammaṭṭhānadīpanī (Sāriputta. Maybe identical with the preceding entry. ) Ps, SW.

Kammaṭṭhānavibhāga (C?) L.

Kammaṭṭhānagahananiddesasannaya, L.

Kammaṭṭhāna, Kammaṭṭhānabhāvanā, Karmaṣṭhāna, Kamaṭahan, Kamaṭahansannaya (C. Different

works?) LCM 1067, N 6600 (145), L.

Vimuttisaṅgaha (Pāli.) (C?) L.

Vimuttisaṅgahasannaya (C) L.

Vimuktisaṃgrahaya ((Pāli verse + sanna + Sinh. prose.C, Laṅkāsenavirat pirivena adhipatti, late 14th c. Often together with the Skhandhādingē vibhāgaya and Navaarahādībuddhaguṇa vibhāgaya. Beg: Natvā buddhañca...) N 6601(55), CM xxxii, SL 53, L.

Vimuktimargaya (C?) L.

Mūlakammaṭṭhāna, Mahāmūlakammaṭṭhāna (Ic.) PCS 2.165, PSA 108, VP 4/120.

Yokappako Ācāriya (La?) PSA 121.

#### Abbreviations:

B: Burma/Myanmar

CM: Chiang Mai/Lān2 Nā

I: India

Ic: Indochina. (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Siam, Vietnam, i.e., the wider sense given in the Oxford Dictionary.)

Kh: Khmer/Cambodia

La: Laos

S: Siam/Thailand

Sl: South-India, Tamil Nadu

C: Ceylon/Sri Lanka

CM: Catalogue of Ceylonese Manuscripts; C.E. Godakumbara, the Royal Library, Copenhagen, 1980.

HP: Handbook of Pāli Literature. Somapala Jayawardhana; Colombo, 1994.

L: Lankāvē Puskoḷa Pot Nāmāvaliya I and II. K.D. Somadasa; Colombo, 1959 and 1964.

LCM: Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in the Library of the Colombo Museum; W.A. de Silva; Colombo 1938.

N: Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library, 7 vols.; K.D. Somadasa, London, 1987 - 95.

PCS: Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam. Peter Skilling & Santi Pakdeekham; Bangkok 2002. (§)

Ps: Pitakat samuina (Burmese History of the Tipiṭaka); Mahasiriyejyasū, 19th c.

PSA: Pāli Literature of South-east Asia; Ven. Dr. Hammalawa Saddhātissa, Singapore, 1992, repr. 2004.

SH: Singhalesische Handschriften Teil I; Heinz Bechert and Maria Bidoli, Wiesbaden, 1969.

Singhalesische Handschriften Teil II; Heinz Bechert, Stuttgart, 1997.

SL: Sinhalese Literature; C.E. Godakumbara, Colombo, 1955.

SW: "Sāriputta and his works"; Primoz Pecenko, JPTS XXIII (1997), pp. 159–179.

VP: The Pāli Manuscript Collection kept in the Vat Phra Jetuphon Vimol Mangklaram (Vat Po), Jacqueline Filliozat, Bangkok, 2002–2003. In ED 108. (MS No.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 8:57 am

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

From a Buddhist point of view the "internal winds" are descriptions of physiological functions. Thus, there is no need for imposing metaphysical or "new age" theories. Quite simply, as the mind settles and is composed internally through attention training, this is enough to induce corresponding changes in the respiratory system, the central nervous system, and circulatory system. Therefore, generally speaking, in Buddhist meditation there is no attempt to manipulate the respiratory system to induce changes in the central nervous system or the circulatory system, beyond developing a good meditation posture, allowing the body to breathe naturally, and training in attention. And even in Buddhist vajrayāna, where there can be some degree of conscious manipulation of the respiratory system and circulatory system, the terminology and symbolism used in these yogas still correlates with physiological functions without reference to other metaphysical or new age flights of fancy.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 9:25 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Just to add a couple of definitions from the Pāli texts which may help inform the discussion. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī offers the following:

The mindfulness which on that occasion is recollecting, calling back to mind; the mindfulness which is remembering, bearing in mind the opposite of superficiality and of obliviousness; mindfulness as faculty, mindfulness as power, right mindfulness.

The Milindapañha explains sati as follows:

"What, Nāgasena, is the characteristic mark of mindfulness?"

"Noting and keeping in mind. As mindfulness springs up in the mind of the recluse, he repeatedly notes the wholesome and unwholesome, blameless and blameworthy, insignificant and important, dark and light qualities and those that resemble them thinking, 'These are the four foundations of mindfulness, these the four right efforts, these the four bases of success, these the five controlling faculties, these the five moral powers, these the seven factors of enlightenment, these are the eight factors of the noble path, this is serenity, this insight, this vision and this freedom.' Thus does he cultivate those qualities that are desirable and shun those that should be avoided."...

"How is keeping in mind a mark of mindfulness?"

"As mindfulness springs up in the mind, he searches out the categories of good qualities and their opposites thinking, 'Such and such qualities are beneficial and such are harmful'. Thus does he make what is unwholesome in himself disappear and maintain what is good."

I don't see much support for the notion of sati being "bare attention" or "bare awareness" in the suttas or commentaries. There are other terms which designate this type of mental function such as attention (manasikāra) or awareness (sampajañña).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 2:49 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Yes, these are all related mental functions. Sati has become something of a catch-all term used to designate *manasikāra*, *sampajañña*, *vipassanā*, and even *samādhi*. But when we have *sati* being used in combination with these other mental functions, it's appropriate to differentiate them. I would also suggest that bare awareness as a mode of practice is a somewhat advanced level of practice requiring prior attention training and remembrance of what is skillful and unskillful and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 2:53 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Sati as remembrance is far more subtle than this.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 6:42 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

It's a question of precision really, i.e. how finely does one wish to differentiate between mental factors. It also tangentially relates to how we choose to cultivate *samādhi*.

On a more general note, we need to appreciate just how central the faculty of memory is for our ability to function in the world. Without memory we wouldn't be able to navigate from our house to the corner store. Without memory our closest friends and family would be strangers. Without memory we wouldn't be able to practice meditation. Each day would be like encountering the *Buddhadhamma* for the first time.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 26, 2011 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Flatulence and breathing meditation

Content:

What are you confused about Dave? "Internal winds" and "internal energy flow" are descriptions of physiological functions, i.e. the respiratory system, the central nervous system, and the circulatory system. In meditation we learn how the mind and body are interrelated. As we train in attention and bodily posture we come to see how these induce changes in the the respiratory system, the central nervous system, and the circulatory system. And by learning to fine tune our mental engagement and bodily posture we can further refine these physiological functions.

For more check out this post, where I touched upon some aspects related to posture.

For more on how these systems are defined in Indo-Tibetan yoga and Tibetan medicine check out

this post, this post, this post and this post by Namdrol.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 27, 2011 5:06 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Without an ongoing ability to remember what we are doing we cannot function in the world, and there can be no meaningful observation of presently occurring phenomena. For example, Clive Wearing has no capacity to retain short-term memories and lives in a vacuum of the immediate present with no context or experience of continuity.

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 27, 2011 8:53 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Yes, but the question is: Is this alone an effective way to develop and maintain skillful mental qualities? Or should the satipaṭṭhānā be interpreted to indicate a more specific training regimen? That is, one picks one of the meditation subjects as object support (i.e. kāyānupassanā), then abandons carnal joy and pleasure and develops non-carnal joy and pleasure (i.e. vedanānupassanā), and recognizes the difference between limited and afflicted states of mind vs. expansive states of mind (i.e. cittānupassanā), and engages in the appropriate categories of phenomena to (a) abandon any further occurrences of hindrances, and (b) develop insight (i.e. dhammānupassanā).

Support for this latter interpretation can be found in the Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga, which takes the subject of the 32 parts of the body as an example of the object support, then explicitly differentiates the distinctions between full awareness (sampajañña) and mindfulness (sati), and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 27, 2011 3:30 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Yes, I think that the function of "stay[ing] on task with the object of contemplation" offers a good indication of sati as a mental factor, and fits well with the definitions given in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Vibhaṅga, the Milindapañha, and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 27, 2011 3:36 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:



I think you have it right on both counts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 28, 2011 1:03 pm

Title: Re: sammāsamādhi: the four jhānas

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 28, 2011 2:12 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

When we see this level of accord among the suttas, the canonical abhidhamma texts, and the early para-canonical treatises, then there is no reason to dismiss what they are saying. Rather, it's incumbent upon us to reassess our own opinions on the matter.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 28, 2011 2:35 pm

Title: Re: sammāsamādhi: the four jhānas

Content:

I'm not suggesting that jhāna is commonplace. But the English term "superhuman" carries quite inaccurate connotations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 28, 2011 4:08 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Actually, it's quite relevant whether you acknowledge its relevance or not. The Pāli Tipiṭaka is a better and more authoritative source than your opinions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 28, 2011 10:03 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Again, the recognition of impermanence always relies on memory and is therefore always inferential. And since the recognition of unsatisfactoriness and the recognition of selflessness are based upon the recognition of impermanence they too are inferential.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 29, 2011 4:42 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Again, the noun sati is related to the verb sarati, which means "to remember." This meaning is retained in all of the Pāli texts which define sati and give instructions of the development of satipaṭṭhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 29, 2011 7:41 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

"Present moment awareness" is viññāṇa. The gist of what you are attempting to argue for is that sati doesn't mean sati, rather, sati means viññāṇa.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 29, 2011 3:03 pm

Title: Re: Meanings of sati undebunkable once and for all

Content:

The Sankrit root smṛ and the term smṛti predate Buddhism. In the ancient Ṛgveda, smṛ means "to remember" or "to keep in mind." Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary includes the following for each:

smṛ

to remember, recollect, bear in mind, call to mind, think of, be mindful of

to remember or think of with sorrow or regret

to hand down memoriter, teach, declare

to recite, to be remembered or recorded or declared (as a law) or mentioned in the smṛti

to be declared or regarded as, to cause to remember or be mindful of or regret

to remind any one of, to wish to remember

smṛti

f. remembrance, reminiscence, thinking of or upon (loc. or comp.), calling to mind (smṛtim api te na yānti, "they are not even thought of"), memory

memory as one of the vyabhicāri-bhāvas (q.v.)

Memory (personified either as the daughter of dakṣa and wife of aṅgiras or as the daughter of dharma and medhā)

the whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers (in contradistinction to śruti or what is directly heard or revealed to the ṛṣis)

These ancient meanings of "remembrance" and "keeping in mind" were retained in the Buddhist canonical discourses as well as the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda commentarial traditions. For example, the faculty of sati (satindriya) is defined in SN 48.9 Paṭhamavibhaṅga Sutta as follows:

Katamañca, bhikkhave, satindriyaṃ? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako satimā hoti paramena

satinepakkena samannāgato cirakatampi cirabhāsitaampi saritā anussaritā – idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, satindriyaṃ.

And what, monks, is the faculty of sati? Here, monks, a noble disciple is satimā, possessing supreme sati and discretion, one who remembers and recollects what was done and said long ago. This is called the faculty of sati.

Likewise, in SN 46.3 Sīlasutta we find the following passage relating to the awakening factor of sati (satisambojjhaṅga):

Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathā vūpakaṭṭho viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ anussarati anuvitakketi, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti; satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti; satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.

Dwelling thus withdrawn, one recollects the dhamma and thinks it over. Whenever, monks, a monk dwelling thus withdrawn recollects that dhamma and thinks it over, on that occasion the awakening factor of sati is aroused by the monk, on that occasion the monk develops the awakening factor of sati, on that occasion the awakening factor of sati comes to fulfillment through development in the monk.

And SN 45.8 Vibhaṅga Sutta we find the description of right sati (sammāsati):

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāsati? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ; vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ; citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ; dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ – ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāsati.

And what, monks, is right sati? Here, monks, a monk dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, fully aware, satimā, having removed covetousness and displeasure with regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, fully aware, satimā, having removed covetousness and displeasure with regard to the world. He dwells contemplating mind in mind, ardent, fully aware, satimā, having removed covetousness and displeasure with regard to the world. He dwells contemplating phenomena in phenomena, ardent, fully aware, satimā, having removed covetousness and displeasure with regard to the world.

It's worth noticing that this description of right sati is qualified by being ardent (ātāpī), fully aware (sampajāna), and satimā. To clarify the meanings of these terms we can turn to the Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga of the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka, which gives the following word analysis for each:

“Ātāpī” ti. Tattha, katamaṃ ātappaṃ? Yo cetasiko viriyārambho nikkamo parakkamo, uyyāmo vāyāmo ussāho ussoḷhī thāmo dhiti asithilaparakkamatā, anikkhattachandatā anikkhattadhuratā dhurasampaggāho, viriyaṃ Viriyindriyaṃ Viriyabalaṃ Sammāvāyāmo – ayaṃ vuccati “ātappaṃ”. Iminā ātappena upeto hoti samupeto upāgato samupāgato, upapanno samupapanno samannāgato. Tena vuccati “ātāpī” ti.

“Sampajāno” ti. Tattha, katamaṃ sampajaññaṃ? Yā paññā pajānanā vicayo pavicayo dhammavicayo, sallakkhaṇā upalakkhaṇā paccupalakkhaṇā, paṇḍiccaṃ kosallaṃ nepuññaṃ vebhabyā cintā upaparikkhā, bhūrī medhā pariñāyikā vipassanā sampajaññaṃ patodo, paññā Paññindriyaṃ Paññābalaṃ paññāsattaṃ, paññāpāsādo paññā-āloko paññā-obhāso paññāpajjoto paññāratanaṃ, amoho dhammavicayo Sammādiṭṭhi – idaṃ vuccati “sampajaññaṃ”. Iminā sampajaññaṇa upeto hoti samupeto upāgato samupāgato, upapanno samupapanno samannāgato. Tena vuccati “sampajāno” ti.

“Satimā” ti. Tattha, katamā sati? Yā sati anussati paṭissati sati saraṇatā, dhāraṇatā apilāpanatā asammussanatā, sati Satindriyaṃ Satibalaṃ Sammāsati – ayaṃ vuccati “sati”. Imāya satiyā upeto hoti samupeto upāgato samupāgato, upapanno samupapanno samannāgato. Tena vuccati “satimā” ti.

“Ardent”. Herein, what is ardour? Whatever mental exercise of effort, exertion, great exertion, enterprise, endeavour, attempt, travail, vigour, courage, exertion that is not lax, not putting aside of

(wholesome) desire, not putting aside of responsibility, being taken up with responsibility, effort, the faculty of effort, the strength of effort, right endeavour – this is called “ardour”. With this ardour he is endowed, truly endowed, having attained, truly attained, being possessed, truly possessed, furnished (with it). Because of this “ardent” is said.

“Full awareness”. Herein, what is full awareness? That which is wisdom, knowing, investigation, deep investigation, investigation of (the nature of) things, discernment, discrimination, differentiation, erudition, skilfulness, subtlety, clarification, thoughtfulness, consideration, breadth, intelligence, guidance, insight, full awareness, examination, wisdom, the faculty of wisdom, the strength of wisdom, the sword of wisdom, height of wisdom, light of wisdom, lustre of wisdom, flame of wisdom, treasure of wisdom, non-delusion, investigation of (the nature of) things, right view – this is called “full awareness”. With this full awareness he is endowed, truly endowed, having attained, truly attained, being possessed, truly possessed, furnished (with it). Because of this “full awareness” is said.

“Satimāti”. Herein, what is sati? That which is sati, recollection, recall, sati, remembrance, bearing (in mind), not losing, not confusing, sati, the faculty of sati, the strength of sati, right sati – this is called “sati”. With this sati he is endowed, truly endowed, having attained, truly attained, being possessed, truly possessed, furnished (with it). Because of this “satimā” is said.

And so it's clear that the meaning of sati as "remembrance" and "keeping in mind" was still very much retained in the Vibhaṅga (and in parallel passages in the Dhammasaṅgāṭī).

Likewise, the early meanings of remembrance and keeping in mind are retained in the Milindapañha, which gives the characteristics of sati as "calling to mind" or "noting" (apilāpana) and "taking hold" or "keeping in mind" (upaggaṇhana). These two characteristics are further explained as follows:

“Sati, mahārāja, uppajjamānā

kusalākusalasāvajjānavajjahīnapaṇṇātakapaṇṇasukkasappaṭibhāgadhamme apilāpeti ‘ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā, ime cattāro sammappadhānā, ime cattāro iddhipādā, imāni pañcindriyāni, imāni pañca balāni, ime satta bojjhaṅgā, ayaṃ ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, ayaṃ samatho, ayaṃ vipassanā, ayaṃ vijjā, ayaṃ vimutti’ti. Tato yogāvacaro sevitabbe dhamme sevati, asevitabbe dhamme na sevati. Bhajitabbe dhamme bhajati abhajitabbe dhamme na bhajati. Evaṃ kho, mahārāja, apilāpanalakkhaṇā satī”ti...

“Sati, mahārāja, uppajjamānā hitāhitānaṃ dhammānaṃ gatiyo samanveti ‘ime dhammā hitā, ime dhammā ahitā. Ime dhammā upakārā, ime dhammā anupakārā’ti. Tato yogāvacaro ahite dhamme apanudeti, hite dhamme upaggaṇhāti. Anupakāre dhamme apanudeti, upakāre dhamme upaggaṇhāti. Evaṃ kho, mahārāja, upaggaṇhanalakkhaṇā satī”ti.

“As sati springs up in the mind of the recluse, he repeatedly notes the wholesome and unwholesome, blameless and blameworthy, insignificant and important, dark and light qualities and those that resemble them thinking, ‘These are the four foundations of mindfulness, these the four right efforts, these the four bases of success, these the five controlling faculties, these the five moral powers, these the seven factors of enlightenment, these are the eight factors of the noble path, this is serenity, this insight, this vision and this freedom.’ Thus does he cultivate those qualities that are desirable and shun those that should be avoided.”...

“As sati springs up in the mind, he searches out the categories of good qualities and their opposites thinking, ‘Such and such qualities are beneficial and such are harmful’. Thus does he make what is unwholesome in himself disappear and maintain what is good.”

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 29, 2011 3:10 pm

Title: Re: Meanings of sati undebunkable once and for all

Content:

Probably one of the most succinct and precise definitions of sati is given in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya:  
smṛtir ālambanāsaṃpramoṣaḥ

Smṛti is not losing the object [of the mind].

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 3:51 am

Title: Re: Meanings of sati undebunkable once and for all

Content:

Fortunately, the suttas and abhidhamma are in agreement on this issue.

A good practical introduction is offered in Mindfulness Defined by Ven. Ṭhānissaro.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 5:43 am

Title: Re: Meanings of sati undebunkable once and for all

Content:

This is obvious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 5:54 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I do too. But I would add that "perception" isn't the best translation of saññā. "Recognition" is better. Secondly, saññā is also a fabrication (saṅkhāra). Thirdly, the recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā) would be more accurately phrased as the recognition of the absence of permanence. Similarly, the recognition of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhasaññā) is the recognition of the absence of satisfactoriness in that which is not permanent. And the recognition of selflessness (anattasaññā) is the recognition of the absence of a permanent and satisfactory self in that which is not permanent and not satisfactory.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:08 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

IMO Ven. Anālayo could have spent more time and effort detailing the fundamentals of sati. He

begins in the right place (p. 46):

The noun sati is related to the verb sarati, to remember. Sati in the sense of "memory" occurs on several occasions in the discourses, and also in the standard definitions of sati given in the Abhidhamma and the commentaries.

But only three paragraphs later he is off stating his theory that sati "functions as awareness of the present moment." So much for the fundamentals and details offered in the ancient Pāli texts....

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:16 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The path is fabricated to lead to dispassion, cessation, and liberation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:20 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

When we stop buying into what Ñāṇananda has referred to as the "relentless tyranny of the empirical consciousness." That is, the "myth of the given."

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:35 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Sure it does.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:53 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

As I've already mentioned to Dukkhanirodha, "present moment awareness" is viññāṇa. Specifically, the five sensory consciousnesses. It isn't sati. Sati functions to direct awareness away from the five strands of sensual pleasure and place, develop, & maintain awareness within the domain of any one of the four satipaṭṭhānas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 6:56 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

You've actively participated in numerous threads dealing with the subject, often directly responding

to the posts in question. In point of fact, just in the past few weeks I deleted a post which you objected to, which pertained to this issue in the context of the two truths theory.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 7:20 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

"Laying waste"?...There's no need to "lay waste" to anything. Let's get real -- you are always ready to attack anything which questions the dubious assumptions of Burmese vipassanā. Assumptions which are old and boring and better set aside when writing a doctoral dissertation in 2002.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 8:04 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

That's fine. And those of us who are quite unconcerned with the apologetics of Burmese vipassanā will continue to post here on DW in the midst of your protests and complaints.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 12:37 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I was speaking of a lack of interest in Burmese vipassanā in general. If one isn't tied to the thought-world of the Vissudhimagga, then Burmese vipassanā doesn't really have much to offer that's especially interesting or important.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 2:36 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

This is either a disingenuous statement or you are uninformed (or misinformed) about the Vipassanā meditation traditions which are based upon the view presented in the Visuddhimagga and further elaborated in post-Visuddhimagga commentaries.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 8:30 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

There's nothing to be gained by waffling. At some point one either buys into the view and system presented in the Visuddhimagga and post-Visuddhimagga treatises and commentaries or one doesn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 8:34 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Regarding saññā, SN 22.95 Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta:

Recognition (saññā) is like a mirage.

Regarding the entire complex of name-and-form (nāmarūpa), Sn 3.12: Dvayatānupassanā Sutta:  
Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 9:44 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

To remedy desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda, also rāga) we are instructed to attend to, develop, and maintain recognition of an unattractive object (asubhanimitta). AN 1.2

Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen desire for sensual pleasure does not arise and arisen desire for sensual pleasure is abandoned as much as on account of this: an unattractive object. For one who attends properly to an unattractive object, unarisen desire for sensual pleasure does not arise and arisen desire for sensual pleasure is abandoned.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 30, 2011 10:16 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Indeed. And also be motivated to actually engage in abandoning it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 5:31 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Sati is even more fundamental than this. In terms of sati as memory, it's what allows for context and the continuity of experience. In terms of practice it is both calling to mind (apilāpana) as well as keeping in mind (upaggaṇhana). Cf. Milindapañha.

In commentarial terms, regarding sati's characteristic (lakkhaṇa), property (rasa), manifestation (paccupaṭṭāna), and basis (padaṭṭāna), the Vism. adds the following (Ch. 14.141):

By means of it they remember (saranti), or it itself remembers, or it is just mere remembering (saraṇamatta), thus it is sati. Its characteristic is not floating [away from the object]; its property is not losing [the object]; its manifestation is guarding the state of being face to face with an object; its basis is strong noting or the satipaṭṭhānas of the body and so on. It should be seen as like a post due to its state of being firmly set in the object, and as like a gatekeeper because it guards the gate of the



eye and so on.

(In the Vism. apilāpana is interpreted differently than in the older Milindapañha, but that isn't germane to this discussion.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 6:01 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

No, I'm not saying that. Saññā is not the same as paññā. But there can be no paññā without saññā. BTW, the followers of Buddhaghosa's system also accept that the three characteristics are known by inferential cognition (anumānaññā) Why? Because the three characteristics are universals (i.e. sāmāññalakkhaṇa) and not unique particulars (i.e. salakkhaṇa). The latter are cognized by direct perception, the former are not.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 6:21 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

It's really quite odd that you would consider discussing the fundamentals of sati "fruitless."

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 6:34 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

"Rise and fall" as it's used in the suttas has nothing to do with the theory of momentariness -- i.e. the arising and disappearance of discrete momentary dhammas. This theory wasn't introduced into Theravāda until much later. Rather, in the suttas the contemplation of rise and fall (udayabbayānupassinā) is described in MN 122:

‘Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away. Such is feeling, such its origin, such its passing away. Such is recognition, such its origin, such its passing away. Such are fabrications, such their origin, such their passing away. Such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away.’

We are being instructed to experientially understand and attend to each of the aggregates as they are present, and also reflect upon their conditional origin and cessation by giving thorough attention to specific conditionality (idappaccayatā). This is further explained in SN 22.57 Sattaṭṭhāna Sutta (abridged):

With the arising of nutriment there is the arising of form. With the cessation of nutriment there is the cessation of form. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of form.

The pleasure and happiness that arise in dependence on form: this is the allure of form. That form is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and subject to change: this is the drawback of form. The subduing and abandoning of desire and passion for form: this is the escape from form.

With the arising of contact there is the arising of feeling. With the cessation of contact there is the

cessation of feeling. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of feeling.

The pleasure and happiness that arise in dependence on feeling: this is the allure of feeling. That feeling is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and subject to change: this is the drawback of feeling. The subduing and abandoning of desire and passion for feeling: this is the escape from feeling.

With the arising of contact there is the arising of recognition. With the cessation of contact there is the cessation of recognition. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of recognition.

The pleasure and happiness that arise in dependence on recognition: this is the allure of recognition. That recognition is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and subject to change: this is the drawback of recognition. The subduing and abandoning of desire and passion for recognition: this is the escape from recognition.

With the arising of contact there is the arising of fabrications. With the cessation of contact there is the cessation of fabrications. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of fabrications.

The pleasure and happiness that arise in dependence on fabrications: this is the allure of fabrications. That fabrications are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and subject to change: this is the drawback of fabrications. The subduing and abandoning of desire and passion for fabrications: this is the escape from fabrications.

With the arising of name-and-form there is the arising of consciousness. With the cessation of name-and-form there is the cessation of consciousness. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of consciousness.

The pleasure and happiness that arise in dependence on consciousness: this is the allure of consciousness. That consciousness is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and subject to change: this is the drawback of consciousness. The subduing and abandoning of desire and passion for consciousness: this is the escape from consciousness.

It's important to understand that it is the noble eightfold path which is the way leading to the cessation of the aggregates, and that our engagement with this path involves comprehending both the allure and drawbacks of the aggregates. After having recognized that the drawback in each case is that they are impermanent and can't be relied upon, we can come to discern the escape from the aggregates, which consists of subduing and abandoning desire and passion for these bodily and mental processes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 7:14 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday sattva ! ! !

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 01, 2011 11:57 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The Burmese Vipassanā of Mahāsi Sayādaw and Sayādaw U Paṇḍita, et al, is at a minimum, predicated on at least three related propositions: (i) the primary function of sati is bare awareness; (ii) reality is actually comprised of discrete momentary dhammas which rise and fall in rapid succession, and therefore the recognition of impermanence requires directly perceiving the individual characteristics of these discrete momentary dhammas via bare awareness; and (iii) reality and truths pertaining to reality are objectively established through epistemological realism.

Ven. Ñāṇananda significantly contributed to questioning and criticizing the historicity and veracity of the third proposition, but continued to tacitly accept and employ the second proposition in his analysis, and to explicitly acknowledge and employ the first.

And although these theories were first introduced in the commentaries and became dominant in the sub-commentarial texts, they aren't to be found in the suttas and have been criticized by a number of scholars and scholar-monks for not accurately representing the teachings contained in the suttas.

The thing is, during the second half of the 20th century one could hardly turn around in any Theravāda setting without encountering these propositions and being told that this was indeed the view and the unique practice of Theravāda Buddhism. During this period Burmese Vipassanā found its way into every Asian Theravāda country and was also exported to Western countries, and for the most part was uncritically accepted. Fortunately, we now know that prior to the widespread ascendancy of Burmese Vipassanā in the 20th century, the Theravāda was far more dynamic than this. And in certain remote places other Theravāda practice traditions managed to survive.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 6:43 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Alexander von Rospatt, The Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness:

There can be no doubt that the theory of momentariness cannot be traced back to the beginnings of Buddhism or even the Buddha himself. It does not fit the practically orientated teachings of early Buddhism and clearly bears the mark of later doctrinal elaboration. Thus in the Nikāyas/Āgamas there are many passages which attribute duration to material and even mental entities, whereas there is, at least to my knowledge, no passage which testifies to the stance that all conditioned entities are momentary.... Furthermore, the fact that the theory of momentariness was a controversial issue among the various schools of the so-called Hīnayāna indicates that it is not canonical.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 6:46 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I don't think it's too much to ask that a teaching be coherent and based on what is found in the suttas themselves, and not be predicated on fictions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 8:38 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

A look at Sayādaw U Paṇḍita's The Practical Way to Nibbāna based on the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta demonstrates that the three propositions already mentioned are explicit and central to the view and practice he describes:

Meditating yogis should understand what is meant by the following three marks or characteristics of psycho-physical phenomena:

- (1) sabhāva lakkhaṇa
- (2) saṅkhata lakkhaṇa
- (3) samañña lakkhaṇa

Sabhāva lakkhaṇa means the specific or particular mark or characteristic of mental and physical phenomena....

Each and every particular mark or characteristic of all psycho-physical phenomena has a beginning, a middle and an end. In Pāli scriptural language, these are termed uppāda, ṭhiti and bhaṅga. Uppāda means the beginning or arising of a phenomenon. Ṭhiti is duration or continuance or proceeding towards dissolution. Bhaṅga is breaking up or dissolution.

These three lakkhaṇas (marks or characteristics) are called Saṅkhata lakkhaṇa (saṅkhata = compounded or conditioned). The third mark or characteristic of all psycho-physical phenomena is called samañña (general or common). The impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and impersonality of all conditioned phenomena constitute their common or general mark or characteristic....

We have dealt with the first aphorism — true nature will be revealed only when phenomena are noticed as and when they arise.

The second aphorism says: Only when sabhāva (true nature) is 'seen', will saṅkhata lakkhaṇa (characteristic of conditionality) become manifest, meaning the phenomenon being noted will be 'seen' to arise, to continue and to pass away.

When saṅkhata lakkhaṇa is 'seen', samañña lakkhaṇa will appear.... So the third aphorism is: Only when saṅkhata becomes apparent will samañña be 'seen'.

This will be followed by the fourth aphorism which says: When samañña is 'seen', vipassanā ñāṇa (insight knowledge) emerged.

And also from the same text:

Immediately after the last consciousness in this series of accelerated noting has ceased, magga and phala (path and fruition) arises, realizing nibbāna, the cessation of all formations.... After the last act of noting, the cessation of the formations and realization of nibbāna become manifest. This is why those who have realized nibbāna would say: "The objects noted and the consciousness noting them cease altogether...." He knows that the cessation of material process noted and the mental process noting them is the realization of nibbāna. Those who are well informed know that the cessation of the formations is nibbāna.... They would say inwardly: "I have now realized nibbāna and have

attained sotāpatti magga-phala."

So if you weed out the realist epistemology, the theory of radical momentariness, and the wrong view that the noble path attainment is the cessation of all formations, what are you left with that is especially meaningful and coherent?

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 8:58 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

It isn't a question of existing moments, it's a question of existing discrete momentary dhammas. And the latter are indeed claimed to truly exist by the realist commentators. It's the basis of their epistemology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 9:31 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

There is a major difference between alteration and change (aññathatta & vipariṇāma) on the one hand, and the theory of discrete momentary dhammas rising and falling in rapid succession, on the other. David Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*:

The theory of impermanence in Buddhism has been generally misunderstood because it came to be confused with a later theory known as the 'doctrine of moments' (ksanavada/ kanavada), which was formulated from a logical analysis of the process of change (parinama) by the later Buddhist scholars belonging to the scholastic (abhidhamma) tradition....

It is significant that the Abhidhamma pitaka of the Theravadins makes no mention of either the theory of atoms or the theory of moments. They are certainly not found in either the Pali Nikayas or the Chinese Agamas. In his commentary on the Dhammasangani, Buddhaghosa makes a very important remark regarding the theory of moments. He says: "Herein, the continued present (santatipaccuppanna) finds mention in the commentaries (atthakatha) ; the enduring or long present (addhapaccuppanna) in the discourses (sutta). Some say that the thought existing in the momentary present (khanapaccuppanna) becomes the object of telepathic insight" (DhsA, p. 421). According to this statement, it was 'some people' (keci) who spoke about the momentary present; it was found neither in the discourses nor in the commentaries preserved at the Mahavihara which Buddhaghosa was using for his own commentaries in Pali. This may be taken as substantial evidence for the view that the doctrine of moments was not found in Theravada Buddhism as it was preserved at the Mahavihara in Sri Lanka. In the same way, the theory of atoms was for the first time suggested by Buddhaghosa.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 9:37 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The sutta you quoted doesn't address the issue under discussion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 02, 2011 10:04 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Yes, indeed. Karunadasa's The Dhamma Theory:

What emerges from this Abhidhammic doctrine of dhammas is a critical realism, one which recognizes the distinctness of the world from the experiencing subject yet also distinguishes between those types of entities that truly exist independently of the cognitive act and those that owe their being to the act of cognition itself.

And:

[A] dhamma is a truly existent thing (sabhavasiddha).

And:

The description of dhammas as paramattha means ... objective existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 12:01 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I think it means that dependent on a sense sphere and sense object coming together, the corresponding consciousness arises. When attention is averted elsewhere, that specific consciousness ceases. Furthermore, during the duration of this experience that specific consciousness undergoes change and alteration. This duration is relative to the attention given to the object of consciousness and is therefore not subject to any fixed momentary limit.

There's no basis for reading it as referring to the khaṇavāda interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 12:07 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Me either. Sn 3.12 Dvayatānupassanā Sutta:

Whatever is transitory certainly has a false nature.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 3:21 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

It's quite clear that Sayādaw U Paṇḍita, et al, have misunderstood the four noble truths. If you think that that sutta justifies their notion of path attainment, then I'd suggest that you don't understand the four noble truths either.

These fellows have misunderstood and thereby misrepresented the function of sammāsati as well as the noble path attainments. What they're teaching contradicts the Theravāda exegesis contained in the Vibhaṅga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the Paṭisambhidāmagga, and the Visuddhimagga. And if they are indeed claiming that the saṅkhata lakkhaṇa and sāmāñña lakkhaṇa are cognized by direct perception, this contradicts Karunadasa as well. This would make them more committed to reification than even Karunadasa's commentarial sources.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 3:28 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

It's pretty clear what they are teaching. I think it's low quality and students should find better informed and trained teachers.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 3:53 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

No need to be sorry Ben.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 4:00 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The noble path is for terminating specific saṅkhāras which are the causes of dukkha, not for inducing the "cessation of material process noted and the mental process noting them." This latter type of cessation is irrelevant in the context of Buddhist soteriology. It has nothing to do with realizing the noble path attainment.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 4:42 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The specific saṅkhāra which is the origin of dukkha is craving (taṇhā): craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence (kāmatāṇhā, bhavataṇhā, and vibhavataṇhā). SN 56.11 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta:

And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origin of unsatisfactoriness: craving which leads to further existence, associated with delight and passion, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, craving non-existence.

But before we can terminate these cravings we have to begin with the first path where we eliminate the fetters of identity view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubt (vicikicchā), mistaken adherence to rules and duty

(sīlabbataparāmāsa) and associated underlying tendencies. The Paṭisambhidāmagga:  
How is it that the discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa)?

Through the stream-entry path he terminates identity view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubt (vicikicchā), and mistaken adherence to rules and duty (sīlabbataparāmāsa).... This discernment of the termination of continuance in one who is fully aware is gnosis of full extinguishment....

He causes the cessation of identity view, doubt, and mistaken adherence to rules and duty through the stream-entry path.

And so on for the fetters which are terminated on the remaining three paths. These gnoses of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇas) are also called gnoses of the bliss of liberation (vimuttisukha ñāṇa-s). The Paṭisambhidāmagga:

With the stream-entry path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (1) identity view,
- (2) doubt,
- (3) mistaken adherence to rules and duty,
- (4) the underlying tendency of view,
- (5) the underlying tendency of doubt.

With the once-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (6) the gross fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (7) the gross fetter of aversion,
- (8) the gross underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (9) the gross underlying tendency of aversion.

With the non-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (10) the secondary fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (11) the secondary fetter of aversion,
- (12) the secondary underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (13) the secondary underlying tendency of aversion.

With the arahant path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (14) passion for form [existence],
- (15) passion for formless [existence],
- (16) conceit,
- (17) restlessness,
- (18) ignorance,
- (19) the underlying tendency of conceit,
- (20) the underlying tendency of passion for existence,
- (21) the underlying tendency of ignorance.



Therefore, the cessation of dukkha progresses sequentially with the cessation of very specific fetters pertaining to each of the four noble paths. The state wherein one experiences the extinguishment (nibbāna) of fetters appropriate to each path and fruition, is supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna). And this state must necessarily arise with the concomitant jhāna factors and other mental factors such as attention (manasikāra) and apperception (saññā), as well as gnosis (ñāṇa). Without the presence of these mental factors there can be no gnosis and therefore no path attainment or fruition attainment.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 9:27 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

The dhamma doesn't mean anything goes. Should one refrain from all criticism? Probably. But at any rate, I haven't said anything that hasn't already been said by people who far more respectable than myself.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 2:11 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Okay, then sit and practice bare attention until you experience a momentary blip -- the lights go out, then the lights come back on -- and voila! you're a sotāpanna!

You'll have to excuse me though, for considering this claim less than compelling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 2:26 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

You're welcome. Now we can all sheepishly congregate like good little Buddhists.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 5:35 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Not to mention the dubious practice of attending to the continual "dissolution" (bhaṅga) of momentary nāma and rūpa. Never mind the fact that the idea of the continual "dissolution" of momentary nāma and rūpa is never attested to in the suttas and has nothing to do with the instructions found in the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas and is introduced through the power of suggestion on the part of the vipassanā teacher and later confirmed as an actual and true perception of the impermanence of reality.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I know you were. And "momentary dhammas rising and falling in rapid succession" is a conceptual fiction.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 9:22 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

I think we should avoid falling victim to the seductive allure of conceptual realism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 9:44 pm

Title: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It's common in teachings and texts on vipassanā to hear that mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa) are actually comprised of discrete, momentary things undergoing incessant dissolution (bhaṅga). For example:

Ledi Sayādaw, A Manual of the Excellent Man:

In the ultimate sense, however, new psychophysical phenomena arise only after the old phenomena have perished, which is death. This constant perishing of phenomena is also called cessation (nirodha) or dissolution (bhaṅga). It is only when one discerns the ultimate truth of this cessation of phenomena that one gains insight.

Mahāsi Sayādaw, The Great Discourse on the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta:

The yogī perceives that all the nāmas, rūpas which manifest themselves at the moment of seeing, hearing etc., are undergoing instant dissolution and are, therefore, transient.... When the yogī comes to the bhaṅga stage, during the interval of one cycle of rising and falling, numerous moments of dissolution will be seen to flit by. The material body of rising and falling, being subjected to incessant dissolution is indeed not permanent.

Sayāgyi U Ba Khin, The Essentials of Buddha-Dhamma in Meditative Practice:

The Buddha taught his disciples that everything that exists at the material level is composed of kalāpas. Kalāpas are material units very much smaller than atoms, which die out almost immediately after they come into being.... The life-span of a kalāpa is termed a "moment," and a trillion such moments are said to elapse during the wink of a man's eye.

S.N. Goenka, Meditation Now:

Every moment, masses of subatomic particles — kalāpas — within the framework of the body, arise and pass away, arise and pass away. How do they arise? The cause becomes clear as you investigate the reality as it is without influence from any past conditioning of philosophical beliefs. The material input, the food that you have taken, becomes a cause for these kalāpas to arise. You will also find

that kalāpas arise and pass away due to the climatic atmosphere around you.

Pa Auk Sayādaw, The Practice Which Leads to Nibbāna:

The meditator discerns the five khandhas, in the past, present, and future both internally and externally and seeing only the passing away and ceasing of them he applies the three characteristics one at a time. At the time when a meditator takes matter as an object and sees it passing away and knows that it is impermanent; this knowledge of impermanence of an object is called insight knowledge.

Questions:

(i) Is it really true that mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa) are discrete, momentary things undergoing incessant dissolution?

(ii) Is it really true that matter is comprised of momentary kalāpas which undergo incessant dissolution?

(iii) If so, how do you know this to be true?

(iv) If not, can "insight" into conceptual fictions really be considered insight at all?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 03, 2011 9:46 pm

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Yes, I agree.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 2:46 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Feel free to reword the question so that it's meaningful for you.

Thanks everyone who's responded so far.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 3:04 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The OP offers a representative selection of quotations from well known vipassanā teachers on the dissolution of discrete, momentary dhammas, which is a stage of insight meditation as they teach it.

Question: How do you relate to these ideas?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 3:13 am

Title: Re: Nature of time

Content:

I consider time and conditioned things to both be useful conventions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 3:20 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Then what is the basis for insight?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:24 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Haven't most particles been around since shortly after the big bang?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:43 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

How is it that knowing things to be true is ignorance?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 4:17 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

But impermanence must be the characteristic of dhammas that can be directly perceived right? So what is it that is directly perceived to be undergoing incessant dissolution if not discrete momentary dhammas?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 4:21 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It seems to me that this line of investigation takes us away from the penetration of the four noble truths.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 8:25 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It would have to be discrete momentary dhammas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 9:46 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

So if one doesn't accept or at least acquiesce to the view of discrete momentary dhammas with sub-moments of origination (uppāda), subsistence (ṭhiti), and dissolution (bhaṅga) then the insight stage of knowing the incessant dissolution of discrete momentary dhammas lacks meaning and coherence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 10:03 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Without observing discrete momentary dhammas with sub-moments of origination (uppāda), subsistence (ṭhiti), and dissolution (bhaṅga) the "observation" of incessant dissolution is impossible.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 10:05 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

You'll have to clarify what you mean by "rise and fall." This phrase is understood differently in different contexts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 10:19 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It's for each of us to discern if what we are directly perceiving or inferring on the basis of direct perception is valid or invalid.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 10:35 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

If one attends to the recognition of the thought for its entire duration one can inferentially know that it underwent alteration and change (aññathatta & vipariṇāma) during this duration, and then ceased. This duration is relative to the attention given to the object of consciousness, in this case a thought, and is therefore not restricted to any fixed momentary limit.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 10:41 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

There is no "complaint." One either accepts or at least acquiesces to the view of discrete momentary dhammas or one doesn't. If one doesn't, then the insight stage of knowing the incessant dissolution of discrete momentary dhammas lacks meaning and coherence. It would be like trying to discern the incessant dissolution of unicorns.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:09 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

People claim to experience all sorts of things. Just because someone claims to experience something doesn't mean that their claim is valid. They could very well be basing their claim on incorrect inferences and all sorts of cognitive biases.

For example, there was a time when I uncritically acquiesced to the view of radical momentariness and indeed experienced what I took to be the direct perception of incessant dissolution. Later, I came to understand that this was an inaccurate interpretation of what I was experiencing and I had no alternative but to abandon that view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:38 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

When have I ever said that you should take me as the arbiter of these things???

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:48 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Nonsense. Believe whatever you want. But there are no sacred cows in Buddhism, and everything is open to critical investigation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 04, 2011 11:59 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Why should you care? The real question for you is: What are you experiencing?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 12:00 am

Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

Oh? How so?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 12:26 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

"Overly rigid"? It isn't "overly rigid" to subscribe to teachings which are meaningful and coherent. You may think it is, but it isn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 1:19 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Personal experiences are quite irrelevant to this sub-forum and this thread. I only mentioned that as one example. It isn't a case study.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 3:21 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

According to their interpretation, vipassanā cannot occur in jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 3:33 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

They all teach dry-vipassanā without the need for jhāna. Pa Auk also teaches jhāna, as does Goenka.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 6:31 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
How can you discern something if you don't believe it is there?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 7:56 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
And how do you know they aren't wrong?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 11:52 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
No, it isn't.

Some people would rather learn Buddhadhamma than Buddhaghosadhamma.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 3:10 pm  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Indeed.

Why would one devote one's precious time on the sitting cushion or in retreat practicing bare attention to incessant dissolution and so on, unless one believed that there was good reason to do so?

On the other hand, if one understands the practice of bare attention to be of limited use in and of itself and considers the doctrine of momentariness to be an unwarranted deviation from the view of the four noble truths and specific conditionality, then it seems likely that they will devote their sitting practice and retreat time to developing a wider range of skills pertaining to mindfulness and samādhi. Ven. Ṭhānissaro, *One Tool Among Many: The Place of Vipassanā in Buddhist Practice*:  
To take a reductionist approach to the practice can produce only reduced results, for meditation is a skill like carpentry, requiring a mastery of many tools in response to many different needs. To limit oneself to only one approach in meditation would be like trying to build a house when one's motivation is uncertain and one's tool box contains nothing but hammers.

Nothing more need be said.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 05, 2011 3:39 pm



Title: Re: Objection to the Views of Venerable Analayo

Content:

This sounds to me like an interpretation of experience based on a profusion of mental proliferation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 06, 2011 7:43 pm

Title: Learning Dhamma

Content:

Right view is important. It's the forerunner of the noble path and integral to practice. It is more comprehensive than just practical advice. It orients and informs all aspects of discernment, ethical conduct, and meditation. Moreover, the historical development of Theravāda views and commentary isn't rocket science. In fact, compared to other Buddhist schools, the first 1000+ years of Theravāda Buddhism is pretty straightforward. It's not all that difficult nor time consuming in this day and age to learn the fundamental teachings thoroughly as well as the basic commentarial additions. Is this a high standard? I'd suggest that dhamma practice requires a standard of excellence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 1:21 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

Discussing dhamma on this forum is open to everyone who wishes to participate, regardless of the extent of their prior study and practice. But informed opinions and understanding are more substantive than uninformed ones. And this obviously includes understanding informed by practice. The two (learning and practice) aren't mutually exclusive.

People are going to believe what they choose to believe, based on various criteria, some more valid than others. What I find hard to fathom is defensive posturing as soon as some tradition or teaching is questioned.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 2:38 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

I certainly don't insist that others agree with me on anything. I never have. I do, however, prefer issues to be discussed meaningfully based on historical Pāli sources and systematic interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 2:43 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

If you think that what I have to offer isn't sufficiently objective then you could either (a) add what you believe to be a more objective perspective, or (b) forget about it and move on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 4:16 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

The fourfold analytical understanding is mentioned in brief in various suttas, mostly from the Aṅguttaranikāya. These are further developed in the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga (Chapter on Paṭisambhidā-vibhaṅga), and various chapters and sections of the Paṭisambhidāmagga.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 5:29 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

Your point being what?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 5:32 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The doctrine of momentariness is pseudo-impermanence. It was a poor idea when it was first thought up and it remains a poor idea to this day.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 07, 2011 6:18 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The immediate present has no temporal duration. Duration is always a relationship between two different times, such as the present and the past. This is the case whether the duration is .0005 nanoseconds or 5 days. And since duration cannot exist in the immediate present, there is no reason to privilege the concept of an extremely short duration over other lengths of duration. All durations are relative.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 3:19 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The doctrine of momentariness is merely an intellectual superimposition. A mind moment is an arbitrary concept which impedes clear seeing.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 6:54 pm

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

Such as those of Sujin Boriharnwanaket, Sayādaw U Paṇḍita, Patrick Kearney, Daniel Ingram, Kenneth Folk, and so on.

Fortunately, we still have the Pāli discourses available to us, and the injunction in DN 16:

Without approval and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses and verify them by the Discipline. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Discipline, one must conclude thus: 'Certainly, this is not the Blessed One's utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu — or by that community, or by those elders, or by that elder.' In that way, bhikkhus, you should reject it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 10:33 pm

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

As do I. When fellows like U Paṇḍita and Kearney understand nibbāna to be a momentary blip of nothingness it's clear that the soteriological significance of nibbāna and the foundational structure of the four noble truths has been misunderstood by this community. It's little wonder then, when someone like Ingram comes along, who has trained in this same Mahāsi tradition, and claims that the full realization of nibbāna doesn't result in the complete extinguishment of lust and anger. Why is this not surprising? Because the soteriological significance of nibbāna and the foundation of the four noble truths has been forgotten by this community.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 11:03 pm

Title: Re: is ever ok to criticize any Buddhist idea or technique?

Content:

It's now rather apparent that you are not interested in any criticism whatsoever of the Burmese Vipassanā movement, even when furnished with textual support and point by point reasoning.

Burmese Vipassanā is a modern interpretation of the Visuddhimagga and post-Visuddhimagga commentaries and treatises pertaining to the insight knowledges, which in some cases at least, introduces novel interpretations of this material. Add to this that the insight knowledges as found in the Visuddhimagga are an interpretation of the Paṭisambhidāmagga, which introduce novel ideas not found in the Paṭisambhidāmagga. Add to this that the Paṭisambhidāmagga itself introduces novel ideas not found in the suttas. The culmination of all these novel additions results, in some cases at least, in unwarranted divergences from what is found in the suttas or even the canonical Abhidhamma. This has been demonstrated to be the case with textual support and point by point reasoning on numerous occasions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 11:45 pm

Title: Re: is ever ok to criticize any Buddhist idea or technique?

Content:

For the most part, until quite recently, I've been quite content to stand aside and let you attempt to steamroll over any criticisms brought forward by other DW members or criticisms expressed by teachers and authors who are not members here. During this time the trend has been that you've steadfastly refused to acknowledge that there might be a meaningful basis for any of these criticisms. Whether it's with regard to the meaning and function of sati, the four satipaṭṭhānas, the explicit use of the theory of momentariness, or the noble path and fruition attainments, according to you everyone who criticizes any of these as their used by any of the Burmese Vipassanā teachers is mistaken.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 08, 2011 11:58 pm

Title: Re: is ever ok to criticize any Buddhist idea or technique?

Content:

Yes, your agenda is quite clear.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 09, 2011 1:58 am

Title: Re: is ever ok to criticize any Buddhist idea or technique?

Content:

And what is this "knee-jerk stuff"? I was quietly following the discussion at that point and for quite a while afterwards, and it seemed to me that Dmytro and others were making some valid and critically substantiated points.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 09, 2011 2:19 am

Title: Re: Learning Dhamma

Content:

I have always made a conscious effort to support those aspects of the Burmese vipassanā meditation instructions that can be used within the framework of the view and practice presented in the early Pāli sources. For example, [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#). Thus, I have hardly been unyielding or lacking nuance.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 09, 2011 3:39 pm

Title: Re: is ever ok to criticize any Buddhist idea or technique?

Content:

This sort of thing isn't unique to Goenka's fans. For example, U Hla Myint: Some time ago in a certain town in Burma, there was a prominent monk who taught his personal method of practice. He also wrote books criticising Ledi Sayādaw and Mahāsi Sayādaw. Shortly after these efforts, he had a fall. Panditārāma Shwe Taung Gon Sāsana Yeikthā's chief abbot, Sayādaw U Panditabhivamsa is of the opinion that such retributive effects can befall detractors and critics of

Mahāsi Sayādaw.

He states the following:

1. Anyone who attacks Mahāsi Sayādaw will surely suffer a fall and that the method of practice promulgated by this person, will not last long as the burning of dried paddy straw.
2. The Mahāsi method is liken to a balloon of hot air and the greater the one forces it down, the higher will it rise.
3. One who criticises the Mahāsi method is still aloof of the right path.
4. One who does not appreciate that the Mahāsi method is correct is like a blind person.

Mahāsi Sayādaw faced numerous challenges when he first arrived in Sri Lanka to propagate the Dhamma. Many monks and the laity wrote articles in the press denouncing his method. Subsequent to these acts, they each suffered a fall.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 09, 2011 3:49 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Liberating gnosis includes at least some degree of disenchantment (nibbidā), leading to dispassion (virāga), which will culminate in the full extinguishment (parinibbāna) of fetters pertaining to each one of the four paths.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 10, 2011 3:29 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It's a developmental process: disenchantment (nibbidā), leading to dispassion (virāga), which will culminate in the full extinguishment (parinibbāna) of fetters pertaining to each one of the four paths.

As Dave has indicated, this developmental process requires discernment obtained through meditative development (bhāvanāmayā paññā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 12, 2011 6:58 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Dependent upon a sense sphere and sense object coming together, the corresponding consciousness arises. When attention is averted elsewhere, that specific consciousness ceases. Furthermore, during the duration of this experience that specific consciousness undergoes change and alteration. This duration is relative to the attention given to the object of consciousness and is therefore not restricted to any fixed momentary limit.

This is known via discernment obtained through meditative development. Based upon this, one comes to understand impermanence, and so on. All of this is recognized based upon prior learning,

and can be described conventionally, with no recourse to any two truths theory or theory of momentariness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 1:59 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

How minute are these "minute moments of conditioning"?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 8:07 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

There were many centuries of Theravāda tradition before this theory made its appearance. What value is there in holding on to untenable conceptual accretions such as this theory of momentariness?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 9:48 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

What do the laws of thermodynamics have to do with the mind?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 10:49 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It's your choice whether or not you find any of this annoying. The idea of clearing the path, which was initiated by Ñāṇavīra and carried on by Ñāṇananda, continues to be a relevant concern for many Theravāda lay practitioners, monastics, and scholars. This clearing inevitably involves the criticism of historical accretions. Maybe it's time to enlist the far less diplomatic and genteel words of Ven.

Sujato. The Mystique of the Abhidhamma:

In the later abhidhamma, the treatment of time is dominated by a radical new theory, totally unlike anything in the suttas or even the canonical abhidhamma, the theory of moments (khaṇavāda). This postulates that time is constituted of a series of discrete, indivisible units, rather like a series of billiard balls lined up on a table. Each unit, or 'moment', is infinitesimally small, such that billions pass by in a lightning-flash. So while the suttas emphasize the length of time, the abhidhamma emphasizes the shortness. This theory shapes the abhidhamma conception of a whole range of central doctrines. Thus impermanence becomes, not simply being subject to birth and death, rise and fall, but the momentary dissolution of phenomena – one dhamma rises and ceases in an instant, leaving no trace of residue in the next. Samadhi becomes, not an exalted, stable coalescence of mind, but a 'momentary samadhi' running after the fluctuations of phenomena. The path becomes, not a gradual program of spiritual development, but a 'path-moment', gone in a flash. And the mind itself becomes just a series of 'mind-moments'.

Now it is quite possible to take this theory, compare it with the suttas, and refute it point by point. But here I would simply like to point out what an implausible and useless idea it is. Quite obviously, time may be analyzed as finely as we wish, its divisibility determined only by the sharpness of our analytical razor. Any unit of time has a beginning, a middle, and an end. That beginning, too, has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and so on ad infinitum. There is simply no good reason to postulate an ultimate substratum of time to which other strata can be reduced. This idea seems to derive some of its impressiveness from its air of acrid, pessimistic, reductionist severity, which is often mistaken as a sign of really uncompromising wisdom.

The guiding objective for the formulation of the mind-moment theory would seem to be for exactitude of definition. So while the Buddha spoke of the mind 'changing while it stands', the abhidhamma just speaks of 'standing'. It is much easier to define a static entity than a process evolving over time. This is why a butterfly collector wants to have his butterflies dead, with a pin stuck through their heart and a little label underneath, not madly meandering about in the woods. The dead mind. But the Buddha was not a butterfly collector, he was an observer of nature. He wanted us to watch the flight and flutter of the butterfly, to understand how it behaves in its natural environment, and to follow it gently, delicately, quietly until it settles down to rest and be still according to its nature – which he called 'samadhi'....

Just what is going on here? Why postulate such an odd theory, raising so many pseudo-problems, and so contrary to the suttas, to common sense, and to experience? What is occurring, I suggest, is that the domain of discourse has been shifted from the empirical to the metaphysical. The suttas treat time in a straightforward, pragmatic, empirical terms – birth, ageing, and death, the changing states of the mind, the progressive development of spiritual qualities. The purpose, the sole purpose, is to empower the practitioner to get a handle on this stuff of life, directing attention to the seat of the problem – how our attachments cause suffering, and how to find peace by letting go. But the abhidhamma aims to describe, not just the spiritual problem and its solution, but the totality of existence. Inevitably, the subjective stance of the suttas becomes objectified, and as the focus moves from meditation to study, the concepts in the books become imposed on reality; in fact, they become reality itself. The quest for truth becomes a quest for definition, and reality becomes as neatly departmentalized as a mathematical table. 'Ultimate reality' becomes, not what you are experiencing now, but what you read about in abhidhamma books.

Find this hard to swallow? You might be interested to know that in contemporary abhidhamma circles it is, apparently, the orthodox position that the series of 'mind-moments' can only be directly seen by Buddhas, and perhaps chief disciples. This is, admittedly, challenged by some, who claim it can be seen in meditation. In just the same way, a Christian meditator will claim to see God, or a Hindu to see the universal Self. Seek and ye shall find. The very fact that such a controversy could possibly arise is a sign how far we have drifted from the Buddha's pragmatic empiricism. This is bad enough; but even worse when we realize that the theory in question made its appearance a millennium after the Buddha's time. This, for me, is as good as an admission that the whole thing is mere metaphysical speculation. No wonder the abhidhammikas have been so keen to father the canonical abhidhamma (and sometimes even the commentaries!) on the Buddha himself, despite massive evidence to the contrary.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 11:03 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

FTR I have never said nor implied that the Burmese Vipassanā traditions have no legitimacy. I have said:

[T]he most important factors for productive progress in meditation are the maintenance of appropriate ethical conduct, being committed to renunciation and a life of voluntary simplicity, engaging in either solitary or group retreats on a fairly regular basis, and being dedicated to sustaining a daily practice schedule. If these conditions are in place (and it can take time to develop these optimal conditions), then whatever method of instruction one relies on, and whatever primary meditation object one engages in, there will be significant progress.

This whole "samatha vs. vipassanā" debate where some parties are intent upon either tacitly criticizing or overtly attacking the meditation instructions of the Mahāsi Sayādaw tradition and the U Ba Khin tradition as not being the sammāsamādhi of the early teachings, is completely without merit. In both of these traditions the meditation instructions are conjoined samatha & vipassanā methods. Following these instructions can certainly lead to the attainment of the four jhānas as these are described in the canon.

And:

"Jhāna" as it occurs in the suttas can refer to either (i) jhāna which scrutinizes an object-support (ārammaṇūpanijjhāna) or (ii) jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna). The former is also called samatha jhāna and the latter is also called vipassanā jhāna. Mahāsi Sayādaw, The Wheel of Dhamma:

Jhāna means closely observing an object with fixed attention. Concentrated attention given to a selected object of meditation, such as breathing for tranquility concentration, gives rise to samatha jhāna, whereas noting the characteristic nature of mind and body and contemplating on their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality brings about vipassanā jhāna.

Jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna) occurs during any moment of the development of vipassanā (vipassanābhāvanā), as well as during any path or fruition attainment. As Sayādaw U Pandita explains in In This Very Life: The Vipassanā Jhānas, vipassanā jhāna can occur with the jhāna factors of each of the four jhānas, and therefore fulfill the criteria of the standard jhāna formula.

And:

Anyone who denies the efficacy of classical vipassanābhāvanā without rūpāvacarajjhāna and modern Burmese vipassanā jhāna is asserting that they -- and the select few that agree with them -- are right, and anyone who doesn't agree with them is necessarily wrong. This not only represents a dismissive, extreme agenda, the entire premise is nonsensical on the face of it.

And:

All of the different common [meditation] instructions will work if applied. The most important point is to sit on your sitting mat or cushion -- regularly and repeatedly -- and apply the instruction that resonates with you.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 14, 2011 6:37 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

My concerns pertain to view, specifically (i) privileging the writings of Buddhaghosa, et al, over all



earlier Pāli sources to such an extent that the latter can only be understood through the former; and (ii) placing so much emphasis on "attaining" an event called a "path moment" without sufficiently locating this experience within the larger soteriological context.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 15, 2011 12:31 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

There are many decent and well-intentioned teachers. I don't know of any one who would stand out as better or more learned or more accomplished than all others.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 15, 2011 12:43 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I believe that the laws of thermodynamics have little if any relevance with regard to the four noble truths, the noble eightfold path, and liberation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 15, 2011 10:12 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I prefer to rely on the entire Suttapiṭaka.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 16, 2011 11:31 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

There's no reason to believe in discrete momentary dhammas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 16, 2011 11:35 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I'm not dismissing the laws of thermodynamics as a source of worldly knowledge. I'm suggesting that one doesn't need to know anything about the laws of thermodynamics to practice the path and attain liberation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 16, 2011 7:23 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

And for the reasons already provided, this insight has nothing to do with perceiving discrete momentary dhammas.

Nevertheless, if you think the idea of momentariness is a useful representation of your own experiential cognitive processes, then it can be useful to that extent. But this doesn't mean that it isn't a conceptual interpretation of what you are experiencing.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 17, 2011 7:30 am

Title: Re: Allowances of differences within the Theravada

Content:

If we don't set up camps in the first place then there's no need to eyeball each other from across an imagined no-man's-land.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 17, 2011 12:39 pm

Title: Re: Allowances of differences within the Theravada

Content:

Sure. People can disagree without being petty or mean. Criticism isn't a bad thing either. Of course, it should be informed and substantive.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 17, 2011 10:46 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday plwk!!!

Content:

Happy birthday plwk!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 5:25 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It seems to me that one could follow the basic meditation instructions of Mahāsi Sayādaw or U Ba Khin, etc., without subscribing to the view of momentariness. But this probably isn't possible once one gets into the subsequent stages of insight knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 5:40 am

Title: Re: Questions about mn 111, Anupada Sutta

Content:

The distinction is between carnal pleasure (sensual desire) and the non-carnal pleasure of jhāna. The former is a hindrance; the latter is to be developed as part of the path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 8:52 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

He's less than clear on this point.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:11 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The contemplation of rise and fall (udayabbayānupassinā) as it's taught in the suttas pertains to understanding specific conditionality (idappaccayatā). For example, SN 22.57 Sattatṭhāna Sutta: With the arising of nutriment there is the arising of form. With the cessation of nutriment there is the cessation of form. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of form....

With the arising of name-and-form there is the arising of consciousness. With the cessation of name-and-form there is the cessation of consciousness. And this noble eightfold path is the way leading to the cessation of consciousness.

And SN 22.5 Samādhī Sutta:

And what, monks, is the origin of form? What is the origin of feeling? What is the origin of recognition? What is the origin of fabrications? What is the origin of consciousness? Here monks, a monk seeks delight, welcomes, remains attached.

And what does one seek delight in, welcome, and remain attached to? One seeks delight in form, welcomes it, and remains attached to it. Due to seeking delight in form, welcoming it, and remaining attached to it, delight arises. Delight in form is clinging. With clinging as a condition, existence; with existence as a condition, birth; with birth as a condition, aging and death, sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

One seeks delight in feeling, welcomes it, and remains attached to it... One seeks delight in recognition, welcomes it, and remains attached to it... One seeks delight in fabrications, welcomes them, and remains attached to them... One seeks delight in consciousness, welcomes it, and remains attached to it. Due to seeking delight in consciousness, welcoming it, and remaining attached to it, delight arises. Delight in consciousness is clinging. With clinging as a condition, existence; with existence as a condition, birth; with birth as a condition, aging and death, sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

This, monks, is the origin of form, this is the origin of feeling, this is the origin of recognition, this is the origin of fabrications, this is the origin of consciousness.

And what, monks, is the passing away of form? What is the passing away of feeling? What is the

passing away of recognition? What is the passing away of fabrications? What is the passing away of consciousness? Here monks, a monk does not seek delight, does not welcome, does not remain attached.

And what does one not seek delight in, not welcome, and not remain attached to? One does not seek delight in form, does not welcome it, and does not remain attached to it. Due to not seeking delight in form, not welcoming it, and not remaining attached to it, delight in form ceases. With the cessation of delight, the cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, the cessation of existence... Such is the cessation of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

One does not seek delight in feeling, does not welcome it, and does not remain attached to it... One does not seek delight in recognition, does not welcome it, and does not remain attached to it... One does not seek delight in fabrications, does not welcome them, and does not remain attached to them... One does not seek delight in consciousness, does not welcome it, and does not remain attached to it. Due to not seeking delight in consciousness, not welcoming it, and not remaining attached to it, delight in consciousness ceases. With the cessation of delight, the cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, the cessation of existence... Such is the cessation of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

This, monks, is the passing away of form, this is the passing away of feeling, this is the passing away of recognition, this is the passing away of fabrications, this is the passing away of consciousness.

There's no need for a pseudo-impermanence doctrine of momentariness nor the Visuddhimagga presentation of insight-knowledges.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:18 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I'd suggest that it's far better to base one's practice on what is taught in the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:42 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Ven. Bodhi's translation is better. Moreover, if you consider the context of the sutta it has nothing to do with a theory of momentariness. It's a criticism of devas and deva realms.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:46 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Which precludes arbitrary momentariness.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:51 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
The suttas are.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 9:52 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Not as affirming a doctrine of momentariness.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 10:07 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Yes. Duration is the alteration of what persists.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 10:12 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Momentariness is pseudo-impermanence with no demonstrable basis. If you want to affirm a doctrine of momentariness then the onus is on you to show how this "experience" is veridical and established by direct perception.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 11:06 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Typical. You assert claims then refuse to establish them when asked.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 11:37 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Buddhaghosa, Dhammasaṅgaṇi Aṭṭhakathā:  
Herein, the continued present (santatipaccuppanna) finds mention in the commentaries (atthakatha); the enduring or long present (addhapaccuppanna) in the discourses (sutta).

Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis:

The theory of impermanence in Buddhism has been generally misunderstood because it came to be confused with a later theory known as the 'doctrine of moments' (ksanavada/ kanavada), which was formulated from a logical analysis of the process of change (parinama) by the later Buddhist scholars belonging to the scholastic (abhidhamma) tradition. But such a theory is conspicuous by its absence in the early discourses.

von Rospatt, The Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness:

There can be no doubt that the theory of momentariness cannot be traced back to the beginnings of Buddhism or even the Buddha himself. It does not fit the practically orientated teachings of early Buddhism and clearly bears the mark of later doctrinal elaboration. Thus in the Nikāyas/Āgamas there are many passages which attribute duration to material and even mental entities, whereas there is, at least to my knowledge, no passage which testifies to the stance that all conditioned entities are momentary.... Furthermore, the fact that the theory of momentariness was a controversial issue among the various schools of the so-called Hīnayāna indicates that it is not canonical.

Sujato, The Mystique of the Abhidhamma:

In the later abhidhamma, the treatment of time is dominated by a radical new theory, totally unlike anything in the suttas or even the canonical abhidhamma, the theory of moments (khaṇavāda).... Now it is quite possible to take this theory, compare it with the suttas, and refute it point by point. But here I would simply like to point out what an implausible and useless idea it is.

Bodhesako, Change: An Examination of Impermanence in Experience:

Indeed, although the four Nikāyas occupy some 5,500 pages of print in their abbreviated roman-script edition, there seems to be not a single statement anywhere within them that requires us to understand thereby (in opposition to the above passages) a doctrine of flux. On the contrary, the Suttas are wholly consistent on this point (as on others). Therefore even in precisely those passages where we would most expect to find such a doctrine, if it were to be found in the Nikāyas at all, the assertion is conspicuously absent.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 4:22 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I'm not asserting anything. I'm criticizing the assertion that the doctrine of momentariness is central to Buddhist insight and/or that it is present in the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 4:27 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

You're free to follow whatever interpretation you wish.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 5:16 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

That's fine. I don't "reject the commentaries in toto out of hand" either.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 19, 2011 6:42 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

As far as I'm concerned, the fundamental teachings of the Pāli dhamma are the only thing worth discussing. Period. Anything other than these fundamental teachings is unnecessary and should be cleared from the path lest it impede what is important. The recognition of unattractiveness (asubhasaññā) is important. The recognition of death (maraṇasaññā) is important. The recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā) is important. The recognition of dispassion (virāgasaññā) is important. The theory of momentariness is not important. The theory of two truths is not important. And any other novel ideas that Buddhaghosa introduced to Theravāda commentary are not important. Moreover, if one isn't tied to the thought-world of the Visuddhimagga, then Burmese Vipassanā doesn't really have much to offer that's especially interesting or important.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 1:38 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Maybe it's time for you to quit accusing people who don't agree with you of engaging in a "scorched-earth approach."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 1:48 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I don't see anyone here trying to convince you of anything.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 5:45 am

Title: Re: shakyauni Buddha and Maitreya Buddha

Content:

Here is a translation of the Pāli Anāgatavaṃsa: Chronicle of the Future [Buddha] which describes the visionary narrative relating to Metteyya (Maitreya).

It is not possible for anyone to describe completely at length Ajita's great accumulation of merit which is not small, which is of great fame. I will tell [you about] it in part. Listen to me, O Sāriputta.

In this auspicious world cycle, in the future, in a crore of years, there will be an Awakened One

named Metteyya, the best of two-footed beings,

of great merit, great wisdom, great knowledge, great fame, great power, great steadfastness; he will be born, one who sees.

That Conqueror will be born, having a great [state of] rebirth, [great] mindfulness, full of wisdom, of great learning, he will be a preacher, a knower of all things, one who sees well, who touches, plunges into, and grasps.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 9:09 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 9:49 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The "philosophical ideas" such as the doctrine of momentariness and the realist epistemology of unique particulars and so on, are inextricably tied to the Visuddhimagga and post-Visuddhimagga thought-world. It makes no sense at all to accept the the stages of insight knowledge as they're presented in the Visuddhimagga and further elaborated in later commentaries without accepting these embedded views.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 2:30 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Change and alteration of what persists do not entail the "constant perishing of phenomena" or "incessant dissolution." To arrive at this latter conclusion requires belief in a view of discrete dhammas subject to momentary arising, subsistence, and dissolution.

Ledi Sayādaw, A Manual of the Excellent Man:

In the ultimate sense, however, new psychophysical phenomena arise only after the old phenomena have perished, which is death. This constant perishing of phenomena is also called cessation (nirodha) or dissolution (bhaṅga). It is only when one discerns the ultimate truth of this cessation of phenomena that one gains insight.

Mahāsi Sayādaw, The Great Discourse on the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta:

The yogī perceives that all the nāmas, rūpas which manifest themselves at the moment of seeing, hearing etc., are undergoing instant dissolution and are, therefore, transient.... When the yogī comes to the bhaṅga stage, during the interval of one cycle of rising and falling, numerous moments of dissolution will be seen to flit by. The material body of rising and falling, being subjected to incessant dissolution is indeed not permanent.



And one doesn't have to look too far to find this view spelled out in detail. For example, the Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā:

[Conditioned dhammas] individual essences (sabhāva) have rise and fall and change. Herein, conditioned dhammas' arising owing to causes and conditions, their coming to be after non-existence, their acquisition of an individual self (attalābha), is 'rise'. Their momentary cessation when arisen is 'fall'. Their changedness due to aging is 'change'.

So here we have discrete momentary dhammas acquiring individual selves, then aging, then dying. In other words, the "constant perishing of phenomena."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 4:04 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Actually, according to this view the mind attends to a completely new and different object each moment. For example, take the mundane experience of listening attentively to a song as it plays. In terms of conventional designation one can describe this song as undergoing alteration and change as it plays. But according to the view of radical momentariness, each moment of attentive listening requires a new and different object. So instead of listening to "a song" there are now how many "songs" or "sub-songs" or "pieces of song"? 100 thousand?... 100 million?... 100 trillion?... Is this not arbitrary? How could it not be? Ven. Sujato:

Thus impermanence becomes, not simply being subject to birth and death, rise and fall, but the momentary dissolution of phenomena – one dhamma rises and ceases in an instant, leaving no trace of residue in the next. Samadhi becomes, not an exalted, stable coalescence of mind, but a 'momentary samadhi' running after the fluctuations of phenomena. The path becomes, not a gradual program of spiritual development, but a 'path-moment', gone in a flash. And the mind itself becomes just a series of 'mind-moments'.... This idea seems to derive some of its impressiveness from its air of acrid, pessimistic, reductionist severity, which is often mistaken as a sign of really uncompromising wisdom.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 4:51 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

(a) adhering to the idea of a direct perception of momentary dissolution without accepting the existence of discrete, momentary dhammas is nonsensical; (b) the doctrine of momentariness is itself arbitrary with no demonstrable basis; and therefore both are untenable views. Ven. Sujato: Find this hard to swallow? You might be interested to know that in contemporary abhidhamma circles it is, apparently, the orthodox position that the series of 'mind-moments' can only be directly seen by Buddhas, and perhaps chief disciples. This is, admittedly, challenged by some, who claim it can be seen in meditation. In just the same way, a Christian meditator will claim to see God, or a Hindu to see the universal Self. Seek and ye shall find. The very fact that such a controversy could possibly arise is a sign how far we have drifted from the Buddha's pragmatic empiricism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 6:32 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It should be quite evident. As Sujato says, "The very fact that such a controversy could possibly arise is a sign how far we have drifted from the Buddha's pragmatic empiricism."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 7:34 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

How would one directly perceive the limits of perception when perception is itself constrained by its own limitations? And how would one correctly differentiate between this veridical perception and any number of adventitious phenomena that can be perceived as side effects of samādhi? Having experienced various kinds of adventitious occurrences myself, such as a perceptual strobing effect, or incessant dissolution, or the momentary cessation of awareness, etc., I don't consider any of these experiences to be a reliable basis for insight, especially since one is just as prone to experience many other more stable mental nimittas as side effects of samādhi.

Fortunately, all of this is easily avoided by basing insight into impermanence on pragmatic empiricism, just as we find in the suttas, where there is nothing esoteric, mysterious, or hidden about impermanence. Your body will surely die. My body will surely die. Death could occur at any time. And mental processes are subject to even greater change, alteration, and passing away than the body. Conventional description offers a more meaningful, pragmatic, and therefore useful reference, using a clearly demonstrable basis for designation.

In this way there is no need for inducing painful sensations in order to recognize dukkha, or perceptions of incessant dissolution in order to recognize impermanence, or any other adventitious experiences. One can get on with developing the noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 8:17 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

The mind is highly susceptible to the power of suggestion as well as the urge towards confirmation bias and other cognitive biases. This is why insight has to proceed further to deconstruct the saññā embedded in experience itself. This is the progression from right view to no view, where no experience is special.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 9:06 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Rhetorical question.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 11:10 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

How would I know if he's a sotāpanna or a sakadāgāmi and so on? But relevant to this discussion, I've never heard or read anything by him regarding the Visuddhimagga presentation of the insight knowledges.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 20, 2011 11:14 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

If this were really the case then there would be no objections from any quarter about clearing the path of approximately 2000+ years of accumulated debris. Nor would there be threats of incurring negative kamma from merely critiquing the teaching methods or views of any particular teacher or sayādaw.... At any rate, it seems far more advisable to have no dog in the hunt.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 21, 2011 3:13 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

I don't consider your habit of attempting to steamroll over all substantive criticism as being either desirable or acceptable. Maybe you think that this is a way to preserve the status-quo of Theravāda Buddhism. But as far as I'm concerned, this brand of conservatism is ill-conceived. Informed discussion and substantive criticism should never be deemed threatening or harmful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 21, 2011 10:02 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Let's see....

tiltbillings: "[Some] with good reason as any, consider the Sujin take on things, especially vipassana meditation, equally out there as Ingram's approach." Source.

tiltbillings: "Nanavira was given to overblown, dense prose and not always the best reasoning." Source.

tiltbillings: "Essentially Wallace is tarring the whole of the Western contingent of vipassana teachers with this sort of accusation as makes in his cheesy interview." Source.

And on and on it goes....

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 21, 2011 10:31 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Ven. Ṭhānissaro:

Some Theravadins insist that questioning the commentaries is a sign of disrespect for the tradition, but it seems to be a sign of greater disrespect for the Buddha — or the compilers of the Canon — to assume that he or they would have left out something absolutely essential to the practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 21, 2011 4:14 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Cognitions are classified in terms of sense faculty and object. MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta: Monks, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds, it is reckoned as ear-consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on the nose and odors, it is reckoned as nose-consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on tongue and flavors, it is reckoned as tongue-consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on body and tangibles, it is reckoned as body consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness.

And there also has to be the corresponding engagement or "act-of-attention" (samannāhāra) for any of the six consciousnesses to arise. MN 28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta:

Now if internally the eye is intact but externally forms do not come into range, nor is there a corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. If internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, but there is no corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, and there is a corresponding engagement, then there is the appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 7:23 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Already answered. Why would you want to think that they are the same one?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 7:25 am

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

Momentariness is already an abstraction. It doesn't matter at all how short a duration you wish to ascribe to a mind moment, it's still an abstraction that has no demonstrable basis.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 10:46 am  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 6:36 pm  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Yes, well here we have two extremes with regard to duration.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 6:40 pm  
Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?  
Content:  
Good work Alex. This offers a clearly demonstrable and therefore identifiable basis of designation for both the object and the cognition. All designated within the framework of conventional discourse, just like the suttas are. No need for a theory of momentariness. No need for a theory of two truths.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 6:48 pm  
Title: Re: Oh Nooo, why I end up here? What's wrong?  
Content:  
Indeed. We can also call these first two by their more common early classifications as simply "jhāna" (i.e. the four jhānas) and the "formless attainments" (arūpasamāpatti).

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 7:15 pm  
Title: Re: 2012 Uposatha Calendar...  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Dec 22, 2011 8:17 pm  
Title: Re: Oh Nooo, why I end up here? What's wrong?  
Content:  
Yes. Which is why they were not considered necessary attainments by the early Buddhists. And they

were never considered necessary attainments by the Theravadins.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 25, 2011 1:54 pm

Title: Re: Bases for Skillful Action?

Content:

Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis 1.13.4:

The mysteries are transmitted mysteriously.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 25, 2011 5:35 pm

Title: Re: I'd Like to Know More About Buddhanussati

Content:

There is a concluding section of the Suttanipāṭa Pārāyanavagga which isn't translated on ATI. See Pārāyanānugītiḡāthā. This is what Williams is referring to.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 02, 2012 10:28 am

Title: Re: Is there sutta basis for the modern bifurcation of jhanas?

Content:

MN 111, AN 9.36, DN 2, and numerous other discourses demonstrate that this isn't so. All four of these developments of samādhi intersect with jhāna at some point.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 03, 2012 4:26 am

Title: Re: Is there sutta basis for the modern bifurcation of jhanas?

Content:

None of this establishes the restrictions that you want to establish.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 03, 2012 4:30 am

Title: Re: Why was the Buddha omniscient?

Content:

The ideas regarding a buddha's omniscience were developed long before the emergence of the Mahāyāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 03, 2012 5:48 am

Title: Re: Is there sutta basis for the modern bifurcation of jhanas?

Content:

Yes, of course. There's really no possible way at arriving at a (hypothetical) original meaning. Thus, I've relied on various commentaries to help clarify and define Pāli terms as well as interpret sutta passages. IMO, sensitivity to the historical development of ancient commentary offers a coherent and pragmatic method of interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 03, 2012 9:39 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

IMO it's a bit of a stretch to assume that these figurative expressions were meant to be understood as literal teachings on the development of jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 06, 2012 3:55 am

Title: Re: soul, do you have any?

Content:

As you may know, the early Church fathers incorporated a fair amount of middle-Platonism and Neoplatonism into their theology (with good reason). But this kind of system and way of thinking is very different from early Buddhism. There is no assertion, reasoning, or contemplation related to a first principle -- a "first cause" -- in Buddhism. Therefore, there is no attention given to anything else related to this notion of a first cause, including a soul or theophany or theosis, etc. Simply stated, Buddhism has no place for theism (or pantheism). The dhamma offers a completely different kind of discourse and soteriological path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 06, 2012 8:48 am

Title: Re: soul, do you have any?

Content:

Indeed. How long would it take before the soul would long for extinguishment?...

Or, if this simplicity of substance doesn't allow for the alteration of reflexive awareness, what could it be other than an immaterial, sessile barnacle?...

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 06, 2012 7:04 pm

Title: Re: soul, do you have any?

Content:

I've read these authors & texts and many others as well. Buddhist dhamma offers a completely different kind of discourse and soteriological path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 07, 2012 7:20 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

In order to understand the recognition of anatta (anattasaññā) it's important to understand the object of negation. Anatta is negating the notion of a permanent Self which is not subject to affliction/dis-ease. It is not negating the utility of healthy, functional developmental processes with conditional self-agency (attakāra). Take SN 22.59 for example, as it is a central teachings on anatta. The Self which is being negated in SN 22.59 is a Self which would be:

1. permanent
2. satisfactory
3. not subject to affliction/dis-ease

This "Self" is refuted: a permanent, satisfactory Self which is not prone to old age, sickness, and death. As SN 22.59 states:

Bhikkhus, form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness is not-self. Were form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness self, then this form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness would not lead to affliction/dis-ease.

This criterion of affliction/disease is the context for the following statement that:

none can have it of form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness: 'Let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be thus, let my form... feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness be not thus.'

What is not negated is the developmental processes which are conditions for happiness or unhappiness, etc. In fact, there is great emphasis in Buddhism on learning to develop wholesome, skillful (kusala) developmental processes which lead to happiness and joy, and learning to abandon unwholesome, unskillful (akusala) developmental processes which lead to unhappiness, confusion, and conflicted emotions. This is why many contemporary insight meditation teachers have recognized that no significant progress can be made by employing the path of gradual training unless the student is in good mental health. Hence the well known phrase: "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 08, 2012 11:02 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Anatta is a recognition (anattasaññā) of the absence of self, and not a self-view (attadiṭṭhi; attānudiṭṭhi).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 08, 2012 5:44 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

That sutta passage is talking about mistaken ideas of possession due to the conceits of superimposing a subjective perspective. It is not saying that the appropriate recognition of the absence of self is a self-view.



Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 10, 2012 12:54 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

What's being indicated here is the erroneous assumption of a personal subject who has no self. Thus, a mistaken view of personal existence is still functioning as the basis for inappropriate attention. Discernment hasn't successfully eliminated this subjective perspective -- the habitual filter of a separate observer.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 10, 2012 4:49 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

It seems to me to be refuting the idea of strict determinism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 1:34 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Yes, we have to proceed one step at a time.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 5:05 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

I think there is really no other way to proceed. We all have to start from where we are, and begin by committing and re-committing to developing appropriate ethical conduct (*sīla*) and meditative composure (*samādhi*). This already involves a significant degree of focus and dedication: choosing to go for refuge in the three jewels; choosing to undertake training according to the five and/or eight precepts; choosing to develop renunciation and live a life of voluntary simplicity; choosing to practice sense restraint; and choosing to commit to a dedicated daily practice schedule. It can take quite some time to establish these aspects of gradual training and really begin to integrate them. And given that much of this will already challenge many preconceived notions and contemporary social and cultural beliefs and customs, it can be confusing at times, and even somewhat disorienting if we don't have the support of admirable, like-minded friends (*kalyāṇamitta*). Therefore, all of this is most skillfully approached through the orientation of the four noble truths. This is the view that concerns us as practitioners. Any other views are quite irrelevant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 5:10 am

Title: Re: Confidence in Transmission

Content:

I chose "None of the above" because there is no way of knowing what the Buddha actually taught. Thus, there is no way of knowing how accurately the extant collections of discourses represent what he taught.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 6:30 am

Title: Re: Any recommendations for a good book on the Five Aggregates

Content:

This study is probably the most thorough survey of sutta passages, etc., pertaining to the five aggregates.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 10:38 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

His views haven't been misrepresented in this thread.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 2:08 pm

Title: Re: What are differences between magga and phala?

Content:

For another perspective on this, see Path, Fruit and Nibbāna by Ven. Kheminda Thera.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 11, 2012 10:19 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

In the endnotes to MN 49 he also asserts that nibbāna is a form of consciousness: Some have objected to the equation of this consciousness with nibbana, on the grounds that nibbana is nowhere else in the Canon described as a form of consciousness. Thus they have proposed that consciousness without surface be regarded as an arahant's consciousness of nibbana in meditative experience, and not nibbana itself.

No Indian Buddhist author -- whether Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, Mādhyamaka, or Yogācāra -- ever made this assertion that nibbāna is a type of consciousness. And in the Introduction to his translation of the same sutta he also asserts that this consciousness is not known by means of any of the six senses at all:

The Buddha describes his awakened knowledge in a variety of ways ... by describing an awakened consciousness that is not known by means of any of the six senses at all.... Some of these assertions — in particular, the assertion of a consciousness not mediated by any of the six senses — are extremely important dhamma lessons....

And in the endnotes to MN 38 he asserts that this consciousness is not included in the consciousness aggregate:

The Buddha, knowing that there are two types of consciousness — the consciousness aggregate (viññāṇakkhandha), which is experienced in conjunction with the six sense media, and consciousness without surface (viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ), which is experienced independently of the six sense media....

Again, no Indian Buddhist author -- whether Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, Mādhyamaka, or Yogācāra -- ever made any of these assertions. So apparently we are to believe that Ṭhānissaro has re-discovered the correct understanding of nibbāna as a form of consciousness which can only be experienced independently of the six sense media, that somehow eluded all of the best and brightest minds of Buddhist India!

His interpretation of nibbāna is very novel. It's also nonsense.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 12, 2012 6:48 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

There is no good reason to equate the two.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jan 13, 2012 9:26 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

The bottom line is that his theory on nibbāna isn't even Buddhist. At best, it's mildly amusing. It certainly doesn't offer a credible alternative or pose a credible challenge to the standard path structures contained in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Vibhaṅga, etc. So there's really no need to get too involved in criticizing it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 2:07 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Sure I did. Mind Like Fire Unbound:

The first chapter surveys ancient Vedic ideas of fire as subsisting in a diffused state even when extinguished. It then shows how the Buddha took an original approach to those ideas to illustrate the concept of nibbāna after death as referring not to eternal existence, but rather to absolute freedom from all constraints of time, space, & being....

Now, although the Vedic texts contain several different theories concerning the physics of fire, there is at least one basic point on which they agree: Fire, even when not manifest, continues to exist in a latent form....

But when we look at how the Buddha actually used the image of extinguished fire in his teachings, we find that he approached the Vedic idea of latent fire from another angle entirely: If latent fire is everywhere all at once, it is nowhere in particular. If it is conceived as always present in everything, it has to be so loosely defined that it has no defining characteristics, nothing by which it might be known at all. Thus, instead of using the subsistence of latent fire as an image for immortality, he uses the diffuse, indeterminate nature of extinguished fire as understood by the Vedists to illustrate the absolute indescribability of the person who has reached the Buddhist goal....

This experience of the goal — absolutely unlimited freedom, beyond classification and exclusive of all else — is termed the elemental nibbāna property with no 'fuel' remaining (anupādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu). It is one of two ways in which nibbāna is experienced.... Thus the completely free & unadulterated experience we have been discussing is that of nibbāna after death.

And so Ṭhānissaro wants to have his cake and eat it too. According to him, an arahant's post-mortem state is a "completely free and unadulterated experience," yet we're supposed to believe that this assertion is somehow still immune from being a type of eternalist view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 1:53 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Ṭhānissaro also thinks that his assertion of a post-mortem "unadulterated experience" of "absolute freedom from all constraints of time, space, and being" should somehow exempt him from getting entangled in wrong views. Well, it doesn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 3:04 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

You haven't shown anything of the sort. Ṭhānissaro has been quoted verbatim throughout this thread. There has been no distortion of any of his statements.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 3:50 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Anyway, returning to the issues....

In Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities, Steven Collins correctly understands that any imposition of a Vedic theory of latent fire in the interpretation of Buddhist discourse only serves to fill in intentional silences with the views of the commentator who resorts to this interpretation, and thereby necessarily diverges from the radical message of the Buddhist discourses themselves. Moreover, any view asserting an analogy to the latent fire theory will result in rendering Buddhist soteriology impossible:

In the majority of uses of fire-imagery in Buddhist texts the fires which go out or go down like the

sun, are -- like the three fires of Greed, Hatred, and Delusion -- precisely what must be wholly eliminated for release to be possible. If these fires simply return to their "primitive, pure, invisible" state, then according to Buddhist logic and psychology, their invisible existence and potential reappearance would make release impossible.

To concretize the fire-image into a conceptually specific doctrine ... is an example of what the last chapter described as filling Buddhist silences, vocalizing their meaning. Scholars who do this often have their own account of what Buddhism must really mean, one which is divergent with the discourse of Buddhism itself.

Also, in Nibbāna and the Fire Simile, Ven. Ñāṇananda correctly understands that this Vedic theory of latency contradicts Buddhist conditionality:

'The fire has gone out.' How ridiculous it is to conclude that the fire goes somewhere when it goes out. If one asks whether the extinguished fire has gone to the East or West or North or South, it is a foolish question. If something exists depending on causes and conditions, when those causes and conditions are removed, it has to cease....

There is a flush of Buddhist literature thriving in the West which attempts to interpret this fire simile in the light of the Vedic myth that the extinguished fire 'goes into hiding.' Though the Buddha succeeded in convincing the Brahmin interlocutors of the dependently arisen nature of the fire by the reductio-ad-absurdum method, these scholars seem to be impervious to his arguments. What is worse, misinterpretations have even sought refuge in blatant mistranslations of sacred texts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 10:10 pm

Title: Re: Is Nirvana Blissful?

Content:

No. It's the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 14, 2012 10:18 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Let's be clear Piotr: Ṭhānissaro's imposition of a latent fire theory only serves to buttress his view of an arahant's post-mortem "unadulterated experience." Not only does this theory contradict Buddhist conditionality, it is inextricably entangled in the very thicket of views that we are instructed to avoid and abandon. It's an ill-conceived interpretive strategy that clarifies nothing, and proliferates mistaken assertions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 15, 2012 12:09 pm

Title: Re: Samatha: suppression and cultivation

Content:

The discourses offer specific meditation subjects for working with the hindrances. There is also a very ancient tradition where the meditation teacher and student assess the student's temperament and

disposition, and the student is given a specific meditation subject on this basis. For example, if the student has a predominantly passionate, lustful disposition then the meditation subject of an unattractive object (asubhanimitta) is given as the student's main meditation practice. If the student has a more aggressive, impatient type of personality then loving-kindness (mettā) is given as the student's main meditation practice, and so on.

A few sutta passages....

#### Desire for Sensual Pleasure (Kāmacchanda)

To remedy desire for sensual pleasure we are advised to attend to an unattractive object (asubhanimitta). AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen desire for sensual pleasure does not arise and arisen desire for sensual pleasure is abandoned as much as on account of this: an unattractive object. For one who attends properly to an unattractive object, unarisen desire for sensual pleasure does not arise and arisen desire for sensual pleasure is abandoned.

#### Aversion (Byāpāda)

In order to abandon aversion we are instructed to develop the liberation of the mind through loving-kindness (mettācetovimutti). AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen aversion does not arise and arisen aversion is abandoned as much as on account of this: the liberation of the mind through loving-kindness. For one who attends properly to the liberation of the mind through loving-kindness, unarisen aversion does not arise and arisen aversion is abandoned.

#### Lethargy and Drowsiness (Thīnamiddha)

As an antidote to lethargy and drowsiness we are advised to develop the productive mental components of arousal (ārambhadhātu), persistence (nikkāmadhātu), and energetic endeavor (parakkāmadhātu). Other passages advise to practice walking meditation, or the recognition of light.

AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen lethargy and drowsiness does not arise and arisen lethargy and drowsiness is abandoned as much as on account of this: the component of arousal, the component of persistence, the component of energetic endeavor. For one who has aroused energy, unarisen lethargy and drowsiness does not arise and arisen lethargy and drowsiness is abandoned.

#### Restlessness and Anxiety (Uddhaccakukkucca)

The remedy for restlessness and anxiety is the development of a pacified mind (cetaso vūpasama).

Other passages suggest taking up mindfulness of breathing. AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen restlessness and anxiety does not arise and arisen restlessness and anxiety is abandoned as much as on account of this: a pacified mind. For one with a pacified mind, unarisen restlessness and anxiety does not arise and arisen restlessness and anxiety is abandoned.

#### Doubt (Vicikicchā)

Thorough reflection (yoniso manasikāra) is suggested in order to work with any doubts that we may have about the veracity and effectiveness of the dhamma. AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇappahāṇavagga:

No other phenomenon do I know, monks, on account of which unarisen doubt does not arise and arisen doubt is abandoned as much as on account of this: thorough reflection (yoniso manasikāra). For one who thoroughly reflects, unarisen doubt does not arise and arisen doubt is abandoned.

Generally speaking, the cultivation and development of whichever meditation subject is taken up will lead to the suppression of the hindrances and the appearance and strengthening of the jhāna factors. This developmental process is nicely explained in SN 46.3:

Dwelling thus withdrawn, one recollects that Dhamma and thinks it over. Whenever, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwelling thus withdrawn recollects that Dhamma and thinks it over, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of mindfulness; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

Dwelling thus mindfully, he discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it. Whenever, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwelling thus mindfully discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of discrimination of states comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

While he discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it, his energy is aroused without slackening. Whenever, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu's energy is aroused without slackening as he discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom, examines it, makes an investigation of it, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of energy is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of energy; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of energy comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

When his energy is aroused, there arises in him spiritual rapture. Whenever, bhikkhus, spiritual rapture arises in a bhikkhu whose energy is aroused, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of rapture is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of rapture; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of rapture comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

For one whose mind is uplifted by rapture the body becomes tranquil and the mind becomes tranquil. Whenever, bhikkhus, the body becomes tranquil and the mind becomes tranquil in a bhikkhu whose mind is uplifted by rapture, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of tranquillity is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of tranquillity; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of tranquillity comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

For one whose body is tranquil and who is happy the mind becomes concentrated. Whenever, bhikkhus, the mind becomes concentrated in a bhikkhu whose body is tranquil and who is happy, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of concentration is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of concentration; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of concentration comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. Whenever, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of equanimity is aroused by the bhikkhu; on that occasion the bhikkhu develops the enlightenment factor of equanimity; on that occasion the enlightenment factor of equanimity comes to fulfilment by development in the bhikkhu.

There are a number of other excellent discourses related to this development in the Bojjhaṅgasamyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya. And of course, what these discourses summarize in a few paragraphs can encapsulate years of dedicated practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 15, 2012 5:05 pm

Title: Re: Samatha: supression and cultivation

Content:

The developmental process is similar regardless of one's chosen meditation subject: By attending to the object-support, in this case the breath, the hindrances are starved of their cognitive and affective nutriments, and the jhāna factors are stabilized.

In terms of method, this is taught in brief in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā and in detail in the Vimuttimaggā, the Visuddhimagga, and numerous contemporary texts and dhamma talks pertaining to ānāpānassati.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 15, 2012 5:06 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jan 15, 2012 5:11 pm

Title: Re: Why was the Buddha omniscient?

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 16, 2012 10:39 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

This is just more convoluted double-speak that clarifies nothing. The bottom line is that no matter how hard you search you will never find a singular entity that fulfills the criteria of selfhood.

Ṭhānissaro thinks that because his assertion of an arahant's post-mortem "unadulterated experience" is qualified by being outside of time and space, this should exempt him from adhering to a mistaken view. Well, it doesn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 16, 2012 1:29 pm

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

There's no need for "fist pounding." Again, the bottom line is that no matter how hard you search you will never find a singular entity that fulfills the criteria for selfhood.



Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 16, 2012 1:48 pm

Title: Re: Samatha: supression and cultivation

Content:

Yes. Optimally, we can begin to learn to maintain appropriate attention and mental composure in all four postures. AN 4.12 Sīla Sutta:

If while he is walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, a monk is free from greed and ill will, from sloth and torpor, from restlessness and worry, and has discarded doubt, then his will has become strong and impregnable; his mindfulness is alert and unclouded; his body is calm and unexcited; his mind is concentrated and collected.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 16, 2012 3:10 pm

Title: Re: Any recomendations for a good book on the Five Aggregates

Content:

It's a decent book but hardly worth that price IMO. If you can get a cheaper used copy or borrow a copy through an inter-library loan, then that would be the way to go.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 26, 2012 3:32 am

Title: Re: percipient of not-self

Content:

Insight is a process that develops over time. The purpose is to develop disenchantment and dispassion towards bodily and mental phenomena by understanding that all phenomena are empty of self or what pertains to a self (cf. SN 35.85).

Anatta isn't a thing. Therefore, anattasaññā is not the perception of the presence of something. It's the recognition of the absence of a permanent, unchanging self. Similarly, the recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā) would be more accurately phrased as the recognition of the absence of permanence. The recognition of unsatisfactoriness (dukkhasaññā) is the recognition of the absence of satisfactoriness in that which is not permanent. And again, the recognition of selflessness (anattasaññā) is the recognition of the absence of a permanent and satisfactory self in that which is not permanent and not satisfactory.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 26, 2012 3:58 pm

Title: Re: Is shunyatha a Mahayana concept? or a Theravada concept?

Content:

See this thread: Emptiness (Suññatā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 31, 2012 5:24 pm

Title: Re: "Original Mind" and the atta

Content:

Ajahn Chah addresses this question in What Is Contemplation:

Question: Is this mind you are talking about called the 'Original Mind'?

Ajahn Chah's Answer: What do you mean?

Question: It seems as if you are saying there is something else outside of the conventional body-mind (the five khandhas). Is there something else? What do you call it?

Answer: There isn't anything and we don't call it anything – that's all there is to it! Be finished with all of it. Even the knowing doesn't belong to anybody, so be finished with that, too! Consciousness is not an individual, not a being, not a self, not an other, so finish with that – finish with everything! There is nothing worth wanting! It's all just a load of trouble. When you see clearly like this then everything is finished.

Question: Could we not call it the 'Original Mind'?

Answer: You can call it that if you insist. You can call it whatever you like, for the sake of conventional reality. But you must understand this point properly. This is very important. If we didn't make use of conventional reality we wouldn't have any words or concepts with which to consider actual reality – Dhamma. This is very important to understand.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 12, 2012 5:35 am

Title: Re: The Dhamma eye: "whatever arising-dhamma cessation-dhamma"

Content:

Wangchuk Dorje (9th Karmapa) says the same thing.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 12, 2012 2:17 pm

Title: Re: The Dhamma eye: "whatever arising-dhamma cessation-dhamma"

Content:

The simile of writing in water seems to be indicating basically the same thing in both cases, i.e. the non-substantiality of phenomena.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 18, 2012 11:02 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

It seems that many of you folks have more in common with ancient Indian materialists than you do with any form of Buddhism. Why not just say that you are materialists who practice meditation?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 3:00 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Buddhist suttas aren't the best source of information on Indian materialist views....

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 3:01 am

Title: Re: Life without God: Sam Harris interviews Tim Prowse

Content:

Harris is narrow minded and annoying.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 3:55 am

Title: Re: Life without God: Sam Harris interviews Tim Prowse

Content:

Harris draws a lame caricature of religion and then attacks it ad nauseum. Chris Hedges' opening statement in his debate with Harris:

Sam Harris has conflated faith with tribalism. His book is an attack not on faith but on a system of being and believing that is dangerous and incompatible with the open society. He attacks superstition, a belief in magic and the childish notion of an anthropomorphic God that is characteristic of the tribe, of the closed society. He calls this religion. I do not.

Throughout the debate Harris wasn't willing (or able?) to step out of his narrow little worldview and acknowledge other ways of understanding. Boring stuff really.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 6:21 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

No, but neither do these modern secular "Buddhists." At least not in any traditional Buddhist context.

The Cārvāka views are completely in accord with scientific materialism, physicalism, atheism, or whatever one wants to call it. Most notably in the field of epistemology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 8:53 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Yeah, much of it should sound familiar to most contemporary, Western educated readers. In Indian Philosophy, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya quotes S. N. Dasgupta:

Purandara (a Lokāyata philosopher) [...] admits the usefulness of inference in determining the nature of all worldly things where perceptual experience is available; but inference cannot be employed for establishing any dogma regarding the transcendental world, or life after death or the law of karma which cannot be available to ordinary perceptual experience.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 9:00 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

In the context of the middle way of practice of the dhammavinaya most modern human beings are hedonists to some degree.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 9:16 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

I think it's inaccurate to attempt to recast the Buddha as advocating a materialist worldview or as being an agnostic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 9:34 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

People are certainly free to call themselves whatever they want. That's fine. It's a pluralistic world.

Personally, I think it's prudent to resist every urge to remake the samaṇa Gotama in one's own image.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 19, 2012 11:43 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

According to the suttas direct knowledge can include the recollection of former lives, the divine eye that can perceive beings in different realms, the divine ear which can hear the same, and so on. This knowledge was part of the Buddha's awakening (and also that of many arahant disciples). Therefore, there is no good reason for limiting knowledge merely to what can be known through deluded cognitions of ordinary worldlings. As already suggested, the epistemological premise of the following: Secular Buddhism is naturalistic, in that it references natural causes and effects, demonstrable in the known world.

Is better aligned with the naturalistic worldview of the Lokāyata than with the Buddhadhamma.

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, Indian Philosophy, p. 188:

Purandara (a Lokāyata philosopher) [...] admits the usefulness of inference in determining the nature of all worldly things where perceptual experience is available; but inference cannot be employed for

establishing any dogma regarding the transcendental world, or life after death or the law of karma which cannot be available to ordinary perceptual experience.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 20, 2012 7:15 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Here we're talking about what constitutes valid sources of knowledge (pramāṇa). All Indian philosophical schools accept direct perception (pratyakṣa) and inference (anumāna) as valid sources of knowledge. Scripture (āgama) and verbal testimony (śabda) can be added to inferential knowledge, provided that one accepts the authority of the scriptural source, author, or speaker.

In the context of the Pāli Tipiṭaka (and related collections preserved in other languages), there is simply too much scriptural material that's been preserved which is beyond the range of consensual, empirical experience of the average human being. In addition, there are a vast number of anecdotal sources (i.e. śabda) from every culture and historical period that speak of certain similar non-ordinary phenomenological experiences that result in significant cognitive and therapeutic changes in the individual. These are often highly valued changes resulting in various degrees of liberation and freedom, as well as other types of direct perception of non-ordinary phenomena. Personally, I consider these sources (āgama & śabda) compelling enough to keep an open mind regarding what I do not (yet) know via direct perception.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 20, 2012 1:22 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Yes, the head and the heart each develop at their own pace. And there's no set formula -- this development is unique to each individual. Optimally, any combination of faith and skeptical inquiry that leads to resiliency can be useful to help see one through both the highs and the lows.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 21, 2012 1:29 am

Title: Re: Comparative Book on Meditation and/or Mystical Experiences

Content:

Here are a few:

Asceticism

The Yogi and the Mystic: Studies in Indian and Comparative Mysticism

The Unity of Mystical Traditions: The Transformation of Consciousness in Tibetan and German Mysticism

The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 9:41 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

I really don't think Batchelor is, Mike. How can one have a meaningful and coherent "sutta method" which fails to accept the validity of passages which are central to the description of the Buddha's awakening and passages which are common throughout the suttas? Just to mention a few, passages describing:

1. the content of the Buddha's awakening,
2. the first two of the three higher knowledges,
3. the first five of the six higher gnoses.

Failing to accept the validity of these teachings, yet still wanting to be a "Buddhist," is analogous to someone calling themselves a "Christian" yet refusing to accept the Trinity or the Resurrection of Christ. It's nonsensical.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 10:17 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Yes, Liberal Theology was (and is) a necessary development in Biblical hermeneutics -- in order to differentiate the mythical and allegorical literary styles from the ethical and soteriological message of Christianity. Theistic religions cannot peacefully and coherently coexist and integrate with modernity without this differentiation. And just like for Christianity, liberal hermeneutics doesn't necessitate the rejection of the afterlife, within the context of the Buddhaddhamma this differentiation doesn't necessitate rejecting the teachings on post-mortem continuity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 10:22 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Firstly, tonglen is more about karuṇā and vedanānupassanā than about mettā. Secondly, the "taking" is a metaphor for inducing empathy by contemplating external feelings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 10:41 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

To be sure, there are different degrees of commitment and different degrees of the sense of urgency to practice. I wonder though, how this notion of secular Buddhism fits with Buddhist monasticism?... I think most of the ordained monastics I know -- who have dedicated their lives to the dhammavinaya -- do accept the teachings on rebirth and take this view seriously and also practice contemplative recollections like recognition of the uncertainty of the time of death, and so on (although I've never

conducted anything like a formal survey on the subject).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 10:58 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Yes, Chah and Sumedho are skillful teachers.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 6:32 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Your argument entails that the dhammavinaya has been poorly understood by all Buddhists for approximately the past 2500 years, including all of the best Buddhist minds of India and Asia. Yet, somehow, you and your chosen circle of "secularists" have rediscovered the true meaning of the dhammavinaya all these many centuries after the fact. And even more astonishingly, this dhamma actually has very little in common with the worldview and epistemology presented in the suttas themselves, and a whole lot in common with the worldview of modern scientific materialism! Seems rather self-serving, to say the least.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 24, 2012 7:53 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

By "monastics" I also have in mind Thai, Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and Tibetan monastics (rebirth is a pan-Buddhist doctrine).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 25, 2012 12:56 am

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

They all teach rebirth. Why? Because it's a canonical doctrine that has never been questioned prior to the rise of materialist influences in the 20th century.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 27, 2012 3:48 pm

Title: Re: Blue light

Content:

Just a light nimitta. I get the same, especially the latter part of your description of it "washing over me." It's very easy to get attached to such experiences, but they are adventitious and impermanent like anything else.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 28, 2012 4:48 am

Title: Re: Blue light

Content:

Light nimittas are just adventitious side-effects of the development of samādhi that occur for some people. And although some teachers emphasize using the occurrence of light nimittas, these phenomena are not essential for samatha.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 28, 2012 3:05 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 28, 2012 8:13 pm

Title: Re: The Secular Buddhist

Content:

Some of us have been contemplating these ideas for as long as Batchelor, et al.

Skepticism cuts both ways.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 06, 2012 11:07 pm

Title: Re: The Satipatthana Sutta a forgery?

Content:

Generally speaking, the different collections of suttas that were compiled and redacted by the various early Buddhist sects are similar enough in content that in practical terms they are teaching the same dhamma, regardless of the differences in how the pericopes are arranged.

Here's Tse-fu Kuan's English translations of the Chinese versions of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and the Kāyagatāsati Sutta, and his endnotes for both suttas:

Sutta\_1.pdf

(94.55 KiB) Downloaded 330 times

Sutta\_2.pdf

(92.14 KiB) Downloaded 293 times



Notes.pdf

(181.51 KiB) Downloaded 302 times

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 08, 2012 7:22 pm

Title: Re: Rarely mentioned criteria of the 1st jhana

Content:

Better to follow the suttas and the word commentary of Peṭakopadesa 7.72:

The twofold bodily and mental pain does not arise in one steadied in directed thought and evaluation, and the twofold bodily and mental pleasure does arise. The mental pleasure thus produced from directed thought is joy, while the bodily pleasure is bodily feeling.

SN 48.40 Uppaṭipāṭika Sutta states that the pain faculty (dukkhindriya) ceases completely in the first jhāna, the unhappiness faculty (domanassindriya) ceases completely in the second jhāna, the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases completely in the third jhāna, and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases completely in the fourth jhāna.

SN 48.37 Dutiyavibhaṅga Sutta informs us that the pleasure and pain faculties are born of body contact (kāyasamphassaja), whereas the happiness and unhappiness faculties are born of mind contact (manosamphassaja).

Taking all of the above passages into consideration we can deduce that the non-carnal joy (nirāmisā pīti) of the first jhāna is mental pleasure (cetasika sukha, i.e. somanassa) born of mind contact, and the non-carnal pleasure (nirāmisā sukha) of the first jhāna is bodily pleasure (kāyika sukha) born of body contact.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 09, 2012 1:10 am

Title: Re: Shamatha in Five (not nine) Stages?

Content:

The Tibetans prefer Indian commentaries to sūtras. Also, the Tibetan canon doesn't have a complete Śrāvaka Sūtrapiṭaka or Abhidharmapiṭaka. Therefore, they have relied almost entirely on the Abhidharmakośa and the Śrāvakabhūmi for Śrāvaka teachings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 09, 2012 2:33 am

Title: Re: Meditation, 5 hindrances, and the misconception

Content:

Language isn't static. The meaning of the English term "meditation" has shifted in the past 40-50 years to include Buddhist definitions.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 09, 2012 4:59 pm  
Title: Re: Andrew Olendzki on Protestant Buddhism  
Content:  
Well said Zavk.

Here are a couple of aspects of Theravāda Buddhism that are worth keeping:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Mar 10, 2012 3:49 pm  
Title: Re: The fetters of conceit, ignorance and doubt  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Mar 10, 2012 3:53 pm  
Title: Re: Suttas on yoniso manasikara?  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Mar 12, 2012 1:30 am  
Title: Re: Shamatha in Five (not nine) Stages?  
Content:  
I'd recommend visiting a Theravāda monastery if at all possible.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Mar 15, 2012 4:08 am  
Title: Re: The Buddha's Challenge in Teaching the Dhamma  
Content:  
I haven't been following the discussion which (I think) led to this thread too closely, but I'd just like to suggest for your consideration that the other key teachings which you listed above also relate directly to idappaccayatā and paṭiccasamuppāda.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Mar 15, 2012 4:11 am  
Title: Re: The Buddha's Challenge in Teaching the Dhamma  
Content:  
Yes, and it informs all other aspects of the Buddhadhamma.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 16, 2012 9:19 am  
Title: Re: Do the Three Realms Really Exist?  
Content:  
I refuse to believe in chickens....

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 16, 2012 4:46 pm  
Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Mar 17, 2012 12:18 am  
Title: Re: Do the Three Realms Really Exist?  
Content:  
Thanks Mike!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Mar 17, 2012 9:20 am  
Title: Re: freedom from death  
Content:  
Far more accurate in meaning than "the Unborn," "the Deathless," and so on.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Mar 18, 2012 4:04 am  
Title: Re: The Buddha's Challenge in Teaching the Dhamma  
Content:  
I get your point, but insofar as understanding and interpretation lead to right view, they are also dhamma challenges. Practice becomes much more straightforward when the practitioner understands the elements of Theravāda theory which inform ethical conduct, meditation, and discernment.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 5:10 am  
Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)  
Content:  
C'mon Kevin, you're a pretty intelligent guy, you can do better than this. This type of essentialist

language is useless.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 5:25 am

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

You're missing the point. Nibbāna is the estinguishment of fetters pertaining to each noble path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 5:31 am

Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?

Content:

FTR the noble path and fruition attainments occur with both concomitant perception and feeling.

Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha:

1. The First Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
2. The Second Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
3. The Third Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
4. The Fourth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness,
5. The Fifth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

These are the five types of Sotāpatti Path-consciousness.

So are the Sakadāgāmī Path-consciousness, Anāgāmī Path-consciousness, and Arahatta Path-consciousness, making exactly twenty classes of consciousness. Similarly there are twenty classes of Fruit-consciousness. Thus there are forty types of supra mundane consciousness.

Also, in keeping with the Kathāvatthu, the Visuddhimagga maintains that the cessation of apperception and feeling, which is also called the cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti) is neither supramundane nor not-conditioned (asaṅkhata). Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 5:48 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

As already indicated, "reincarnation" is not an accurate term in a Buddhist context. But to answer your question, if you don't believe in the post-mortem continuum of saṃsāric becoming, then there is no reason whatsoever to want to realize nibbāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 9:55 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

If someone has a sincere interest in Buddhism then I think they should be willing to keep an open mind on the question of rebirth, and at least accept that this is a significant teaching of the Buddhadhamma, even while they remain agnostic themselves.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 11:38 am

Title: Re: Lay Buddhists and the end of sexual intercourse?

Content:

I see no good reason to doubt it. The ending of the mental fermentations would entail that the arahant no longer experiences sensual desire. But there's only one way to know for sure: realize the arahant fruition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 1:07 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Fortunately, Theravādins who have gone for refuge in the three jewels have a number of reliable sources for ascertaining valid knowledge:

1. the Pāli Tipiṭaka;
2. the written & verbal testimony of noble persons;
3. inferential perception;
4. direct perception.

These are four powerful assets when employed in concert.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 2:52 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

The actual task of engaging the path to the point of arahant fruition is probably the rarest thing in this world, especially in this day and age. If one's motivation is just to be happy in this life, there are easier ways to go about it than dedicating every moment to being a celibate Buddhist yogi.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 5:07 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Do you consider a post-mortem continuum to be metaphysical ridiculousness Dave?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 11:32 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

I consider the three jewels to be the only refuge, not the deluded cognitions of unawakened worldlings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 19, 2012 11:37 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Stopping saṃsāric becoming by developing the noble eightfold path is uniquely Buddhist.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 12:15 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

The latter is pointless without the former.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 12:26 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Worldly happiness isn't the point of the noble eightfold path. Moreover, a path without right view isn't the noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 12:55 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Rebirth has nothing to do with atoms going anywhere.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 1:03 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

He also showed that it is. SN 15.3:

"What do you think, monks: Which is greater, the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time — crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing — or the water in the four great oceans?"

"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the tears we have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time — crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing — not the water in the four great oceans."

"Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me."

SN 15.9:

"From an inconstruable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Just as a stick thrown up in the air lands sometimes on its base, sometimes on its side, sometimes on its tip; in the same way, beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, transmigrating & wandering on, sometimes go from this world to another world, sometimes come from another world to this.

"Why is that? From an inconstruable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries — enough to become disenchanted with all fabricated things, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released."

SN 15.13:

"What do you think, monks? Which is greater, the blood you have shed from having your heads cut off while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time, or the water in the four great oceans?"

"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Blessed One, this is the greater: the blood we have shed from having our heads cut off while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time, not the water in the four great oceans."

"Excellent, monks. Excellent. It is excellent that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me."

SN 15.14-19:

"A being who has not been your mother at one time in the past is not easy to find... A being who has not been your father... your brother... your sister... your son... your daughter at one time in the past is not easy to find.

"Why is that? From an inconstruable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries — enough to become disenchanted with all fabricated things, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 1:35 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Of course the Buddha is teaching in these discourses. SN 15.10:

The heap of bones one person leaves behind

With the passing of a single aeon

Would form a heap as high as a mountain:

So said the Great Sage.

This is declared to be as massive

As the tall Vepulla Mountain

Standing north of Vulture's Peak

In the Magadhan mountain range.

But when one sees with correct wisdom

The truths of the noble ones—

Suffering and its origin,

The overcoming of suffering,

And the Noble Eightfold Path

That leads to suffering's appeasement—

Then that person, having wandered on

For seven more times at most,

Makes an end to suffering

By destroying all the fetters.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 3:24 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Oh for goodness sake.... Read the suttas in that samyutta. E.g. SN 15.13:

"The blood you have shed when, being cows, you had your cow-heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"The blood you have shed when, being water buffaloes, you had your water buffalo-heads cut off... when, being rams, you had your ram-heads cut off... when, being goats, you had your goat-heads cut off... when, being deer, you had your deer-heads cut off... when, being chickens, you had your chicken-heads cut off... when, being pigs, you had your pig-heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

"The blood you have shed when, arrested as thieves plundering villages, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as highway thieves, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as adulterers, you had your heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 3:51 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:



No, the point is that there is no dhamma teaching which denies the validity of rebirth. In fact, nowhere in the Vinayapiṭaka, the Suttapiṭaka, the Abhidhammapiṭaka, the Aṭṭhakathā, or the Tīkā is rebirth ever questioned. This notion of questioning rebirth, setting aside the teachings on rebirth, or denying that the Buddha taught rebirth is entirely a modern phenomenon occurring due to the influence of materialist views. This entire phenomenon is a dodgy enterprise thick with the stench of ego-cherishing -- a narcissistic urge to remake the Buddha in one's own image.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 4:31 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Again, if a person doesn't believe in the post-mortem continuum of saṃsāric becoming, then there is no reason whatsoever to want to realize nibbāna. The entire purpose of the noble eightfold path is to realize nibbāna, end the mental outflows, and be released from saṃsāric becoming. Any thesis positing an ulterior purpose is absurd on the face of it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 4:44 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Also, I suggest that you'd do well to read what's been said in this thread more carefully.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 5:28 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

But let there be no mistake about it, denying rebirth is indeed a wrong view. MN 117:  
And what is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no brahmans or contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.' This is wrong view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 5:38 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Sorry, but modern science does not and cannot refute rebirth. Empirical science has nothing meaningful to say on the subject.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 5:52 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Again, you're missing the point: There is no possibility of practicing the noble eightfold path with wrong view, i.e. denying rebirth. It isn't possible. There's no noble path without right view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 6:05 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Again, it's utterly impossible to engage in the noble eightfold path while holding a wrong view. This means that it's utterly impossible to attain the path of stream-entry if one denies rebirth. It's utterly impossible to attain the fruition of stream-entry if one denies rebirth. The same goes for the higher paths and fruitions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 6:18 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

One of the purposes of right view with mental outflows is to ensure that one doesn't dismiss the teachings on kamma and engage in unskillful conduct that would result in birth in the lower realms.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 6:27 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Without right view one is, at best, an ethical person who meditates. This isn't a bad thing, but there's nothing specifically Buddhist about being an ethical person who meditates.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 6:28 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

This doesn't negate the right view taught in MN 117.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 6:49 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Ven. Bodhi, A Look at the Kalama Sutta:

[T]he discourse to the Kalamas offers an acid test for gaining confidence in the Dhamma as a viable doctrine of deliverance. We begin with an immediately verifiable teaching whose validity can be attested by anyone with the moral integrity to follow it through to its conclusions, namely, that the defilements cause harm and suffering both personal and social, that their removal brings peace and happiness, and that the practices taught by the Buddha are effective means for achieving their removal. By putting this teaching to a personal test, with only a provisional trust in the Buddha as one's collateral, one eventually arrives at a firmer, experientially grounded confidence in the liberating and purifying power of the Dhamma. This increased confidence in the teaching brings along a deepened faith in the Buddha as teacher, and thus disposes one to accept on trust those principles he enunciates that are relevant to the quest for awakening, even when they lie beyond one's own capacity for verification. This, in fact, marks the acquisition of right view, in its preliminary role as the forerunner of the entire Noble Eightfold Path.

Partly in reaction to dogmatic religion, partly in subservience to the reigning paradigm of objective scientific knowledge, it has become fashionable to hold, by appeal to the Kalama Sutta, that the Buddha's teaching dispenses with faith and formulated doctrine and asks us to accept only what we can personally verify. This interpretation of the sutta, however, forgets that the advice the Buddha gave the Kalamas was contingent upon the understanding that they were not yet prepared to place faith in him and his doctrine; it also forgets that the sutta omits, for that very reason, all mention of right view and of the entire perspective that opens up when right view is acquired. It offers instead the most reasonable counsel on wholesome living possible when the issue of ultimate beliefs has been put into brackets.

What can be justly maintained is that those aspects of the Buddha's teaching that come within the purview of our ordinary experience can be personally confirmed within experience, and that this confirmation provides a sound basis for placing faith in those aspects of the teaching that necessarily transcend ordinary experience.

I understand that it isn't easy for some people to accept the deeper aspects of the Buddhadhamma which aren't easily verifiable via ordinary cognitions. But there's nothing ordinary about entering the stream and aligning all of the path factors of the noble eightfold path. To do so is both extraordinary and supramundane.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:46 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Rebirth is an aspect of DO as well. And FTR Lee, I'm hardly a "rebirth proselytizer" (I saw the other paragraph before you edited it out ). I generally avoid rebirth debates; my own opinion on the subject is moderate. I accept that it is a significant aspect of the received tradition, including the Suttapiṭaka. And this is a Theravāda discussion forum, the Buddhadhamma is more important than my opinions or your opinions or anyone else's opinions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:47 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:08 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

If you think that it's beneficial to practice an eightfold path with wrong view then go right ahead. MN 60:

Because there actually is the next world, the view of one who thinks, 'There is no next world' is his wrong view. Because there actually is the next world, when he is resolved that 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong resolve. Because there actually is the next world, when he speaks the statement, 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong speech. Because there actually is the next world, when he says that 'There is no next world,' he makes himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world. Because there actually is the next world, when he persuades another that 'There is no next world,' that is persuasion in what is not true Dhamma. And in that persuasion in what is not true Dhamma, he exalts himself and disparages others. Whatever good habituation he previously had is abandoned, while bad habituation is manifested. And this wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, opposition to the arahants, persuasion in what is not true Dhamma, exaltation of self, & disparagement of others: These many evil, unskillful activities come into play, in dependence on wrong view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:33 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

But that isn't what MN 60 is saying.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:35 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

As I already tried to indicate, it doesn't matter what I believe. I accept that rebirth is a significant aspect of the received tradition, including the Suttapiṭaka. And this is a Theravāda discussion forum, the Buddhaddhamma is more important than my opinions or your opinions or anyone else's opinions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 10:41 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

You're again misconstruing what I'm trying to indicate. As far as I'm concerned you're completely free to believe whatever you want to believe or remain agnostic or disbelieve. I've already explicitly said this now two or three times on this thread.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:12 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

I think a more useful line of questioning would be: Am I willing to engage aspects of the dhamma that are challenging, or do I habitually gravitate only towards teachings that are within my comfort zone?

Personally, I think it's a good idea to really use the dhamma, which includes reflecting on all aspects of the dhamma including those aspects which don't lend themselves to easy answers. The sources that I rely on include (i) the Pāli Tipiṭaka, (ii) the written & verbal testimony of noble persons, (iii) inferential perception, (iv) direct perception.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:21 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Your lack of understanding what I've been saying doesn't entail any contradictions on my part.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:23 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Yes, of course.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:35 pm

Title: Re: Abhidhamma amata

Content:

FYI, the Abhidhammapiṭaka generally uses the term asaṅkhatā dhātu, and defines this term exactly as nibbāna and asaṅkhata are defined in the suttas. For example, the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga 184: What, there, is the not-fabricated component (asaṅkhatā dhātu)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-fabricated component.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:42 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Nibbāna as taught in the Pāli dhammavinaya is only meaningful in the context of the cessation of becoming (bhavanirodho nibbāna).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 20, 2012 11:52 pm

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 3:43 am

Title: Re: Abhidhamma amata

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 3:52 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Yes, this is the gist of AN 3.65 and MN 60, primarily for people who still haven't gone for refuge in the three jewels.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 8:29 am

Title: Re: can i achieve nirvana when i don't believe in Reincarnation

Content:

Yes, the relevant sections of MN 60 Apanṇaka Sutta: A Safe Bet are quite remarkable, offering a clear step-by-step way forward for people who are not yet comfortable with accepting the whole of the dhammavinaya, especially those aspects of right view which are not easily verifiable via ordinary cognitions. This type of reflection can also help to build confidence in ascertaining valid knowledge of dhamma through inference.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 10:04 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Here's a critique of Ven. Ṭhānissaro's The Truth of Rebirth by Mark Knickelbine:

"The Truth of Rebirth" : A Review, Part I

"The Truth of Rebirth": A Review, Part 2

"The Truth of Rebirth" : A Review, Part 3

Without giving a detailed critique of Knickelbine's review, I'll just say that I found his criticisms weak primarily due to the weakness of the "secular" hermeneutic founded on the premise that the historical Buddha was either an agnostic or materialist, and that all of the teachings on rebirth found in the Pāli canon are either (i) based on a strategy for teaching morality to people who weren't capable of understanding Gotama's true dhamma, or (ii) were never intended to be interpreted literally, or (iii) were composed by deluded Indians in the centuries after the Buddha's death who weren't capable of accurately retaining and transmitting Gotama's true dhamma.

Unfortunately, this premise is entirely speculative. The methodology of textual criticism is not able and will never be able to demonstrate what the historical Buddha actually taught. This is why a necessary distinction needs to be made between Original Buddhism and Early Buddhism. Original Buddhism refers to the actual oral teachings of the historical Gotama and his immediate disciples. Early Buddhism refers to the early formative pre-sectarian period of Indian Buddhism and the extant textual documents which claim to be records of the Buddha's teachings as remembered by his immediate disciples after his death.

And while we can infer some significant information about the early pre-sectarian period of Indian Buddhism with the help of text-critical analysis of the extant discourses, we will never be able to prove with any degree of certainty which of these doctrines and training rules actually originated with the Buddha himself. What is clearly evident, however, is that teachings pertaining to rebirth, higher and lower realms, and supernormal knowledges are found throughout the discourses and are thoroughly integrated into the thought-world of Early Buddhism. And prior to the modern age, informed as it is by empirical science and a materialist worldview, these teachings on rebirth, etc., were never questioned, denied, or dismissed by any Buddhist school or commentator.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 5:10 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Okay then, let's start here: What precisely is inaccurate about the traditional view of the Buddha's teachings on rebirth?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 7:51 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Let's take a look at some of your claims. In your review you juxtapose what you call a "metaphysical Gotama" against a "pragmatic, phenomenalist Gotama." I assume that you're not suggesting that the Buddha suffered from a dissociative identity disorder. Yet you opine that the teachings of these two personalities are in conflict, indicating what you see as a "dramatic discrepancy" within the canonical discourses. You suggest that we should read the teachings of the former Gotama regarding past and future lives as merely comprising "metaphorical poetry." Is this not an assertion that either (i) the teachings of the "metaphysical Gotama" are based on an intentional strategy for teaching morality to people who weren't capable of understanding Gotama's true dhamma, or (ii) these teachings were never intended to be interpreted literally, or (iii) they were composed and inserted into the canon by devotees who were incapable of accurately retaining and transmitting Gotama's true dhamma?

And again, in Authenticity, Anxiety, and the Revision of the Pali Canon you see more conflict and discord. You propose that "significant portions of the Samyutta Nikaya appear to be propaganda, designed either to denigrate the leader of one faction or reinforce the authority of another." Is this not another charge that significant portions of this Nikāya were composed and inserted into the canon by deluded devotees who were more concerned with (and consumed by) unskillful worldly dhammas than with accurately retaining and transmitting Gotama's true dhamma?

And in The Goal of Practice you suggest that there is evidence throughout the canon of attempts to "reconcile Buddhist thought with Vedic soteriology." That is, the traditional formulation of the four noble truths wherein the noble eightfold path leads to the fruition of nibbāna is nothing short of "a metaphysical claim, one that tends to tame the subversive nature of Gotama's teachings and bring them back in line with the mainstream Vedantic doctrine that prevailed in the society of northern India in Gotama's era." Is this not another assertion that at some point after the Buddha's death the dhamma was reworked by devotees who were incapable of accurately retaining and transmitting Gotama's true dhamma?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 8:03 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Yes, yes, according to Knickelbine, Secular Buddhism exists, in part, because "the metaphysics of ancient India cannot be embraced by an educated, intellectually honest person today."

But back to the question: How precisely do the Buddhist teachings on rebirth violate common sense, scientific knowledge, and the core principles of anatta and conditioned arising? What precisely is inaccurate about the traditional view of the Buddha's teachings on rebirth?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 8:25 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

As you probably know, I don't dispute that there was expansion and redaction of the canon. But the claims of Knickelbine and Batchelor, et al, go much further than this. Where I see a canon that displays a remarkably high degree of internal consistency and integrated harmony -- a dhamma that is just as relevant today as it was 2000+ years ago -- Knickelbine sees dramatic doctrinal discrepancies and evidence of conflict and discord inserted by devotees who couldn't maintain an accurate transmission uncontaminated by worldly dhammas. This seems to me to be a highly cynical reading of the texts and amounts to belittling the entire received tradition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 8:30 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Nothing's shocking. But I'd suggest that you're misunderstanding Ṭhānissaro.



Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Mar 21, 2012 8:33 pm  
Title: Re: the great rebirth debate  
Content:  
Yes, of course.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 12:00 am  
Title: Re: the great rebirth debate  
Content:  
Dhamma? Maybe. But hardly the Buddhaddhamma. I can understand why someone would want to appropriate a few of the ethical and meditative aspects of Buddhism, even though they dismiss kamma, as well as nibbāna as the fruition of the noble eightfold path, and the entire Pāli tradition. But what I fail to understand is why, when they clearly aren't interested in sincerely going for refuge in the three jewels, would they nevertheless want to identify themselves as Buddhist? The views of the "Secular Buddhists" that I've read are far more compatible with Cārvāka philosophy than with any Buddhist tradition that's ever existed.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 5:23 am  
Title: Re: the great rebirth debate  
Content:  
Sure, and no derision was intended or stated. Refuge involves more than going for refuge in part of a buddha and a little bit of dhamma, regardless of one's abilities, living situation, and practice commitments. In for a penny, in for a pound.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 5:39 am  
Title: Re: the great rebirth debate  
Content:  
On a practical, day to day level of Buddhist interactions, I wonder how the time-honored, indispensable relationship between the laity and the ordained sangha fits with this idea of secularism?

This is one of the most important aspects of contemporary Theravāda Buddhism: That people can still ordain and devote their entire life to the three jewels, and know that they will be supported by the lay community and have their material needs of food, clothing, and shelter met.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 6:44 am

Title: Re: Andrew Olendzki on Protestant Buddhism

Content:

Cittaviveka (Chithurst Buddhist Monastery, England). The bottom photo is Ven. Gavesako.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 7:09 am

Title: Re: Human re-births

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 7:20 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Yes, this situation can be improved, but there would be no ordained sangha without the support of the laity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 1:48 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Sounds like a slogan for New Atheism....

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 2:56 pm

Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?

Content:

Here the term is "citta" but the meaning is the same as above. Each path consciousness and fruition consciousness are mental consciousnesses (manoviññāṇa). These path and fruition consciousnesses are considered supramundane.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 3:03 pm

Title: Re: Question on full awakening within seven births

Content:

It means that full awakening will occur in seven births or less. So yes, it could occur in one, two, three, etc., births, depending on the individual.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 4:51 pm

Title: Re: Demarkation Dispute

Content:

The name is already taken. Tibetan dzogchen is called the path of self-liberation (rang grol lam).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 22, 2012 11:20 pm

Title: Re: Demarkation Dispute

Content:

T'was meant as a joke....

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 12:06 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

The setting aside of the ten undeclared questions doesn't pertain to the issue of the next world.

Involvement with the former is a fetter of views, while the latter is a right view (sammādiṭṭhi) and a true dhamma (saddhamma), because there actually is a next world and this can be known by arahants with the appropriate higher knowledges. MN 60 Aparaṇṇaka Sutta:

Because there actually is the next world, the view of one who thinks, 'There is a next world' is his right view. Because there actually is the next world, when he is resolved that 'There is a next world,' that is his right resolve. Because there actually is the next world, when he speaks the statement, 'There is a next world,' that is his right speech. Because there actually is the next world, when he is says that 'There is a next world,' he doesn't make himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world. Because there actually is the next world, when he persuades another that 'There is a next world,' that is persuasion in what is true Dhamma. And in that persuasion in what is true Dhamma, he doesn't exalt himself or disparage others. Whatever bad habituation he previously had is abandoned, while good habituation is manifested. And this right view, right resolve, right speech, non-opposition to the arahants, persuasion in what is true Dhamma, non-exaltation of self, & non-disparagement of others: These many skillful activities come into play, in dependence on right view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 1:52 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

You're misunderstanding the passage in question. The Buddha does not deny rebirth.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 3:51 am

Title: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The view of atheistic nihilism (natthika-diṭṭhi) is an unskillful view to maintain and express. Not only is it a denial of the right view of affirmation (atthika-diṭṭhi) which affirms rebirth and the next world, it is also an untrue dhamma (asaddhamma) that contradicts the arahants who know that there is a next world. The wrong view of nihilism is described in DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta:

The person is composed of the four great elements; when he dies, earth returns and goes back to the element of earth, water returns and goes back to the element of water, fire returns and goes back to the element of fire, wind returns and goes back to the element of wind, while the senses disappear into space.... Fools and wise alike are destroyed and perish at the breaking up of the body, they do not exist after death.

The suttas inform us that this nihilistic wrong view leads to wrong intention, wrong speech, and opposition to noble ones. It can also result in trying to convince others to accept this false dhamma. Moreover, maintaining the view of atheistic nihilism is considered to be a type of clinging. Paul Fuller, The Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism:

Indeed the view of nihilism is sometimes used to explain attachment. For example, the Vibhaṅga considers four attachments (upādānas): 'attachment to sensuality', 'attachment to view', 'attachment to precepts and vows' and 'attachment to the theory of self' (kāmaupādānaṃ, diṭṭhupādānaṃ, sīlabbatupādānaṃ, attavādupādānaṃ). The attachment of wrong view is explained, first, as the view of nihilism, then it is stated that all wrong views constitute attachment to view. All wrong views are a form of greed and attachment.

Some food for thought....

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:12 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Woops! Accidentally deleted this reply when editing.....

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:16 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

You've never heard of anyone who believes in this view:

The person is composed of the four great elements; when he dies, earth returns and goes back to the element of earth, water returns and goes back to the element of water, fire returns and goes back to the element of fire, wind returns and goes back to the element of wind, while the senses disappear into space.... Fools and wise alike are destroyed and perish at the breaking up of the body, they do not exist after death.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:31 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

I included the term atheism for a reason. In a contemporary context, it is the mainstream and widespread version of annihilationism. And while the term annihilationism may seem abstract or even quaint and archaic, atheism is well known.

One of the reasons that atheism is an unskillful view to maintain and express, is that it is divisive and dismissive of other religious views. Moreover, people who are members of other religions have very low opinions of atheists. For example, a University of British Columbia study found that religious people distrust atheists as much as rapists. Buddhism is not atheistic, and shouldn't be associated with atheism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:02 am

Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?

Content:

In unconscious states such as a faint or deep sleep there is no active consciousness occurring.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:10 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

This quote is not advocating natthika-diṭṭhi.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:53 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It pertains to understanding the four noble truths.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:59 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Nonsense. Buddhism is not atheism, and shouldn't be associated with atheism. Rowe, William L.

"Atheism". In Edward Craig. Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

[A]n atheist, in the broader sense of the term, is someone who disbelieves in every form of deity, not just the God of traditional Western theology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:07 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Here is a good example of the type of atheistic extremism that is being touted by many these days:

Equating religion with terrorism is fallacious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:40 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The view isn't limited to a denial of rebirth. As already indicated, it is inclusive of a denial of any type of gods, higher and lower realms, and entails a denial of post-mortem existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:45 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

An arahant isn't an atheist, nihilist or materialist. S/he isn't identified with the body in any way. Also, any view pertaining to the post-mortem existence or non-existence of an arahant is a fetter of view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:53 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Atheism is a parasite trying to infect the Pāli dhamma and Theravāda Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:57 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The suttas are consistent in calling the above mentioned nihilist view a wrong view and untrue dhamma (asaddhamma). MN 60 Apaṇṇaka Sutta:

Now, householders, of those contemplatives & brahmins who hold this doctrine, hold this view — 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no brahmins or contemplatives who, faring rightly and practicing rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves' — it can be expected that, shunning these three skillful activities — good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, good mental conduct — they will adopt & practice these three unskillful activities: bad bodily conduct, bad verbal conduct, bad mental conduct. Why is that? Because those venerable contemplatives & brahmins do not see, in unskillful activities, the drawbacks, the degradation, and the defilement; nor in skillful activities the rewards of renunciation, resembling cleansing.

Because there actually is the next world, the view of one who thinks, 'There is no next world' is his wrong view. Because there actually is the next world, when he is resolved that 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong resolve. Because there actually is the next world, when he speaks the statement, 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong speech. Because there actually is the next world, when he says that 'There is no next world,' he makes himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world. Because there actually is the next world, when he persuades another that 'There is no next world,' that is persuasion in what is not true Dhamma. And in that persuasion in what is not true Dhamma, he exalts himself and disparages others. Whatever good habituation he previously had is abandoned, while bad habituation is manifested. And this wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, opposition to the arahants, persuasion in what is not true Dhamma, exaltation of self, & disparagement of others: These many evil, unskillful activities come into play, in dependence on wrong view.

And in regarding the opposite view as right view and true dhamma (saddhamma):

Now, householders, of those contemplatives & brahmins who hold this doctrine, hold this view — 'There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are brahmins & contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves' — it can be expected that, shunning these three unskillful activities — bad bodily conduct, bad verbal conduct, bad mental conduct — they will adopt & practice these three skillful activities: good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, good mental conduct. Why is that? Because those venerable contemplatives & brahmins see in unskillful activities the drawbacks, the degradation, and the defilement; and in skillful activities the rewards of renunciation, resembling cleansing.

Because there actually is the next world, the view of one who thinks, 'There is a next world' is his right view. Because there actually is the next world, when he is resolved that 'There is a next world,' that is his right resolve. Because there actually is the next world, when he speaks the statement, 'There is a next world,' that is his right speech. Because there actually is the next world, when he says that 'There is a next world,' he doesn't make himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world. Because there actually is the next world, when he persuades another that 'There is a next world,' that is persuasion in what is true Dhamma. And in that persuasion in what is true Dhamma, he doesn't exalt himself or disparage others. Whatever bad habituation he previously had is abandoned, while good habituation is manifested. And this right view, right resolve, right speech, non-opposition to the arahants, persuasion in what is true Dhamma, non-exaltation of self, & non-disparagement of others: These many skillful activities come into play, in dependence on right view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 10:10 am

Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?

Content:

I can't recall offhand what the Theravāda commentaries have to say on this (and I can't think of where to look in the commentaries for a discussion of it). Of the top of my head I would guess that the underlying continuum (bhavanga-sota & bhavanga-citta) continues during deep, dreamless sleep, and that mental consciousness (manoviññāṇa) occurs when dreaming. However, there may be a more precise description of the mental processes during the dream state.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 10:15 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, well, discussion of an arahant's death doesn't pertain to the topic at hand. The views under discussion in this topic pertain the birth and death of non-arahants.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 11:59 am

Title: Re: Batchelor's "Confessions of a Buddhist Atheist"

Content:

Maybe Ven. Huifeng has some time these days to comment upon these differences further?....

(There are a number of other informative replies in this thread as well.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 12:08 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 1:15 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Sorry, my mistake.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 1:33 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Of course it isn't justified, that's not the point. The point is that perceptions matter when dealing with people of other religious and cultural traditions. Hence the need for skillfulness. There are a number of rules in the Vinaya which were created to placate public criticisms of monastics contravening local social and cultural standards.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 1:51 pm



Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, well, pseudo-Buddhist anti-intellectualism is unskillful as well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 4:55 pm

Title: Re: Theism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

As a Buddhist, Dharmakīrti was neither an atheist nor a materialist.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 5:02 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, of course. I'm not posting on an Atheist discussion forum, nor do I have any interest in doing so. This is a Theravāda Buddhism discussion forum. As such, discussion of what is right view and true dhamma and what is wrong view and false dhamma is both appropriate and relevant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 6:35 pm

Title: Re: Theism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, of course. That doesn't make him an atheist.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 6:50 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

To be more clear: Atheism (in the broad sense of the term as already stated), moral nihilism, materialism, physicalism, and so on, are each an unskillful false dhamma. None of them are compatible with the Buddhaddhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:36 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:38 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
This is a discussion of view, not a judgement of people.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:40 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
This is a nonstarter. Pointing out that atheism is incompatible with Buddhism doesn't entail equating Buddhism with any form of theism.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:45 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
The term was chosen for a reason. Buddhism is not compatible with atheism.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 7:51 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
Again, pointing out that atheism is incompatible with Buddhism doesn't entail equating Buddhism with any form of theism.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:17 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
Show me a definition of atheism that affirms the existence of gods and higher realms?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:36 pm  
Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma  
Content:  
As already shown, this is an overly restrictive definition of the term.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:49 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Again, the Buddha affirmed the existence of gods and higher realms. He was the teacher of gods and men. The Pāli canon contains many assertions regarding the existence of gods, higher realms, past lives, and rebirth in the next world. Contrary to the opinion of Stephen Batchelor, et al, the Buddha was neither an atheist, an apatheist, nor an agnostic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 8:55 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It most certainly is.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:12 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Nonsense. Nowhere have I lumped Buddhism in with theism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:13 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Actually, it highlights a couple of points pertaining to the contemporary culture of real-world Western pop Buddhism, especially the type of pop Buddhism with leanings towards an inaccurate reading of the Pāli suttas, such as what is being peddled by Stephen Batchelor. As already mentioned:

(i) The term "Buddhist Atheism" is a contradiction in terms. The Buddha affirmed the existence of gods and higher realms. He was the teacher of gods and men. The Pāli canon contains many assertions regarding the existence of gods, higher realms, past lives, and rebirth in the next world.

(ii) Contrary to the opinion of Stephen Batchelor, et al, the Buddha was neither an atheist, an apatheist, nor an agnostic.

Of course, the response on this forum was predictable.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:19 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

What does mean? Are you tacitly implying that he didn't?

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 9:52 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Agreement and consensus isn't required or even desired.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 23, 2012 10:00 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Theism (including polytheism) generally includes the worship and propitiation of one or more gods. This is not a part of the Pāli dhamma or Theravāda Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 4:34 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

This has already been explained to you multiple times.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 6:00 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Again, neither theism nor atheism is an accurate classification of Buddhism. Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy:

In modern Indian languages, "āstika" and "nāstika" generally mean "theist" and "atheist", respectively. But in Sanskrit philosophical literature, "āstika" means "one who believes in the authority of the Vedas" or "one who believes in life after death". ("nāstika" means the opposite of these).... In the second sense, even the Jaina and Buddha schools are "āstika", as they believe in life after death. The six orthodox schools are "āstika", and the Cārvāka is "nāstika" in both the senses.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 11:16 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

More relevant is the rebirth denial of atheists who claim to be "Buddhists." Stephen Batchelor, No Future in a Parrot's Egg:

I reject karma and rebirth not only because I find them unintelligible, but because I believe they obscure and distort what the Buddha was trying to say.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 11:21 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Nāstika in this context means not believing in the authority of the Vedas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 11:50 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Sure. Theravādins who have gone for refuge in the three jewels have a number of reliable sources for ascertaining valid knowledge:

1. the Pāli Tipiṭaka
2. the written & verbal testimony of noble persons
3. inferential perception
4. direct perception

By using these reliable sources we can come to accept the validity of Buddhist teachings which are central to the Buddha's awakening and the knowledge of other awakened arahants as well, even though we don't have direct perception of these knowledges ourselves:

1. the content of the Buddha's awakening
2. the first two of the three higher knowledges
3. the first five of the six higher gnoses

Moreover, by correctly engaging in the noble eightfold path it is possible to personally realize these higher knowledges. But first, one has to abandon the limitations of accepting the false dhammas of atheistic and materialistic views.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 1:23 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It doesn't matter what I believe. However, I can assure you that I haven't developed samādhī to the rarefied level of jhāna mastery, which, of course, is necessary to induce iddhis. But at any rate, with proper context the activity that this passage is describing might not be quite as far out as it may seem to someone's modernist, materialist influenced sensibilities. Sue Hamilton, Identity and Experience: The Construction of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism:

Of all of these supernormal abilities, only one, the creation of the body, is specifically stated to be manomaya [mind-made]. But just as the mind-made body required that the bhikkhu, having achieved the stated meditative level, "apply and bend-down his mind" in order to create such a body, so in the description of every single one of the other abilities, it clearly states that first the bhikkhu has to apply and bend-down his mind. The difference seems to be that the body is created by the mind whereas the other supernormal abilities are activities of the mind: in the former case, the mind produces something; in the latter case the mind does something.

Still remarkable, yes. But not impossible.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 2:08 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Agreed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 2:17 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It doesn't matter what I believe.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 2:21 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Dmytro!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 3:48 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Agreed. As I mentioned the other day on another thread, if someone has a sincere interest in Buddhism then I think they should be willing to keep an open mind on the question of rebirth, and at least accept that this is a significant teaching of the Buddhadhamma, even while they remain agnostic themselves.

On a related note, one of the trends that I've noticed over the years is that there is a certain significant subset of Westerners who are drawn to the Pāli dhamma and Theravāda who are more comfortable with the rational, analytical, and objective perspective than with the intuitive, holistic, subjective perspective. And it's sometimes the case that people who highly value rationalism are suspicious of the more visionary, subjective perspective. But I think both aspects are equally valuable and it's worthwhile -- even necessary -- to work towards integrating both. Awakening requires developing the optimal mental qualities for practice, both cognitive and affective, the rational and the visionary.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Atheism isn't limited to rejection of a creator God or monotheistic deity, and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 6:56 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Well, there are a few related issues. The wrong view already quoted earlier in this thread includes atheism, materialism, and moral nihilism. Regarding atheism, Arvind Sharma, Buddhism and Atheism: Because it posits the existence of devas, original Buddhism cannot be considered an atheistic religion in the broad sense.

Alfred Bloom, Buddhism and Atheism:

Buddhism is not, therefore, atheistic in the modern understanding which developed in the West as a reaction to theistic Christianity.

Michael Martin, Atheism and Religion:

To the extent then that atheism consists in the denial of the existence of god or gods Buddhism is not technically atheistic, since what it really questions is not the existence but the significance of god or gods.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 7:34 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, well, I can assure you that this subject forces me to step outside of my comfort zone. It's an aspect of dhamma that I have always been quite happy to avoid discussing. But the dhammavinaya is much more than a few modern materialist and secular trends.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 24, 2012 9:47 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Caveat:

Well, again Mike, I specifically chose this term for a reason. Part of the issue is this: If one is highly confident that they will attain the arahant path in this life, or, if one is highly confident that there is nothing after this life and death is the end (which, of course, means parinibbāna for everyone), then the issue of rebirth, higher and lower realms, etc., is not a significant aspect of the dhamma or right view.

But if one isn't convinced of the certainty of either of these two endings, then, as you know, Theravāda Buddhism offers a complete worldview and practice, including generating merit (puñña), and practicing the perfections (pāramī), and so on, in order to attain a good rebirth as a human or

god. And far from being an inferior, conciliatory version of the Buddhadhamma, it is a meaningful and valid right view which can inform all aspects of practice and life. This Theravāda Buddhist worldview is far removed from the mainstream atheism being touted by popular authors such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and even Stephen Batchelor and other Secular Buddhism folks.

This Theravāda Buddhism is most fully expressed in texts such as the Apadāna, Buddhavaṃsa, Cariyāpiṭaka, and the Vimānavatthu -- where deities describe their former meritorious deeds that resulted in their rebirth as deities in heavenly mansions. Again, this worldview isn't compatible with mainstream atheism, which dismisses all of this. Indeed, even some of the "sutta-only" Buddhists dismiss these teachings as "late additions to the canon" and therefore spurious or illegitimate. Well, I disagree.

Of course, numerous Buddhist authors -- both academics and teachers -- consider Buddhism to be atheistic in the narrow sense of the word, i.e. denying a Prime Mover creator God. But in the real-world this restrictive sense of the term "atheism" has been eclipsed by the inclusion of a myopic belief in scientific materialism, which is incompatible with Buddhist rebirth, and related teachings. Therefore, this pesky little word has significant connotations that are contrary to 2500 years of Pāli dhammavinaya and Theravāda Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 9:22 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Indeed. Thank you Ven. Pesala. It seems that other related consequences can be dismissing the validity of merit (puñña), not participating in Uposatha days, and the kind of moral relativism which fails to appreciate the purpose and value of monastic ordination.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 12:11 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

If you read the Khuddakanikāya Theragāthā & Therīgāthā you'll notice that many of the arahant monks and nuns had attained either the triple knowledge (tevijjā) or the six higher gnoses (chaḷabhiññā). And SN 8.7 Pavāraṇā Sutta informs us that of 500 arahants present on that occasion, 60 had triple knowledge, 60 had the six higher gnoses, 60 were liberated both ways (ubhatobhāgavimuttā, meaning jhānas & formless attainments), and the rest were liberated through discernment (paññāvimuttā). Therefore, there were many arahants who had direct knowledge of past lives and the passing away and reappearance of beings. These knowledges are fruits of the contemplative life. This is why MN 60 Aparaṇaka Sutta states that when a person says that "There is no next world," he makes himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 4:05 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma



Content:

There are gods and goddesses who have attained the noble path and are noble ones. Vimānavatthu 1.16:

Thus I am a goddess, knowing the undying, a disciple of the Tathagata, the Unrivalled One; a knower of Dhamma established in the first fruit, a stream-enterer. Henceforth there is no bad bourn for me.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 4:42 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Rebirth is quite literal. SN 15.10:

The heap of bones one person leaves behind

With the passing of a single aeon

Would form a heap as high as a mountain:

So said the Great Sage.

This is declared to be as massive

As the tall Vepulla Mountain

Standing north of Vulture's Peak

In the Magadhan mountain range.

SN 15.13:

This is the greater: the blood you have shed from having your heads cut off while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time, not the water in the four great oceans.

The blood you have shed when, being cows, you had your cow-heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

The blood you have shed when, being water buffaloes, you had your water buffalo-heads cut off... when, being rams, you had your ram-heads cut off... when, being goats, you had your goat-heads cut off... when, being deer, you had your deer-heads cut off... when, being chickens, you had your chicken-heads cut off... when, being pigs, you had your pig-heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

The blood you have shed when, arrested as thieves plundering villages, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as highway thieves, you had your heads cut off... when, arrested as adulterers, you had your heads cut off: Long has this been greater than the water in the four great oceans.

Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration. A beginning point is not evident, though beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving are transmigrating & wandering on. Long have you thus experienced stress, experienced pain, experienced loss, swelling the cemeteries — enough to become disenchanted with all fabrications, enough to become dispassionate, enough to be released.

Thag 3.14:

While wandering on I went to hell;

went again & again to the world of the hungry shades;

stayed countless times, long, in the pain of the animal womb;

enjoyed the human state;

went to heaven from time to time;

settled in the elements of form,  
the elements of formlessness,  
neither-perception, perception-less.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 5:16 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

I don't doubt that most of these individuals are decent people. That isn't an issue. I'm highly skeptical of these novel trends to jettison significant portions of the dhamma which aren't reducible to a neo-Lokāyata materialist worldview and epistemology.

In short, there is no Pāli dhamma teaching which denies the validity of rebirth. In fact, nowhere in the Vinayaṭṭakā, the Suttaṭṭakā, the Abhidhammaṭṭakā, the Aṭṭhakathā, or the Tīkā is the validity of rebirth ever set aside as unimportant.

This notion of questioning rebirth, setting aside the teachings on rebirth, or denying that the Buddha taught rebirth is entirely a modern phenomenon occurring due to the influence of materialist views. This entire phenomenon is a dodgy enterprise -- a narcissistic urge to remake the samaṇa Gotama in one's own image.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 5:18 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

If someone accepts the existence of devas and higher realms then they are not atheistic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 5:30 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, and that's all good David. There are people trying to associate Buddhism with the view of atheistic materialism. IMO it's worthwhile acknowledging this trend and voicing and re-affirming the traditional view of the Pāli dhamma and Theravāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

I previously replied to you here. As for why I chose to focus on this particular term, please see this reply.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 6:36 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

You've read Batchelor. While he tries to be careful with his use of language, it's clear that assumptions of atheistic materialism underlies his Confessions and other related writings. For example, in his article Suspending Belief:

The idea that there will be something spiritual or subtle, some sort of consciousness that can escape the collapse of the body and brain, is not very credible in the modern scientific worldview.

And in No Future In A Parrot's Egg:

I reject karma and rebirth not only because I find them unintelligible, but because I believe they obscure and distort what the Buddha was trying to say.

And again:

As for the law of moral causation ('karma'): this is human justice dressed up as cosmic justice and then imputed to the impersonal workings of the natural world.

It's usually explicitly stated corresponding to the idea that "It's okay to be an atheist and a materialist and a Buddhist at the same time." Of course, this claim is a contradiction. If one is a materialist, then insofar as they consider themselves to be a Buddhist, they are a Buddhist who maintains a wrong view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 25, 2012 7:37 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Buddhist ethics entail engaging in actions that are more specific than just being a moral person. The actions motivated by Buddhist ethics include the laity acting in a reciprocal relationship with the monastic sangha. This includes generating merit (puñña) by giving monastics material requisites, and even participating in Uposatha days, and so on. This reciprocity between laity and monastics is essential for the continuity of the dhammavinaya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 26, 2012 6:56 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It's not the dhamma nor the vinaya which needs to change. It's the views of the people who go for refuge in the three jewels which need to change. This is what the path is all about. There is a developmental process. Otherwise, human beings would already be awake and there would be no need for a noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 26, 2012 12:41 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Human knowledge of the natural sciences has developed significantly in the last 400 years. Human knowledge of kamma, rebirth, and the noble eightfold path has not. Moreover, geology and cartography are not relevant disciplinary fields for understanding kamma, the recollection of past lives, the vision of the passing away and reappearance of sentient beings, and the noble eightfold path. Therefore, there is no need for buddhas or arahants to have developed detailed models and maps pertaining to these worldly disciplines.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 26, 2012 8:28 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Food can be brought to the monastery and prepared by a kitchen steward, and so on. This is commonly done and doesn't violate the vinaya, nor does it impede the generation of merit on the part of the lay donors.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 8:59 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Equivocation about the actuality of the next world is a wrong view. DN 1:

Herein, bhikkhus, a certain recluse or a brahmin is dull and stupid. Due to his dullness and stupidity, when he is questioned about this or that point, he resorts to evasive statements and to endless equivocation: 'If you ask me whether there is a world beyond — if I thought there is another world, I would declare that there is. But I do not take it thus, nor do I take it in that way, nor do I take it in some other way. I do not say that it is not, nor do I say that is neither this nor that.'

Similarly, when asked any of the following questions, he resorts to the same evasive statements and to endless equivocation: Is there no world beyond? Is it that there both is and is not a world beyond? Is it that there neither is nor is not a world beyond?

It's impossible to simultaneously hold a wrong view and right view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 12:30 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

There are seven wrong views that are classified as doctrines of annihilationism (ucchedavāda). There are four wrong views that are classified as doctrines of endless equivocation (amarāvikkhepavāda). There is also the wrong view of nihilism (natthika-diṭṭhi), the wrong view of non-doing (akiriya-diṭṭhi), and the wrong view of non-causality (ahetu-diṭṭhi).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 12:46 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

They are not necessarily the same.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 4:33 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

And this is also a wrong view. Again, one cannot attain the path of stream-entry while maintaining a wrong view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 5:05 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The wrong view in question is as follows:

There is no next world,... no spontaneously reborn beings; no brahmans or contemplatives who, faring rightly and practicing rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves. A person is a composite of four primary elements. At death, the earth (in the body) returns to and merges with the (external) earth-substance. The fire returns to and merges with the external fire-substance. The liquid returns to and merges with the external liquid-substance. The wind returns to and merges with the external wind-substance. The sense-faculties scatter into space. Four men, with the bier as the fifth, carry the corpse. Its eulogies are sounded only as far as the charnel ground. The bones turn pigeon-colored. The offerings end in ashes. Generosity is taught by idiots. The words of those who speak of existence after death are false, empty chatter. With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.

MN 60 Apanṇaka Sutta:

Because there actually is the next world, the view of one who thinks, 'There is no next world' is his wrong view. Because there actually is the next world, when he is resolved that 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong resolve. Because there actually is the next world, when he speaks the statement, 'There is no next world,' that is his wrong speech. Because there actually is the next world, when he is says that 'There is no next world,' he makes himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world. Because there actually is the next world, when he persuades another that 'There is no next world,' that is persuasion in what is not true Dhamma.

Again, one cannot attain the noble path of stream-entry while maintaining a wrong view which contradicts the arahants who know the next world.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The Pāli Tipiṭaka is the authority. The ancient Theras are also the authority.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 7:01 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Indeed. MN 58: "In the case of words that the Tathagata knows to be unfactual, untrue, unbeneficial, but endearing & agreeable to others, he does not say them."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 11:02 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

They are sources of refuge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 11:11 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The canon is quite clear that there actually is a next world. I see no good reason for equivocating over this.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 27, 2012 11:43 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

And it is assumptions of materialistic atheism which feed the qualms and doubts found in Batchelor's Confessions of a Buddhist Atheist and other writings. For example, in his article No Future In A Parrot's Egg:

I reject karma and rebirth not only because I find them unintelligible, but because I believe they obscure and distort what the Buddha was trying to say.

And in Suspending Belief:

The idea that there will be something spiritual or subtle, some sort of consciousness that can escape the collapse of the body and brain, is not very credible in the modern scientific worldview.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 12:11 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

The passage from MN 60 Apaṇṇaka Sutta is consistent with the rest of the canon, including the knowledges comprising the Buddha's awakening:

1. the content of the Buddha's awakening
2. the first two of the three higher knowledges
3. the first five of the six higher gnoses

As well as the explicit passages regarding past lives found throughout the Anamataggasaṃyutta. And also the Khuddakanikāya Theragāthā & Therīgāthā where many of the arahant monks and nuns state that they attained either the triple knowledge (tevijjā) or the six higher gnoses (chaḷabhiññā). This is further corroborated by SN 8.7 Pavāraṇā Sutta, which informs us that of 500 arahants present on that occasion, 60 had triple knowledge, 60 had the six higher gnoses, 60 were liberated both ways (ubhatobhāgavimuttā, meaning jhānas & formless attainments), and the rest were liberated through discernment (paññāvimuttā). Therefore, there were many arahants who had direct knowledge of past lives and the passing away and reappearance of beings. DN 2 tells us that these knowledges are fruits of the contemplative life. Thus, the MN 60 statement that a person who says that "There is no next world" thereby makes himself an opponent to those arahants who know the next world is entirely consistent with the rest of the Pāli Tipiṭaka.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 2:15 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Ven. Ṭhānissaro's Introduction pertaining to the absence of reference to the 4NT in this sutta is also relevant to the absence of reference to the triple knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 10:12 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

What I see is yet another novel and unsustainable re-interpretation of the Buddhadhamma on your part. Ven. Bodhi, Dhamma Without Rebirth:

[T]o downplay the doctrine of rebirth and explain the entire import of the Dhamma as the amelioration of mental suffering through enhanced self-awareness is to deprive the Dhamma of those wider perspectives from which it derives its full breadth and profundity. By doing so one seriously risks reducing it in the end to little more than a sophisticated ancient system of humanistic psychotherapy.

Alan Wallace, Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist:

To ignore the most compelling evidence of what the Buddha taught and to replace that by assertions that run counter to such evidence is indefensible. And when those secular, atheistic assertions just happen to correspond to the materialistic assumptions of modernity, it is simply ridiculous to attribute them to the historical Buddha.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 6:25 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Well, I can't speak for Ven. Bodhi or Alan Wallace, but from where I'm sitting it has nothing to do with fear or dogma. It has to do with accurately reading the texts. And in this regard the mainstream Buddhist understanding of the texts isn't mistaken, and therefore, isn't in need of correction.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 6:32 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Text-critical analysis is speculative. The methodology of textual criticism is not able and will never be able to demonstrate what the historical Buddha actually taught.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 7:07 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It cannot deliver certainty about the particulars.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 8:25 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

I haven't seen any credible points raised against the traditional readings in this thread yet. What I see are some tacit epistemological assumptions and qualms rooted in metaphysical naturalism and physicalism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 9:36 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Well, I'm pretty much familiar with most alternate interpretations that have been put forward in the past 100 years, as well as the Indian, Tibetan, and East Asian varieties that have been developed over the past 2000 years. And of all these, I find that the Theravāda tradition has been uniquely able to retain and transmit the Dhamma and Bhikkhu Pāṭimokkha to the modern world. Of course, in the real-world this isn't perfect. But as a lineage it offers a pragmatic working model that I believe is still capable of delivering liberation.



Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 9:41 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Accepting what the texts say on the subject doesn't entail maintaining that "strongly holding rebirth-view is mandatory for progress in the Dhamma." I suggest you're misunderstanding my intentions as well as what I've said.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 9:50 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

This is the traditional understanding: The noble eightfold path arises for the first time at the moment of stream-entry.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 28, 2012 10:34 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, they're also called path attainers (*maggalābhi*). In a couple of commentaries there is also mention of the lesser stream-entrant (*cūlasotāpanna*) who is still on the level of a worldling (*puṭhujjanabhūmi*), in addition to those who are established on the path of stream-entrance (*sotāpattimagga*) and have attained the level of noble ones (*ariyabhūmi*).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 12:04 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

That description could agree with the traditional interpretation, depending on what he means by "stand[ing] on the threshold to stream-entry." Of course, Ṭhānissaro doesn't always go along with the commentarial tradition.

At any rate, the traditional version has it that the noble path moment of stream-entry is supramundane because one penetrates the four noble truths for the first time, and this results in the elimination of the first three fetters. The technical term for this is the "path moment," where, according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, "Right view in the sense of seeing emerges from wrong view..." and so on for the other seven factors of the noble eightfold path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 12:10 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Right. According to the commentarial tradition the "noble right view, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path" occurs when one attains the noble path of stream-entry. This is why it's called noble (ariyā), without effluents (anāsavā), transcendent/supramundane (lokuttarā), and a factor of the path (maggaṅgā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 3:20 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

According to the classification system enumerated in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, etc., any occurrence of a skillful mind (kusala citta) will be associated with right view, but only the path and fruition minds are supramundane (lokuttara) with right view that is a factor of the path (maggaṅga) included in the path (maggapariyāpanna). Thus, while the wording is a bit different, the "right view with effluents" would correspond to any skillful mind of the sensual sphere (kāmvācara), the form sphere (rūpāvacara), or the formless sphere (arūpāvacara), and the "right view without effluents" would correspond to the path and fruition cognitions which penetrate the four noble truths and take cessation as the object-support.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 3:32 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Yes, I've been referring to the noble eightfold path as pertaining to noble persons -- stream-entrants and above. The attainment of stream-entry is also called the level or stage of seeing (dassanabhūmi) and the higher paths are called the stage of cultivation (bhāvanābhūmi).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 12:40 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

It's referring to the supramundane paths, not the mind of an arahant. If the supramundane paths were not without effluents then liberation would not be possible.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 29, 2012 12:57 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

A living arahant who has realized the nibbāna component with fuel remaining (saupādisesa nibbānadhātu) still isn't entirely free from the appropriated aggregates of that life insofar as s/he still has a body. The Nettippakaraṇa:

Herein, the world is, at one time or another, somewhat free from the unsatisfactoriness of pain (dukkhadukkhatā) as well as the unsatisfactoriness of change (vipariṇāmadukkhatā). Why is that?

Because there are those in the world who have little sickness and are long-lived. But only the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu) liberates from the unsatisfactoriness of fabrications (saṅkhāradukkhatā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 30, 2012 11:30 am

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

A puthujjana can be any common worldling, non-Buddhist or Buddhist. And even among Buddhists one can be a blind worldling (andhaputhujjana) who doesn't know much of anything about the dhamma, or a good worldling (kalyāṇaputhujjana) who studies and practices the dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 30, 2012 3:54 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

Indeed. It is explicitly stated as such.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 30, 2012 4:16 pm

Title: Re: Atheism is an Unskillful False Dhamma

Content:

And on a related note, the Pāli Tipiṭaka is a remarkable canon -- from the beginning of the Vinayapiṭaka to the end of the Abhidhammapiṭaka.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 31, 2012 10:32 pm

Title: Re: The thought that stops.....

Content:

Yes, one can either attend to the thought or attend to the volitional intention to think. By attending to the volitional intention, the thought may fall apart (so to speak), because it's deprived of its momentum and fuel.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 31, 2012 10:34 pm

Title: Re: Bhikkhu Bodhi's sutta discourses on video now available

Content:

Good stuff.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 01, 2012 11:22 pm

Title: Re: Are there any consciousness or awareness in Nibbana?

Content:

Not a bad idea either. It's prudent to just study a bit at a time, and try to internalize the meaning in practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 03, 2012 8:51 pm

Title: Re: Parinibbana as a goal?

Content:

Well, it would be a pseudo-parinibbāna. If there's no problem (i.e. post-mortem saṃsāric continuum), then there's no need for a solution (i.e. saupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna component with fuel remaining & anupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna component with no fuel remaining).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 04, 2012 12:25 am

Title: Re: Parinibbana as a goal?

Content:

It's the happiness of knowing that fetters have been terminated and one will never again be born in a realm as a result of those specific fetters and underlying tendencies. For example, the Paṭisambhidāmagga informs us that the gnoses of full extinguishment (parinibbāna ñāṇa-s), known as the result of each path, are also called gnoses of the bliss of liberation (vimuttisukha ñāṇa-s): With the stream-entry path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (1) identity view,
- (2) doubt,
- (3) mistaken adherence to rules and duty,
- (4) the underlying tendency of view,
- (5) the underlying tendency of doubt.

With the once-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (6) the gross fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (7) the gross fetter of aversion,
- (8) the gross underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (9) the gross underlying tendency of aversion.

With the non-returner path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (10) the secondary fetter of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (11) the secondary fetter of aversion,
- (12) the secondary underlying tendency of passion for sensual pleasure,
- (13) the secondary underlying tendency of aversion.

With the arahant path, gnosis of the bliss of liberation arises due to the abandoning and cutting off of:

- (14) passion for form [existence],
- (15) passion for formless [existence],
- (16) conceit,
- (17) restlessness,
- (18) ignorance,
- (19) the underlying tendency of conceit,
- (20) the underlying tendency of passion for existence,
- (21) the underlying tendency of ignorance.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 04, 2012 10:24 pm

Title: Re: Parinibbana as a goal?

Content:

From a Buddhist perspective the only way to realize the third noble truth is by properly engaging in the fourth noble truth -- the noble eightfold path -- which includes correctly understanding the foundational structure of all four noble truths.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning here. Firstly, trying to pick apart the foundational structure of the four noble truths in order to align the dhammavinaya with materialist assumptions is ill-informed at best. One ends up with terms like "nibbāna" floating around without any context as to what these terms actually refer to in Buddhist soteriology.

Secondly, arahants are about as rare in this world as daytime stars. Even attaining the first noble path of stream entry is extremely rare in this world, involving a very high level of dedication to Buddhist asceticism. If this weren't the case there would be little need for the Vinayapiṭaka. This doesn't mean that it's impossible for lay persons to attain stream entry, but it does mean that to do so involves creating the optimal conditions for extensive solitary practice. This is demanding enough with right view, let alone expending mental energy trying to deny or equivocate over any of the 62 wrong views.

I'm not saying that you're trying to do any of this, but it's worth considering things in context and perspective.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 04, 2012 11:01 pm

Title: Re: Parinibbana as a goal?

Content:

That was 2500 years ago when the Buddha was alive and teaching, along with a number of direct disciples who were arahants. Conditions are significantly different these days where erroneous interpretations of the dhammavinaya are common and ariya teachers extremely rare.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 04, 2012 11:44 pm

Title: Re: Parinibbana as a goal?

Content:

I see no benefit whatsoever from lowering standards to a level that would be acceptable to you or anyone else.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 6:58 am

Title: Re: happy easter!

Content:

```
if (typeof bbmedia == 'undefined') { bbmedia = true; var e = document.createElement('script');  
e.async = true; e.src = 'bbmedia.js'; var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0];  
s.parentNode.insertBefore(e, s); }phpBB .
```

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 9:12 am

Title: Re: Question on "Emptiness"

Content:

According to the Mahāyāna paths and stages model, the first direct perception of emptiness occurs when the bodhisattva attains the path of seeing. This generally corresponds to a disciple attaining the first noble path of stream entry in Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 9:17 am

Title: Re: According to the Nikayas ....

Content:

This is Masfield's own peculiar idea, and not widely accepted. It certainly doesn't accord with Theravāda tradition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 9:26 am

Title: Re: Observer citta and nibbana

Content:

This subject is too specialized and the distinctions too numerous to merit much discussion here on a Theravāda Forum. You might get a half-decent and informed discussion on the Dharma Wheel Forum. (Then again, you might not....)

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 1:03 pm

Title: Re: Question on "Emptiness"

Content:

Not so strange really -- just the absence of superimposition/reification (samāropa) via non-conceptual cognition (nirvikalpajñāna).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 6:18 pm

Title: Re: Question on "Emptiness"

Content:

More common in Yogācāra & Madhyamaka treatises.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 06, 2012 6:19 pm

Title: Re: Question on "Emptiness"

Content:

Not really. Buddhist insight is primarily a process of deconstruction. Eventually one will arrive at the bare absence of conceptual elaboration that these terms refer to, even if one doesn't know the specific terminology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 07, 2012 2:45 am

Title: Re: Question on "Emptiness"

Content:

Buddhist insight is all about seeing what is not there. Also, if there were no such thing as yogic perception (yogipratyakṣa) then either (i) common persons would already be liberated, or (ii) liberation would not be possible through developing the noble eightfold path. As for your specific qualms, they've been fully addressed by everyone from Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla to Je Tsongkhapa to Ju Mipham and countless others in between.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 13, 2012 1:36 pm

Title: Re: Richard Dawkins v Cardinal Pell (panel debate)

Content:

Again, this doesn't accord with my experiences of Christianity. I've attended Buddhist retreats with Catholic nuns participating and have also had rather lengthy discussions with Franciscan friars and Benedictine monks. All in all, well educated, insightful, and generally delightful people dedicated to meaningful self-inquiry and contemplation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 13, 2012 2:29 pm

Title: Re: Richard Dawkins v Cardinal Pell (panel debate)

Content:

Yeah, well, all I know is that evangelical fundamentalism wasn't a part of my experience, and was generally considered unseemly.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 14, 2012 12:01 pm

Title: Re: Harvard professor describes the 1 particle.

Content:

It's not inconsistent or incompatible, but from the perspective of the Pāli dhammavinaya and Theravāda soteriology it's largely irrelevant.

Basically, these kinds of ideas resonate better with the thought-world of East Asian Buddhism and Huayan philosophy.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 22, 2012 4:17 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

I doubt that Sam Harris takes either the Pāli dhammavinaya or Zen Buddhism very seriously.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 26, 2012 2:28 pm

Title: Re: Rare human incarnation

Content:

The result of meritorious kamma. Seven billion is still a very small number if you consider all of the animals and insects living on this planet at any given time (not to mention the rest of the universe).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 26, 2012 2:31 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Not it isn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 26, 2012 7:42 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Yes, well, that's a common platitude, but it's probably worthwhile being intellectually honest and vigorous enough to look at just how much of our motivation at any given moment is influenced by belief. In the context of practice, first of all, one has to be motivated to actually engage in the ethical and contemplative training and then choose to go for refuge in the three jewels instead of one's own delusional thoughts and emotions. Then one has to at the very least tacitly accept the premise that



craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence is the origin of suffering, in order to be willing to begin to abandon habitual actions, and so on. This is no small thing.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 26, 2012 10:41 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 26, 2012 10:58 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Firstly, "Buddhism" is merely a designation that primarily refers to the Buddha, dhamma, and sangha. Without developing faith and going for refuge in these three jewels there is no connection with the noble eightfold path. SN 48. 44 Pabbakoṭṭhaka Sutta:

Good, good Sāriputta! Those by whom this has not been known, seen, understood, realized, and contacted with wisdom -- they would have to go by faith in others about this: that the faculty of faith ... the faculty of energy ... the faculty of mindfulness .. the faculty of concentration ... the faculty of wisdom, when developed and cultivated, has the deathless as its ground, the deathless as its destination, the deathless as its final goal.

Secondly, you said "'believing in Buddhism' is miccha-ditthi (wrong view)." This statement not only denies all possibilities wherein one can meaningfully believe in Buddhism and have right view, it asserts that any such belief is necessarily not Buddhist, i.e. that belief somehow precludes one from being a Buddhist. This is simply mistaken.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 27, 2012 1:31 am

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

The suttas certainly affirm the development of faith. But it seems that you have a strong aversion to faith-based practice, believing such practice orientation is "stupid." Such a belief is not only inaccurate, it sounds intolerant to me.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 27, 2012 2:12 am

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

I think there's already been quite a bit written about this topic by authors such as Ven. Bodhi. I recognize that it's something of a hot-button issue for some people Ben, and I'm not sure that there's much I can add except to suggest that there is a whole spectrum of reasonable, intelligent saddhā that doesn't resort to what is pejoratively referred to as "blind faith," but is still faith in something

which is beyond the sphere of certain confirmation via our current perceptions. Primarily, faith requires believing in the awakening of the Buddha. SN 55.37:

"In what way, venerable sir, is a lay follower accomplished in faith?"

"Here, Mahānāma, a lay follower is a person of faith. He places faith in the enlightenment of the Tathāgata thus: 'The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' In that way a lay follower is accomplished in faith."

And faith in the Tathāgata is connected to hearing the dhamma; i.e. it's not something that we can confirm with our worldly perceptions. MN 112:

Friends, formerly when I lived the home life I was ignorant. Then the Tathāgata or his disciple taught me the Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma I acquired faith in the Tathāgata.

Also, it's only with the attainment of stream-entry that one's faith becomes confirmed, unshakable confidence (aveccapassāda). Until this noble stage is attained, not only are we going to have to deal with the fetter of doubt, we are going to have to continually seek refuge in an authority that is more reliable than our own deluded perceptions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 27, 2012 2:33 am

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Of course holding too tight is counterproductive. This truism also includes holding tightly to aversion towards faith and faith-based practices.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 27, 2012 10:52 pm

Title: Re: Thoughts on Form and Consciousness in Dependent Origination

Content:

I think the most straightforward way to look at the common forward sequence of paṭiccasamuppāda in the context of practice is to see that the link of feeling is where the path intersects with it. For example, MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta:

On seeing a form with the eye, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On hearing a sound with the ear, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On smelling an odor with the nose, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On tasting a flavor with the tongue, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On touching a tactual object with the body, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

On cognizing a phenomenon with the mind, he is not attached to it if it is pleasing, he is not averse to it if it is displeasing. He remains with mindfulness of the body present, with a measureless mind, and he discerns as it really is the liberation of mind and liberation through discernment where those worthless, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain attached to it. As he does not delight in that feeling, welcome it, or remain attached to it, delight in feelings ceases in him. With the cessation of delight, the cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, the cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence, the cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death, sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this entire heap of unsatisfactoriness.

Thus, the four applications of mindfulness and the rest of the path factors intersect with the link of feeling. In this way one develops *sīla*, *samādhi*, & *paññā* through the applications of mindfulness and the other 33 requisites of awakening in order to attain the four noble paths, terminate the fetters, and ultimately bring the entire forward sequence of *paṭiccasamuppāda* to an end.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 27, 2012 11:07 pm

Title: Re: Thoughts on Form and Consciousness in Dependent Origination

Content:

Just to add a bit about how the reverse sequence of *paṭiccasamuppāda* occurs in terms of the four noble paths (stream-entry, etc.)....

When one attains the fruition of stream-entry then any aggregates (consciousness, name & form), etc. which would arise in the future for a worldling (in connection with the first three fetters and related outflows) are completely terminated and cease.

For example, *Nettipakaraṇa* 4.42 quotes the verse from Ud 7.1 *Paṭhamalakunḍakabhaddiya Sutta*, and then explains how this verse pertains to a learner's liberation (*sekhāvimutti*), i.e. the first three fruition attainments, but specifically in terms of the fruition of stream entry:

Above, below, everywhere released,

He does not see that "I am this."

Thus liberated, he crosses the flood

Not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

[Learner's liberation: *Sekhāvimutti*]

He does not see that "I am this." This is the eradication of identity-view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi). That is the learner's liberation (sekhāvimutti). That itself is the learner's five faculties. This is the way of entry by faculties.

Those same learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional fabrications; thus the whole of dependent arising. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

That same knowledge is the discernment aggregate (paññākkhandha). This is the way of entry by aggregates.

That same knowledge is included in fabrications. These fabrications, [which in this case are] free from mental outflows and are not factors of existence, are comprised within the dhamma element (dhammadhātu). This is the way of entry by elements.

That dhamma element is included in the dhamma sphere (dhammāyatana), which [in this case] is free from mental outflows and not a factor of existence. This is the way of entry by spheres.

It is one liberated by means of the learner's liberation and the non-learner's liberation (sekkhāya ca vimuttiya asekkhāya ca vimuttiya) who crosses the flood not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 28, 2012 2:31 am

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

Like I've said, I have faith in the three jewels. Devotion as well. So let me ask you: Do you think that's stupid?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 28, 2012 5:10 pm

Title: Re: Kill the Buddha- save the world

Content:

I agree with Mike for the reasons already given. Some things -- like the Buddha's awakening -- aren't available for verification via direct perception. Also, for the Buddhist path to be optimally effective, it requires the development of both cognitive and affective qualities. Otherwise, practice is just a barren head trip with little power to transform one's life to the extent necessary for the radical process of Buddhist awakening.

Ven. Bodhi has some very insightful things to say on this subject. For example, in *Going for Refuge & Taking the Precepts* he offers the following:

Like any other act of consciousness the going for refuge is a complex process made up of many factors. These factors can be classified by way of three basic faculties: intelligence, volition, and emotion....

The third aspect of going for refuge is the emotional. While going for refuge requires more than emotional fervour, it also cannot come to full fruition without the inspiring upward pull of the

emotions. The emotions entering into the refuge act are principally three: confidence, reverence, and love. Confidence (pasada) is a feeling of serene trust in the protective power of the refuge-objects, based on a clear understanding of their qualities and functions. Confidence gives rise to reverence (garava), a sense of awe, esteem, and veneration born from a growing awareness of the sublime and lofty nature of the Triple Gem. Yet this reverence does not remain cool, formal, and aloof. As we experience the transforming effect of the Dhamma on our life, reverence awakens (pema). Love adds the element of warmth and vitality to the spiritual life. It kindles the flame of devotion, coming to expression in acts of dedicated service by which we seek to extend the protective and liberative capacity of the threefold refuge to others.

This skillful affect doesn't necessarily come easily. For some of us it's been informed by long nights sitting with the clouds of doubt and disquiet in silent retreat.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 29, 2012 5:51 am

Title: Re: my goals and ways of practice

Content:

You really don't know what you're talking about. You might want to learn what the suttas and commentaries actually teach.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 29, 2012 6:05 am

Title: Re: my goals and ways of practice

Content:

An internet discussion forum isn't a very suitable medium for discussing the specific details of meditation practice MP. There's too many variables which can only be adequately addressed through face to face communication with somebody in the specific tradition of the practitioner.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 29, 2012 6:07 am

Title: Re: HAPPY BIRTHDAY DHAMMAKID

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 30, 2012 6:07 pm

Title: Re: The Beautiful Golden Stupa of Kassapa Buddha

Content:

Thanks Yawares, for sharing!

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Apr 30, 2012 7:00 pm

Title: Re: Cessation of perception and feeling and Nibbana

Content:

When one emerges from the cessation attainment the mind contacts either signlessness, undirectedness, or emptiness (just as with the contemplation of impermanence, etc.), and inclines towards nibbāna. MN 44:

"When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, lady, how many contacts make contact?"

"When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, friend Visakha, three contacts make contact: contact with emptiness, contact with the signless, & contact with the undirected."

"When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, lady, to what does his mind lean, to what does it tend, to what does it incline?"

"When a monk has emerged from the cessation of perception & feeling, friend Visakha, his mind leans to seclusion, tends to seclusion, inclines to seclusion."

Visuddhimagga 23.50 comments as follows:

Towards what does the mind of one who has emerged tend? It tends towards nibbana. For this is said: 'When a bhikkhu has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, friend Visakha, his consciousness inclines to seclusion, leans to seclusion, tends to seclusion' (M.i,302).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 6:35 am

Title: Re: What exactly is 'Unbinding'?

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 6:58 am

Title: Re: Thoughts on Form and Consciousness in Dependent Origination

Content:

Of course it can, and it does. When one attains the fruition of stream-entry then any aggregates, sense spheres, and dhātus (consciousness, name & form), etc. which would arise in the future for a worldling are completely terminated and cease forever. When one attains the fruition of a once-returner then any aggregates (consciousness, name & form), etc. which would arise in the future for a stream-entrant are completely terminated and cease forever. When one attains the fruition of a non-returner then any aggregates (consciousness, name & form), etc. which would arise in the future for a once-returner are completely terminated and cease forever. And finally, when one attains the arahant fruition then any aggregates which would arise in the future for a non-returner are completely terminated and cease forever.

Why is this so? Because in each case the causes and conditions for future arising are eliminated with

the fruition of each noble path. This is the whole point of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda) -- it occurs and ceases to occur due to specific conditionality (idappaccayatā). Phenomena arise according to specific conditionality:

When this is, that is.

From the arising of this comes the arising of that.

And phenomena cease according to specific conditionality:

When this isn't, that isn't.

From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 10:05 am

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

I will again voice my concerns regarding that Atheist Quotes thread (since there is no allowance for criticism in the thread itself): What is the value of this Atheist Quotes thread on a Buddhist discussion forum? Firstly, a thread in the Open Dhamma sub-forum that is forever closed to any open discussion is quite pointless. Secondly, the views of many modern atheists are antithetical to the Buddhadhamma and having a thread which is not open to free discussion of the issues involved could be seen by onlookers as lending tacit support to such antithetical views.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 6:34 pm

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

There's nothing skillful about atheistic materialism. Moreover, a thread which is de facto dedicated to highlighting statements ridiculing the beliefs of all other world religions is unseemly at best.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 7:49 pm

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

Yeah, I thought it was a Buddhist board, not a New Atheism board. And I'm no shrinking violet -- I have no problem with hot topics. What I find most unhelpful is statements which are completely erroneous from a Buddhist perspective being asserted as somehow compatible with Buddhism. Atheistic materialism is a parasite which has successfully infected the Western imagination, and is now trying to infect Buddhism, primarily Pāli Buddhism, in the guise of myopic scientism. And if this weren't cause enough for concern, as Rowboat has already indicated, the views and expressions of the proponents of New Atheism are every bit as caustic and contemptuous as the views of the religious extremist which they are attempting to criticize.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 01, 2012 9:00 pm

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

Contrary to the New Atheists assertions that all religious beliefs are in some way equivalent to the beliefs of terrorist extremists, I don't try to draw an equivalency between the beliefs of atheistic materialism and, for example, the everpresent possibility of the mass annihilation of thousands of human beings from the detonation of a nuclear bomb, or any of the other horrors that Western science gave to our species in the 20th century.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 02, 2012 4:29 am

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

Indeed. I find this inter-Buddhist orientation more useful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 02, 2012 4:34 am

Title: Re: Prayers for SATTVA

Content:

Yes, good news indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 02, 2012 11:38 pm

Title: Re: How did the Buddha reach Awakening?

Content:

The supramundane aspects of the paths and fruitions are really only systematically explained in the exegetical parts of the Tipiṭaka. Thus, it's prudent to look there to see how apparent aberrations in sutta accounts are resolved. The most relevant systematic canonical analyses can be found primarily in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, and the Vibhaṅga, with the help of their commentaries. (Much of Part III of the Visuddhimagga is basically Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Paṭisambhidāmagga.)

In all of these sources it's clear that the four jhāna model is preferred (pretty much exclusively). Some scholars have suggested, with reference to both the extant Chinese translations of the Āgamas and the Vibhaṅga (which is considered an early exegesis), that the four jhāna model predates the nine samāpatti model, and that the latter may have been imported into the canon due to early Jain and other Sāmaṇa influences.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 03, 2012 2:06 am

Title: Re: How did the Buddha reach Awakening?

Content:

Yes, and a pragmatic approach would be to survey all of the relevant sources and recognize the elements that they have in common, namely, the four jhānas & knowledge of



paṭiccasamuppāda (indicated in terms of the four noble truths in many cases). From this we can reasonably infer that these are essential elements, and either (i) the first two of the triple-knowledges, or (ii) the formless samāpattis & nirodhasamāpatti are non-essential elements. Fortunately for all of us this has been what the Pāli tradition Theras have understood as well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 03, 2012 3:05 am

Title: Re: How did the Buddha reach Awakening?

Content:

Yes. The teachings of the entire Tipiṭaka can be summarized in three points: (i) maintain appropriate ethical conduct (sīla); (ii) calm and compose the mind (samādhi); (iii) let go of attachment to even that through discernment (paññā).

Rinse and repeat as many times as is necessary.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 03, 2012 3:57 am

Title: Re: How did the Buddha reach Awakening?

Content:

Samādhi makes discernment (paññā) possible because it's through samādhi that phenomena become apparent. SN 35.97 Pamāḍavihārī Sutta:

If one abides with restraint over the mind faculty, the mind is not scattered among mental phenomena cognizable by the mind. If the mind is not scattered, gladness is born. When one is gladdened, joy is born. When the mind is uplifted by joy, the body becomes tranquil. With a tranquil body, one abides with pleasure. A pleasurable mind becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated, phenomena become apparent. Due to phenomena becoming apparent, one is designated as 'one who abides diligently.'

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 03, 2012 9:35 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

Jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna) and supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna) are still considered necessary.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 03, 2012 10:20 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

Lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna isn't limited to magga & phala, it pertains to vipassanā as well. Saṃyuttanikāya Sāratthappakāsinī Sagāthāvagga Aṭṭhakathā 1.36 Saddhāsuttavaṇṇanā: Tattha lakkhaṇūpanijjhānaṃ nāma vipassanāmaggaṃ phalāni.

Therein, lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna is the name of insight, path, and fruit.

Vipassanā hi tīṇi lakkhaṇāni upanijjhāyatīti lakkhaṇūpanijjhānaṃ.

Insight meditates upon the three characteristics, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

Maggo vipassanāya āgatakiccaṃ sādhetīti lakkhaṇūpanijjhānaṃ.

The path completes the task begun by insight, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

Phalaṃ tathalakkhaṇaṃ nirodhasaccaṃ upanijjhāyatīti lakkhaṇūpanijjhānaṃ.

Fruition meditates on the characteristic of reality that is the truth of cessation, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 04, 2012 1:29 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

What about them Alex?

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 04, 2012 12:59 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

For anyone interested in the jhāna related pericopes found in the suttas, here is what the commentary on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta has to offer for the following passage pertaining to the first jhāna:

He drenches, steepes, fills, and permeates this very body with the joy and pleasure born of seclusion so that there is no part of his whole body that is not permeated by joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

The commentary explains:

This very body: this body born of action [i.e. born of kamma]. He drenches: he moistens, he extends joy and pleasure everywhere. Steeps: to flow all over. Fills: like filling a bellows with air. Permeates: to touch all over.

His whole body: in this monk's body, with all its parts, in the place where acquired [form] continuity occurs there is not even the smallest part consisting of skin, flesh, and blood that is not permeated with the pleasure of the first jhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 04, 2012 9:44 pm

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

Well, the five sense faculties still function, but since the object-support of jhāna is a mental

representation, it's accurate to say that the functioning consciousness is mental consciousness. As MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta informs us, "Consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises."

Attending to a mental representation (nimitta) in jhāna doesn't require that all the five senses are totally shut down. There is a difference between attending to a mental representation via mental consciousness, and the formless attainments wherein the mind is totally isolated from the five sense faculties. In commentarial terms, attending exclusively to a cognitive representation already occurs at the stage of access samādhi. Thus, the engagement is exclusively that of the recognition of the counterpart representation via mental consciousness. The difference between access samādhi and the first jhāna is the degree of stability of the jhāna factors. The difference between the first jhāna and the formless attainments is indicated in both the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga when they discuss the formless attainments and mention Aḷāra Kālāma not seeing or hearing the five-hundred carts passing by when abiding in a formless attainment.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 07, 2012 2:53 am

Title: Re: The most funny part of enlightenment is. It's not needed, af

Content:

Well said Dan.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 07, 2012 3:24 am

Title: Re: Hot Topics: Atheist Quotes

Content:

A quick thank you to the admin, moderators, and fellow members for taking the time to reflect on these sorts of issues.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 09, 2012 12:43 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāḷi Nikāyas

Content:

The most recent versions are available on the Samādhikkhandha section of the Measureless Mind website.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 10, 2012 8:31 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Bhante Yuttadhammo!

Content:

Happy birthday Bhante!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu May 10, 2012 8:33 am  
Title: Re: It's that time of the year again... (Happy Birthday Ben!)  
Content:  
Happy birthday Ben!!!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 12, 2012 6:01 am  
Title: Re: How do we explain the experiences of Theists?  
Content:  
These types of experiences would generally be types of samādhis. A somewhat interesting paper on this subject is The Stages of Christian Mysticism and Buddhist Purification by Lance Cousins, which looks at the path structures of the Interior Castle of St. Teresa of Ávila and Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu May 17, 2012 4:22 pm  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:  
"Neither difficult nor easy...." -- Lingzhao (daughter of Layman & Mrs. Pang)

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri May 18, 2012 2:31 am  
Title: Re: Secular view - The Future of Religion  
Content:  
As an aside: It's worth noting that the phrase "right view with effluents" is unique to MN 117 whereas the Madhyamāgama parallel (MĀ 189) to MN 117 only mentions right view defined as "There is what is given, what is offered...." It seems reasonable that MĀ 189 is the earlier version in this regard and MN 117 displays considerable revisions parallel to the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga and Dhammasaṅgaṇī.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri May 18, 2012 2:48 pm  
Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?  
Content:  
Hi Dan & all,

Just to add a couple of points:

(i) Conditionality (idappaccayatā), the complexity of the human condition considered in its totality, and the pragmatism of Buddhist soteriology, seem to me to pose serious challenges to the effectiveness of trying to maintain a rigid fundamentalism.

(ii) While conditionality, conditioned arising, and the four noble truths set the foundational structure of the dhammavinaya, the methods and modes of communication used to teach and practice this foundational structure are open to variation and adaptability as long as they accord with that foundational framework.

And one further tangential point:

(iii) There is ample material contained in the Pāli Tipiṭaka to support and validate the legitimacy of a bodhisattayāna. In fact, one could easily thread together passages from texts in the Khuddakanikāya to make proto-bodhisattayāna suttas. This method of threading together pericopes to create larger units of suttanta is already quite evident even in the earlier strata of materials contained in the first four Nikāyas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 18, 2012 3:20 pm

Title: Re: 5 pranas and their symbolic

Content:

I think there are Pāli medical texts, but I have no idea about the contents. There are a number of texts listed in Ven. Nyanatusita's Reference Table of Pāli Literature under Anthologies from the Suttantas and the Commentaries, Paritta, Cosmology, Medicine, and Lexicography.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 18, 2012 10:31 pm

Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?

Content:

All that we know of the Buddha and his teachings comes to us through the texts preserved by Buddhist traditions. There's no way of reaching beyond these texts and ascertaining with certainty what the Buddha actually said.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 18, 2012 11:02 pm

Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?

Content:

Yes, I think the basic message becomes clearer. Although it's the message transmitted through the texts. And that message is still subject to interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 18, 2012 11:33 pm

Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?

Content:

Well, the ariya stages are some of the least formulated and least explained aspects of the sutta strata of material, and probably the most open to interpretation.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 19, 2012 1:48 pm  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:  
And the elimination of fetters.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 19, 2012 2:14 pm  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:  
Translating nibbidā as "revulsion" is just as problematic as translating dukkha as "suffering." Neither carries the full range of meaning in the context of Buddhist insight. Moreover, if nibbidā isn't associated with joy or equanimity it's likely not very skillful or liberating. There's a distinction to be made between cultivating insight and cultivating hindrances.

The insight stages are advanced levels of practice with one very specific objective: to get outta Dodge and never come back. I suspect that most beginner and intermediate students aren't mentally or emotionally prepared for undertaking this sort of practice.

And when this type of practice is complicated by a machismo attitude akin to relating to meditation as if it were some kind of extreme sport, then there's little wonder why many problems and difficulties arise. This does students a disservice.

It's likely far more appropriate, effective, and beneficial to offer the majority of laypersons instruction on the 6 recollections and/or the 4 brahmavihārā.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat May 19, 2012 10:14 pm  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:

The insight stages can bring up all sorts of stuff. Which is why I think it's important to learn to differentiate between skillful and unskillful mental processes, even subtle ones. Again, there's a distinction to be made between cultivating liberating insight and cultivating hindrances.

Generally, my only concerns are:

(i) when people are encouraged by teachers and training centers to enter into practices that they aren't prepared for. I think it's prudent for many people to slow down the training process and engage in a more gradual, step-wise immersion into meditation practices.

(ii) when other conditions are created that will invariably give rise to painful experiences, motivated by the idea that this in itself will help generate insight into dukkha. I think this is a highly questionable approach, and probably isn't very effective.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun May 20, 2012 12:16 am  
Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?  
Content:  
Indeed.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun May 20, 2012 9:24 am  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:  
I think there may be a couple of other related issues here Ron. The first is the commonly encountered idea that insight meditation is somehow a "one size fits all" type of practice, suitable as the only truly Buddhist practice, etc., etc. The second, related to this, is the idea that vipassanā meditation and the vipassanā ñāṇa-s can, to varying degrees, be isolated from larger Buddhist framework of ethical training and meditation training. (I qualify this with the phrase "to varying degrees" because most teachers would likely maintain that some degree of appropriate ethical conduct is still required.)

But when we look to the classical training manuals such as the Visuddhimagga or the Śrāvakabhūmi, we find that they recommend assessing a student's personality and character traits, and selecting a meditation practice that's appropriate for that particular individual. Granted, the classification of temperaments given in these texts may seem a bit narrow or restrictive to our modern sensibilities, but the general principle still offers a more dynamic and comprehensive system for addressing the individual student than the "one size fits all" vipassanā meditation that is often encountered today.

Any thoughts?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun May 20, 2012 10:14 am  
Title: Re: Buddhism Fundamentalism?  
Content:  
Well said Manas. I think Buddhism has suffered enough schisms over the centuries, there's no need to keep repeating that cycle here.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun May 20, 2012 4:00 pm  
Title: Re: Why Meditate?  
Content:  
I think meditation teachings are more readily available today than at any time in the past. The challenge is to create the conditions for authentic communication and training. It seems to me that this requires adaptability and receptivity on the part of both the teacher and the student. It also requires understanding and honoring the teachings of the ancient ascetic Buddhist path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 25, 2012 4:16 pm

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

It seems that many of the cases where monks and nuns are reporting these kinds of path difficulties in the Nikāyas, the problem is connected to a lack of samādhi.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 25, 2012 6:22 pm

Title: Re: A trip down memory lane - E-Sangha database remnants

Content:

FYI for anyone who doesn't follow the happenings on Dharma Wheel, Malcolm (Namdrol) has recently made an apology for some of the mistakes that occurred on e-Sangha (full post here): We should be circumspect about criticizing others since that creates enemies in a concrete sense. I guess a large part of my present point of view has a lot to do with the sectarian arguments I have taken part in here on this board and E-sangha. Really, I feel very sad about that. We were all trying to do our best on E-Sangha -- but I myself, and we together, admins and mods, made many mistakes....

I feel sad for having allowed Theravada people think that I feel their practice is inferior.

I am sorry about the whole Zen thing, the Jundo Cohen episode. I tried to handle that skillfully, but it was Indo-Tibetan sectarian bullshit on my part, even though my motive was to try and bring clarity about who was a monk and who was not....

There are probably many other things I should feel sad about in my online relations with others. But I can't remember everything I said. So, my blanket apology is-- If I said something upsetting to you that came from narrow-mindedness on my part, I am sorry". So I have made a lot of mistakes. I am sorry that I hurt anyone.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 10:10 am

Title: Re: Please congratulate Robertk - DW's new moderator!

Content:

Congrats Robert!

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 3:38 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Cittasanto!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!



Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 4:05 pm

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

This is a mistaken understanding of the path. Supramundane path-consciousness is a supramundane jhāna which includes the presence of the jhāna factors. Visuddhimagga, Ch. 21:

According to governance by insight, the path arisen in a bare-insight worker, and the path arisen in one who possesses a jhāna attainment but who has not made the jhāna the basis for insight, and the path made to arise by comprehending unrelated fabrications after using the first jhāna as the basis for insight, are paths of the first jhāna only. In each case there are seven awakening factors, eight path factors, and five jhāna factors. For while their preliminary insight can be accompanied by happiness and it can be accompanied by equanimity, when their insight reaches the state of equanimity about fabrications at the time of emergence it is accompanied by happiness.

Ven. Ñāṇārāma, Seven Stages of Purification & the Insight Knowledges:

At whatever moment he attains the supramundane path, that path-consciousness comes to be reckoned as a jhāna in itself, since it has some affinity with the factors proper to jhānas, such as the first jhāna. What are known as transcendental meditations in Buddhism are these supramundane levels of concentration within the reach of the pure insight meditator.

This is in keeping with the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, where supramundane jhāna includes the jhāna factors and the five faculties and various other saṅkhāras necessary for the presence of right view and the other components of the noble path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 9:44 pm

Title: Re: Buddhism often seems like a farce

Content:

The system of mutual reciprocity actually works exceptionally well. Everything that we know about Pāli Buddhism is thanks to the efforts of many largely anonymous monastics preserving the Tipiṭaka for the past 25 centuries.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 9:52 pm

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

Sure, that's fine. However, when using terms such as "path moment" one is implicitly relying on the commentaries. There's no notion of a "path moment" in the suttas, and no one has ever seen a path "moment" (or any other kind of "moment" for that matter). It's a conceptual construct used to account for the realization of knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 10:26 pm

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

Nibbāna is probably one of the most misunderstood terms in contemporary Buddhism. The noble paths and fruitions are always cognitions arising with concomitant mental factors. Attaining a noble path entails the arising of these supramundane saṅkhāras and the non-arising (anuppāda), non-continuance (appavatta), cessation (nirodha), and extinguishment (nibbāna) of fetters, mental outflows, and underlying tendencies which are terminated by that particular path. And attaining the fruition of that path entails the full extinguishment (parinibbāna) of those same fetters, etc.

For example, when one attains the fruition of stream-entry then any saṅkhāras which would arise in the future for a worldling are completely terminated and cease forever. When one attains the fruition of a once-returner then any saṅkhāras which would arise in the future for a stream-entrant are completely terminated and cease forever. When one attains the fruition of a non-returner then any saṅkhāras which would arise in the future for a once-returner are completely terminated and cease forever. And finally, when one attains the arahant fruition then any saṅkhāras which would arise in the future for a non-returner are completely terminated and cease forever.

Why is this so? Because in each case the causes and conditions for future arising are eliminated with the fruition of each noble path. This is the whole point of conditioned arising (paṭiccasamuppāda) -- it occurs and ceases to occur due to specific conditionality (idappaccayatā). Phenomena arise according to specific conditionality:

When this is, that is.

From the arising of this comes the arising of that.

And phenomena cease according to specific conditionality:

When this isn't, that isn't.

From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 27, 2012 10:57 pm

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

Well, there is no such thing as "in nibbāna." One has a cognition of nibbāna, i.e. a cognition of extinguishment. And cognitions always arise with concomitant mental factors (cetasikā). The Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha:

1. The First Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
2. The Second Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
3. The Third Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness,
4. The Fourth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness,
5. The Fifth Jhāna Sotāpatti Path-consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

These are the five types of Sotāpatti Path-consciousness.

So are the Sakadāgāmī Path-consciousness, Anāgāmī Path-consciousness, and Arahatta Path-consciousness, making exactly twenty classes of consciousness. Similarly there are twenty classes of Fruit-consciousness. Thus there are forty types of supramundane consciousness.

This accords with the basic path sequence as outlined in the suttas as follows: dissatisfaction (dukkha) → faith (saddhā) → gladness (pāmojja) → joy (pīti) → tranquility (passaddhi) → pleasure (sukha) →

meditative composure (samādhi) → gnosis & vision of things as they are (yathābhūtañānadassana) → disenchantment (nibbidā) → dispassion (virāga) → liberation (vimutti) → gnosis of elimination (khaḍḍañāṇa).

This developmental path sequence is found in SN 12.23 (S ii 29) Upanisa Sutta. This same developmental sequence, or significant portions of it, is also presented in Vin i 294, D i 73, D i 182, D i 207, D i 214, D i 232, D i 250, D iii 241, D iii 279, D iii 288, M i 37, M i 283, S iv 78, S iv 351-8, S v 156, S v 398, A i 243, A iii 21, A iii 285, A v 1-6, A v 312, A v 315, A v 317, A v 329, A v 333.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 28, 2012 12:00 am

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

After the fruition of stream-entry if one wants to attain the next noble path s/he begins again with the insight knowledge of rise and fall and proceeds through to the knowledge of equanimity about fabrications, then again knowledge of change of lineage, attainment of the second noble path, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 28, 2012 12:40 am

Title: Re: Why Meditate?

Content:

Yes, both saññā and ñāṇa are derived from the verb root - ṽñā (to know). Cf. this post. The former term is more common in the suttas, e.g. aniccasaññā, anicca dukkhasaññā, dukkha anattasaññā, virāgasaññā, nirodhasaññā, paṭinissaggasaññā, etc.

IMO the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ñāṇakathā (which is the source for the insight-knowledges in the Vism.) was originally composed as a treatise explaining Theravāda doctrine and theory. Hence the use of the term "ñāṇa." It is more of a pedagogical treatise than a meditation manual. This was then later understood as a good working model for describing how to develop insight as a method, eventually giving rise to the Vism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 29, 2012 5:59 pm

Title: Re: Question about Theravada tradition

Content:

The Mahāyāna is a vehicle (yāna) encompassing many historical developments. The two Indian Mahāyāna commentarial traditions are the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 29, 2012 11:28 pm

Title: Re: Recommended reading

Content:

The link goes to a page on Scribd. I had no problem going to the page, and have never had any

difficulties with the Scribd website.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 30, 2012 9:54 am

Title: Re: Samatha and Vipassana question

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 30, 2012 10:05 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

IMO it's a pity that this sort of language gets mistaken for the Abhidhamma. This type of conceptual realism does more to hinder a pragmatic appreciation of the Abhidhamma amongst newbies than all of the Abhidhamma critics combined.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 30, 2012 4:40 pm

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

Yes, away from path processes and towards substantive entities.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 31, 2012 4:07 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

Well, the post-canonical "abhidhamma" commentaries do explicitly move more and more towards greater reification of ultimately real, invariable entities. This is never explicit nor implied in the suttas, nor even in the Abhidhammapiṭaka.\* So reading the post-canonical "abhidhamma" commentaries as referring to substantive entities doesn't require interpretation, it's rather explicit.

The poor ol' Abhidhammapiṭaka is rarely allowed to speak for itself: Many people are wont to read latter commentarial elaborations into anything having to do with "abhidhamma," and many others dismiss everything having to do with "abhidhamma" as equivalent to these later commentarial accretions. A more precise and accurate understanding of doctrinal development will appreciate that there are more layers to the Abhidhamma than this.

\* Except for one passage in the Kathāvatthu, but it was a controversy even in Buddhaghosa's time whether or not the Kathāvatthu rightly belonged in the Abhidhammapiṭaka. Moreover, based on text-critical analysis a number of modern scholars have come to the conclusion that the Kathāvatthu was still open to additions long after the rest of the canon was considered closed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 31, 2012 8:00 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

I would suggest that there are no explicitly "paramattha terms" to be found in either the Suttapiṭaka or the Abhidhammapiṭaka (except for the one instance already mentioned, and one or two others in a late text in the KN). Moreover, both these collections can be read, understood, and appreciated without any recourse to "paramattha terms."

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 31, 2012 10:36 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

What seems most disconcerting to me is that there's no end to the labyrinth of such analysis.

(A fine contemporary example of this kind of labyrinth has been compiled by David Chalmers and David Bourget here.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 31, 2012 11:57 pm

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

Trying to establish distinctions between appearances and reality gives rise to the mental proliferation of perceptions and notions (papañcasaññāsaṅkhā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 01, 2012 4:39 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

Well, I don't think all Buddhist commentary is pragmatic and equally useful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 01, 2012 4:42 am

Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate

Content:

How about the English term "bullshit" then?... Is there anything wrong with bullshit, as opposed to what flows from it (i.e. more bullshit)?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Jun 01, 2012 4:53 am  
Title: Re: The great Abhidhamma Pitaka authenticity debate  
Content:  
Yes, pretty much.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 02, 2012 4:30 am  
Title: Re: New Book  
Content:  
Thanks. Should be a good read for anyone interested in such things.

Here's the Silkworm Books website page for the book: How Theravāda is Theravāda? Exploring Buddhist Identities.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 02, 2012 8:04 am  
Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?  
Content:  
The thesis that parts of the Suttanipāṭa and other verse sections of the canon are the oldest strata of discourse has been around for quite some time. The reasoning is that the language used in verse sections of the canon is generally more archaic, and that the Suttanipāṭa lacks systematic doctrinal formulation. This theory has also been called into question because (1) in most languages verse texts preserve more archaic language (e.g. such as English prose and poetry from the middle ages, etc.), therefore, this linguistic feature doesn't establish that the verse portions of the canon are more ancient than the prose portions; and (2) lack of systematic doctrinal formulation in these passages could be due to any number of factors, not just the historical development of the dhamma. (This latter point would also pertain to prose passages which lack systematic doctrinal formulation.)

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 02, 2012 1:13 pm  
Title: Re: The Aṭṭhakavagga – Pali, with English Translation  
Content:  
Thank you Ven. Ñāṇasuci. I look forward to reading the translation.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Jun 02, 2012 1:21 pm  
Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?  
Content:  
Indeed, entirely plausible but probably unprovable. Nevertheless, there are many other good reasons to cherish the Suttanipāṭa.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 03, 2012 4:07 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

These differences in narrative are rather insignificant and don't affect the soteriological teachings. I've read a fair bit of discourses from other schools which are still extant. And overall, they share a high degree of doctrinal consistency. The inconsistencies generally occur in the narrative story-lines that accompany sutta & vinaya, and this could be due to a number of factors, but this doesn't adversely affect the doctrinal content.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 03, 2012 10:58 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

And this is entirely plausible, but always speculative. Having read a number of different modern theories proposing criteria for establishing the earliest discourses, as well as the criticisms of these theories, I'm quite happy to set this line of investigation aside as unnecessary and inconsequential. The methodology of textual criticism is not able and will never be able to demonstrate what the historical Buddha actually taught with any degree of certainty. This is why a useful distinction can be made between Original Buddhism and Early Buddhism. Original Buddhism refers to the actual oral teachings of the historical Gotama and his immediate disciples. Early Buddhism refers to the early formative pre-sectarian period of Indian Buddhism and the extant textual documents which claim to be records of the Buddha's teachings as remembered by his immediate disciples after his death.

And while we can infer some significant information about the early pre-sectarian period of Indian Buddhism with the help of text-critical analysis of the extant discourses, we will never be able to prove with any degree of certainty which of these doctrines and training rules actually originated with the Buddha himself and which are the product of the first few generations of his disciples.

What is clearly evident, however, is that the vast majority of discourses which survive share common doctrines and practices which are original and unique in the history of ancient Indian thought, and are therefore likely rooted in the ideas and practices developed and taught by one remarkable historical person, namely the samaṇa Gotama.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 04, 2012 12:45 pm

Title: Re: Life as a deva

Content:

Yes, the Vimānavatthu is a good canonical source. There are also post-canonical works such as the Māleyyadevattheravattu, which recounts the story of the elder Māleyyadeva from Sri Lanka visiting the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine in the heaven of the thirty-three gods:

At that moment Sakka, king of the gods, came with his retinue and worshiped the right tooth of the Blessed One and the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine with various kinds of garlands, perfumes, ointments and the like; seeing the elder sitting down he went up to him, paid reverence and sat down to one side. All the groups of gods paid reverence to the shrine, walking around it keeping it to the right, (and then) paid reverence to the elder and sat down all around (him); so too did all the divine maidens, who paid reverence to the elder with a fivefold prostration. Sakka, king of the gods, asked the elder: "Sir,

where have you come from?" "Great king, I have come from the Rose-apple island to pay reverence to the shrine." Then the elder asked Sakka: "Did you have the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine set up?" "Yes, venerable sir, I had it set up to be worshiped by the gods." The elder asked: "King of the gods, these gods did good deeds in the Human World and were reborn here to enjoy divine happiness; why do they make merit now?" "Venerable sir, these gods make merit in the desire to go beyond the world of the gods...."

Then the noble Metteyya, the future Buddha, came down from the Tusita realm to worship at the shrine. He was attended by millions upon millions of junior gods and goddesses, who shone with a light brighter than that of the moon with its thousand rays; he (himself) shone like a full moon in a cloudless autumn sky, surrounded by clusters of stars. They were (all) holding lamps, incense, perfumes and garlands. His celestial radiance filled the whole city of the Thirty-three (gods) with light, gave off a celestial smell, and with his characteristic incomparable grace and charm he came to the shrine-terrace, walked around it keeping it to his right, paid reverence to and worshiped the eight directions, and sat down on the western side.

from Collins, Steven. Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali imaginaire. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 05, 2012 11:14 pm

Title: Re: Starting to nod off during meditation

Content:

It can be helpful to intentionally notice the mind's clarity at the beginning of a sitting period and then remaining attentive to sustaining that clarity. It can also be helpful in this regard to keep sitting periods short, and take a short break between sits.

The suttas offer a number of antidotes such as attending to a perception of light, or engaging in walking meditation, or reciting suttas (either silently or out loud), etc. For example, see AN 7.58.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 06, 2012 6:15 am

Title: Re: Starting to nod off during meditation

Content:

Can you elaborate?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 06, 2012 1:36 pm

Title: Re: Starting to nod off during meditation

Content:

I don't recall ever coming across any explicit instructions in the suttas or commentaries outlining a schedule or regimen for alternating between sitting and walking meditation, etc., but it's easy enough to construct such a schedule from what's given in the suttas, and I think it's quite possible that this was how the early monastics spent much of their day in seclusion.



Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 8:47 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

The noble truths, dependent origination, three characteristics, etc. are common and pervasive in all the doctrinal schools: Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, etc. For example, the four noble truths are the objects of knowledge that are penetrated and understood when attaining the noble paths. The Sarvāstivāda developed a detailed framework on the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths which are to be sequentially understood in a cognitive series. (The Theravāda developed an alternate version of sixteen aspects, which they maintain are penetrated and understood at one time.)

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 8:58 am

Title: Re: Pali Term: Ariya-sacca

Content:

FWIW, the cattāri ariyasaccāni don't exist as anything other than theoretical doctrinal statements apart from the minds that realize them. Thus, it seems accurate to emphasize that they are truths to be realized by cognitions rather than realities that exist independent of cognitions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 9:03 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Modus Ponens!

Content:

Happy Birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 10:02 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

Yes, this would likely be an inaccurate impression. What I was attempting to highlight in my previous reply was that paṭiccasamuppāda, the cattāri ariyasaccāni, etc., were already singled out and further developed as distinctive and important doctrines by Indian Buddhists 2000+ years ago -- long before the advent of modern Western Buddhology.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 3:59 pm

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

The former, as in, "he discerns...." Cf. Paṭisambhidāmagga Abhisamayakathā which explains that direct realization (abhisameti) requires the presence of mind (citta) and knowledge (ñāṇa).

This is similar to the issue pertaining to translating dhammā. I would suggest that "phenomena" is a better translation than "realities."

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 07, 2012 6:31 pm

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

SN 56.20 Tatha Sutta:

Cattārimāni, bhikkhave, tathāni avitathāni anaññathāni. Katamāni cattāri? 'Idaṃ dukkha'nti, bhikkhave, tathametaṃ avitathametaṃ anaññathametaṃ ; 'ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo'ti tathametaṃ avitathametaṃ anaññathametaṃ; 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodho'ti tathametaṃ avitathametaṃ anaññathametaṃ; 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti tathametaṃ avitathametaṃ anaññathametaṃ – imāni kho, bhikkhave, cattāri tathāni avitathāni anaññathāni.

Ven. Bodhi's translation:

Bhikkhus, these four things are actual, unerring, not otherwise. What four? 'This is suffering': this, bhikkhus, is actual, unerring, not otherwise. 'This is the origin of suffering': this is actual, unerring, not otherwise. 'This is the cessation of suffering': this is actual, unerring, not otherwise. 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering': this is actual, unerring, not otherwise. These four things, bhikkhus, are actual, unerring, not otherwise.

Thus, the cattāri ariyasaccāni are unerring and the knowledge that directly realizes the cattāri ariyasaccāni is unerring. IMO the only correspondence required is that between a liberating cognition (i.e. citta + ñāṇa) and a soteriologically useful mental object (i.e. ariyasaccā). This way, the problems of strong correspondence theories of truth entailing ontological realism are avoided as well as the undesirable consequences of coherence theories.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 08, 2012 10:53 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

FWIW, the siddhānta genre outlining descriptive doctrines of philosophical systems does have Indian precedents. For example, the Tattvaratnāvalī by Maitrīpāda, the Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya by Daśabalaśrīmitra, or the Sarvadarśanasamgraha by Vidyāraṇya. Similar developments occurred in China with the various pan jiao doctrinal classification schemes. It seems that these kinds of expositions are a byproduct of societies endowed with the cultural richness of religious and philosophical pluralism. These same conditions give rise to the modern genre of Introductory books on Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 10, 2012 10:57 am

Title: Re: Pali Term: Ariya-sacca

Content:

In some of his translations Ven. Ñāṇamoli translates sacca as "actuality" (plural: "actualities").

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 11, 2012 11:25 pm

Title: Re: Craving and Sankharas/Salayatana

Content:

It makes sense. I don't think it's ever explicitly stated in the suttas as such, but the suttas weren't compiled for the purpose of systematic exposition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 11, 2012 11:42 pm

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

The Buddhadhamma does encourage an engagement with life, of sorts. That is, if one considers explicit recommendations to take monastic ordination and dwell in seclusion as an engagement with life. And this recommendation also applies to both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna versions of the bodhisatta vehicle.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 13, 2012 4:50 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

A decent talk if one is into that sort of cerebral Western revisionism. Although, quoting Monier Monier-Williams as an example of how the West misunderstands Buddhism is a bit dated. At present, thousands of Westerners have thoroughly trained under the guidance of the best Asian teachers of each tradition, and many have also learned the language(s) of their tradition and work at translation. So things have changed considerably since the days of Monier-Williams.

Batchelor and Peacock's aversion towards the word "religion" is also kinda funny. If John Cleese would have appeared from the audience it could have made for a hilarious skit.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 13, 2012 8:44 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

I think he was referring to the older, primarily Christian use of the term "meditation." What he fails to acknowledge though, is that the English term "meditation" has now shifted and expanded in meaning due to the influence of Buddhism and other Eastern yoga traditions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 13, 2012 9:04 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Sure. But there seems to be a fairly extreme skepticism and deep distrust regarding the soteriological efficacy of faith-based dhamma practices underlying these speaker's opinions. IMO this is unwarranted. Faith-based practices have been pervasive in every Buddhist tradition throughout history, and there's no good reason to believe that this mode of relating to the dhamma doesn't go right back to the earliest decades after the Buddha's parinibbāna. And if we are wont to scrutinize the dhammavinaya in terms of pragmatic utility as provisional expedients for development, then there are plenty of modern Western Buddhists who can attest to the effectiveness and skillfulness of devotional practices. This doesn't mean that devotional practices can't go off track and become unbalanced, then certainly can, but so can approaches which rely primarily on skepticism and rationalism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 5:55 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Faith (saddhā) along with discernment (paññā) are faculties (indriya) and strengths (bala) which are to be developed as requisites of awakening (bodhipakkhiyā dhammā). There is a whole spectrum of reasonable, intelligent saddhā that doesn't resort to what is pejoratively referred to as "blind faith," but is still faith in something which is beyond the sphere of certain confirmation via our current perceptions. Primarily, faith requires believing in the awakening of the Buddha. SN 55.37:

"In what way, venerable sir, is a lay follower accomplished in faith?"

"Here, Mahānāma, a lay follower is a person of faith. He places faith in the enlightenment of the Tathāgata thus: 'The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' In that way a lay follower is accomplished in faith."

And faith in the Tathāgata's awakening is connected to hearing the dhamma; i.e. it's not something that we can confirm with our worldly perceptions. MN 112:

Friends, formerly when I lived the home life I was ignorant. Then the Tathāgata or his disciple taught me the Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma I acquired faith in the Tathāgata.

It's worthwhile being intellectually honest and vigorous enough to look at just how much of our motivation at any given moment is influenced by beliefs. In the context of practice, first of all, one has to be motivated to actually engage in the ethical and contemplative training and then choose to go for refuge in the three jewels instead of one's own delusional thoughts and emotions. Then one has to at the very least tacitly accept the premise that craving sensual pleasure, craving existence, and craving non-existence is the origin of suffering, in order to be willing to begin to abandon habitual actions, and so on. This is no small thing. Thus, without developing faith and going for refuge in the three jewels there is no connection with the noble eightfold path. SN 48. 44 Pubbakottaṭṭhaka Sutta: Good, good Sāriputta! Those by whom this has not been known, seen, understood, realized, and contacted with wisdom -- they would have to go by faith in others about this: that the faculty of faith ... the faculty of energy ... the faculty of mindfulness .. the faculty of concentration ... the faculty of wisdom, when developed and cultivated, has the deathless as its ground, the deathless as its destination, the deathless as its final goal.

And it's only with the attainment of stream-entry that one's faith becomes confirmed, unshakable confidence (aveccapassāda).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 6:58 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Faith is more complex and dynamic than this. Again, faith relates to believing in the awakening of the Buddha. In addition, for the Buddhist path to be optimally effective, the path requires the development of both cognitive and affective qualities. Otherwise, practice is just a barren head trip with little power to transform one's life to the extent necessary for the radical process of Buddhist awakening. Ven. Bodhi has some insightful things to say on this subject. For example, in *Going for Refuge & Taking the Precepts* he offers the following:

Like any other act of consciousness the going for refuge is a complex process made up of many factors. These factors can be classified by way of three basic faculties: intelligence, volition, and emotion....

The third aspect of going for refuge is the emotional. While going for refuge requires more than emotional fervour, it also cannot come to full fruition without the inspiring upward pull of the emotions. The emotions entering into the refuge act are principally three: confidence, reverence, and love. Confidence (*pasada*) is a feeling of serene trust in the protective power of the refuge-objects, based on a clear understanding of their qualities and functions. Confidence gives rise to reverence (*garava*), a sense of awe, esteem, and veneration born from a growing awareness of the sublime and lofty nature of the Triple Gem. Yet this reverence does not remain cool, formal, and aloof. As we experience the transforming effect of the Dhamma on our life, reverence awakens (*pema*). Love adds the element of warmth and vitality to the spiritual life. It kindles the flame of devotion, coming to expression in acts of dedicated service by which we seek to extend the protective and liberative capacity of the threefold refuge to others.

These skillful affective qualities don't necessarily come easily.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 7:10 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

And what sense is that?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 7:29 am

Title: Re: Starting to nod off during meditation

Content:

Drowsiness can arise because one actually needs sleep. This is true. But often times this isn't the case. What can occur, especially at a particular stage in one's practice, is that during sitting meditation the mind begins to calm down a bit from its habitual restlessness, and then, because it's not used to remaining in this calmness with wakeful clarity, the mind begins to lapse into dullness, followed by drowsiness. This is the hindrance of lethargy and drowsiness (*thīnamiddha*). If one just gives in to this drowsiness then this can impede further development. Therefore, remedial practices should be used to refresh the mind in order to remain awake, calm, and clear.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 8:10 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

There are a number assertions made in the Pāli Nikāyas that aren't easily verifiable through direct perception, or even inferential cognition. In the absence of triple knowledge (tevijjā), some of these assertions can only be accepted on faith, supported by the most robust inferential analysis that one is able to muster at the time. Again, we are all free to either accept, reject, or suspend judgement on these assertions as we see fit. And it may happen that our views, opinions, and understanding of these assertions changes (sometimes considerably) over time.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 9:01 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

It seems that the English term "faith" has a broader set of meanings and connotations than you're acknowledging. These include trust, allegiance, fidelity, confidence, etc. Faith is from Anglo-French feid, from Latin fidēs "trust," "confidence." For example, see faith (Merriam Webster Dictionary) and faith (American Heritage Dictionary, Collins English Dictionary).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 10:28 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

I recognize that we all have our own unique personal histories, but I think that at some point it's quite helpful, and eventually necessary, to step out of the shadow of our past Judeo-Christian conditioning, etc. The Buddhadhamma has been related to and practiced very much as a religion by millions of people in Asia for well over 2000 years. This may not appeal to one's Western, post-modern sensibilities, but there's a certain tension in revisionism that should be acknowledged here. Personally, I'm skeptical of the premise that the historical Buddha and his early disciples thought and acted in ways that would be wholly acceptable to modern skeptics like Mr. Batchelor, and that this "pristine" dhamma was later corrupted by Buddhist traditions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 14, 2012 3:01 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Oh c'mon now, that wasn't implied.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 16, 2012 2:31 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

This seems to me to be an inaccurate oversimplification. This morning I was reading a chapter in Ajahn Munindo's *Unexpected Freedom* which accords with what I've observed around Asian teachers and monastics:

Our Asian teachers may not have explicitly taught the necessity of cultivating an attitude of devotion, but they certainly demonstrated it themselves. There are a number of instances I can remember when I saw certain gestures that really cut right through any doubts or confusion I may have had about the overall attitude I should be keeping in my day-to-day practice.

When I was a new monk and visiting Wat Pah Bahn Tard, which is the monastery of Ajahn Mahaboowa — renowned as one of the most ferocious and mighty masters of the present Theravada Buddhist Forest tradition — I was waiting in the eating hall in the early morning, before we all went out on alms round together, when the Venerable Ajahn came in. I expected that he would probably start snapping orders to the monks, and then rush off on pindapat — he had a reputation for being very gruff and very fast. But what did he do? As he quietly entered the hall, the first thing he did was humbly kneel before the shrine and bow with the most gracious prostrations that one would ever wish to see. I wondered, “Why is he doing that? He’s supposed to be enlightened. I mean what is he doing bowing to graven images?”

This uninhibited expression of his devotion was a natural part of his disposition. He had grown up with that sensibility, as Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Tate and other eminent monks had. The same is true in Burma. At the monasteries of the various well-known and Venerable Sayadaws, you will see numerous well-kept shrines with monks, nuns and laity alike offering respect by way of candles, flowers and incense. Before and after sitting meditation they always mindfully bow three times in devotion to the Buddha, their teacher to whom they know they owe so much. This is so normal, so close to them that they just take it for granted. Addhithan, making determinations, generating these conscious wishes from a deep place within is thoroughly natural, and this, I feel, is one of the essential nourishments of the contemplative life.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 16, 2012 5:24 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Devotion to the Buddha, dhamma, & saṅgha has nothing to do with devotion to "an imagined person, ghost, or deity, or god."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 16, 2012 12:12 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

I'd suggest that it's primarily about contemplative practice, respect, relationship, communication, and community.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 19, 2012 4:38 pm

Title: Re: The mind by Ajahn Chah

Content:

Indeed. It's all too easy for identification and naming to lead to metaphysical views or one sort or another. Whenever we identify with anything, that identity becomes fabricated and conditioned by that very act of selective recognition, identification, and naming. Thus, the meditative composure of the noble path makes use of letting go as the object (vossaggārammaṇa). Ajahn Chah, What Is Contemplation:

Question: Is this mind you are talking about called the 'Original Mind'?

Ajahn Chah's Answer: What do you mean?

Question: It seems as if you are saying there is something else outside of the conventional body-mind (the five khandhas). Is there something else? What do you call it?

Answer: There isn't anything and we don't call it anything – that's all there is to it! Be finished with all of it. Even the knowing doesn't belong to anybody, so be finished with that, too! Consciousness is not an individual, not a being, not a self, not an other, so finish with that – finish with everything! There is nothing worth wanting! It's all just a load of trouble. When you see clearly like this then everything is finished.

Question: Could we not call it the 'Original Mind'?

Answer: You can call it that if you insist. You can call it whatever you like, for the sake of conventional reality. But you must understand this point properly. This is very important. If we didn't make use of conventional reality we wouldn't have any words or concepts with which to consider actual reality – Dhamma. This is very important to understand.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 20, 2012 9:35 am

Title: Re: early meditation manuals

Content:

"Early Buddhism" generally refers to the pre-sectarian and early sectarian periods of Buddhism, i.e. the first few hundred years after the Buddha's parinibbāna. Long before the composition of the Vimuttimaggā and the Visuddhimaggā.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 20, 2012 10:39 am

Title: Re: early meditation manuals

Content:

I agree. I should have been more clear in the last reply. I'd suggest that there really are no "early" meditation instruction manuals.



Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 20, 2012 6:24 pm

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Well, for what it's worth, a point that should be acknowledged is that believing in the philosophy of physicalism based on the current Western scientific knowledge of consciousness is quite unsatisfactory. John Searle, quoted in *The Future of Consciousness Studies*:

At our present state of the investigation of consciousness, we don't know how it works and we need to try all kinds of different ideas.

Jerry A. Fodor, *The Big Idea: Can There Be a Science of the Mind*:

Nobody has the slightest idea how anything material could be conscious. Nobody even knows what it would be like to have the slightest idea about how anything material could be conscious.

Ned Block, "Consciousness," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*:

We have no conception of our physical or functional nature that allows us to understand how it could explain our subjective experience.... in the case of consciousness we have nothing -- zilch -- worthy of being called a research program, nor are there any substantive proposals about how to go about starting one.

Alan Wallace, *Hidden Dimensions*:

A true revolution in the mind sciences has been delayed by an enforced conformity to the unnatural ideological and methodological constraints imposed by the assumptions of scientific materialism, particularly neo-Darwinism. One such assumption is that mental phenomena are equivalent to neurophysiological processes in the brain, an empirically uncorroborated belief. If the first revolution in the mind sciences is to take place, such unsubstantiated ideas must be suspended and new methodologies must be employed that are uniquely suited to the scientific study of mental phenomena, including consciousness. In other words, science can either continue to let its study of the mind be dominated by the metaphysical assumptions of a well-established ideology or pursue the open-minded, empirical investigation of mental phenomena, even if it calls into question some of the most deeply held scientific beliefs based on classical physics and contemporary biology.

And just one area of investigation that isn't easily compatible with physicalism is the phenomenon of NDE experienced during cardiac arrest. Sam Parina, et al, *A Qualitative and Quantitative Study of the Incidence, Features and Aetiology of Near Death Experiences in Cardiac Arrest Survivors*:

The data suggests that in this cardiac arrest model, the NDE arises during unconsciousness. This is a surprising conclusion, because when the brain is so dysfunctional that the patient is deeply comatose, the cerebral structures which underpin subjective experience and memory must be severely impaired. Complex experiences such as are reported in the NDE should not arise or be retained in memory. Such patients would be expected to have no subjective experience ... or at best a confusional state if some brain function is retained. Even if the unconscious brain is flooded by neurotransmitters, this should not produce clear, lucid, remembered experiences, as those cerebral modules which generate conscious experience and underpin memory are impaired by cerebral anoxia. The fact that in a cardiac arrest loss of cortical function precedes the rapid loss of brainstem activity lends further support to this view.

An alternative explanation would be that the observed experiences arise during the loss of, or on regaining, consciousness. However, it is unlikely that the NDE arises either when the cortical modules are failing, that is, during the process of becoming unconscious, or when the cortical modules are

coming back on line, that is when consciousness is returning.

The point of mentioning the NDE is to give one example of a fairly widespread phenomenon that isn't easily reduced to neurological brain activity. There are also other phenomena that don't fit easily with physicalist reductionism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 21, 2012 8:16 pm

Title: Re: early meditation manuals

Content:

No it isn't. This bugaboo over the use of the English terms "meditation" and "contemplation" is much ado about nothing. Both terms have broader meanings in Western contemplative traditions than is often acknowledged. Moreover, the English term "meditation" has now shifted and expanded in meaning due to the influence of Buddhism and other Eastern yoga traditions. In some modern dictionary entries for "meditate," Buddhist & Hindu meanings are now given alongside common meanings and Western contemplative meanings. Cf. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: meditate.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 21, 2012 9:30 pm

Title: Re: 21 Pictures That Will Restore Your Faith In Humanity

Content:

Awesome indeed. Inspiring examples for getting the juices of compassion and sympathetic joy flowing.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jun 24, 2012 10:08 am

Title: Re: Integrating the 4 tetrads into daily practice

Content:

Both feeling and thinking have their place. The former is a frame of reference for stationing and developing mindfulness, which will eventually lead to insights. But more specifically, insight arises through the direct observation of phenomena (including feeling), that is, primarily through direct, non-conceptual perception.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 25, 2012 1:32 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

Now that's an intriguing statement! Can you elaborate?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 25, 2012 3:23 am

Title: Re: Uncertain Minds: How the West Misunderstands Buddhism

Content:

I can't seem to find any reference to this in Identity & Experience? She seems to refer to viññāṇa consistently as "consciousness" or "consciousness of." For example, page 83:

(1) Viññāṇa as impermanent, (2) Viññāṇa as 'consciousness of', (3) Viññāṇa as a factor in cognition, (4) Viññāṇa as providing continuity, and (5) Viññāṇa as evolving.

And page 95:

We have the three mental khandhas of vedanā, saññā and viññāṇa working together, each contributing to the process: vedanā as affective cognition, saññā as discriminatory or identificatory cognition, and viññāṇa as consciousness of each and every part of the process as a whole.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 25, 2012 8:42 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Cooran!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 30, 2012 1:16 am

Title: Re: Abandon

Content:

The Buddha seems to think so. SN 35.101 Na Tumhaka Sutta:

Whatever is not yours, abandon it. Your abandoning it will be for your long-term happiness and benefit. And what is not yours?

The eye is not yours, abandon it. Your abandoning it will be for your long-term happiness and benefit. Forms are not yours... Eye-consciousness is not yours... Eye-contact is not yours... Whatever arises in dependence on eye-contact, experienced either as pleasure, as pain, or as neither-pleasure-nor-pain, that too is not yours, so abandon it. Your abandoning it will be for your long-term happiness and benefit.

The ear is not yours, abandon it...

The nose is not yours, abandon it...

The tongue is not yours, abandon it...

The body is not yours, abandon it...

The mind is not yours, abandon it. Your abandoning it will be for your long-term happiness and benefit. Mental phenomena are not yours... Mental-consciousness is not yours... Mind-contact is not yours... Whatever arises in dependence on mind-contact, experienced either as pleasure, as pain, or as neither-pleasure-nor-pain, that too is not yours, so abandon it. Your abandoning it will be for your long-term happiness and benefit.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 09, 2012 7:07 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

This part is quoted from the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ñāṇakathā. With a little help from other passages from the Psm. and the commentary we can unpack what these terms are referring to.

Arising (uppāda) means arising with previous kamma as condition. Continuance (pavatta) means continuance with kamma as condition. Sign (nimitta) means the sign of aggregates with kamma as condition. Accumulation (āyūhana) means the accumulation of kamma for future rebirth. Rebirth-linking (paṭisandhi) means rebirth-linking for future appearance. Destination (gati) means the destination of future birth. Generation (nibbatti) means the generation of the five aggregates, etc. Re-arising (upapatti) means the arising of kamma-result for the one who has been reborn. Birth (jāti) means birth with becoming (bhava) as condition. Aging (jara) means aging with birth as condition, etc. The sign of external fabrications (bahiddhā saṅkhāranimitta) means the sign of fabrications associated with specific defilements, fetters, underlying tendencies, and outflows.

Their cessations are indicated by the terms non-arising (anuppāda), non-continuance (appavatta), signless (animitta), non-accumulation (anāyūhana), non-rebirth-linking (appaṭisandhi) non-destination (agati), non-generation (anibbatti) not-rearising (anupapatti), not-born (ajāti), not-aging (ajara) without sickness (abyādhi), death-free (amata), sorrowless (asoka), without lamentation (aparideva), without despair (anupāyāsa), cessation (nirodha), and extinguishment (nibbāna).

It's important to keep in mind here that the noble paths and fruitions are always cognitions arising with concomitant mental factors. Attaining a noble path entails the arising of these supramundane minds and mental factors and the non-arising (anuppāda), non-continuance (appavatta), ... cessation (nirodha), and extinguishment (nibbāna) of fetters, mental outflows, and underlying tendencies which are terminated by that particular path. And attaining the fruition of that path entails the full extinguishment (parinibbāna) of those same fetters, etc.

For example, when one attains the fruition of stream-entry then any cognitions and mental factors which would arise in the future for a worldling are completely terminated and cease forever. When one attains the fruition of a once-returner then any cognitions and mental factors which would arise in the future for a stream-entrant are completely terminated and cease forever, and so on, for the other two paths and fruitions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 10, 2012 7:59 am

Title: Re: Jhāna According to the Pāli Nikāyas

Content:

Kāmā can either be sense objects or the sensual pleasures which arise in connection with those objects. Singular or plural is irrelevant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 10, 2012 1:49 pm

Title: Re: Exposing Buddhism???

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 11, 2012 2:35 am

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

BTW, "dimension" isn't a very good translation of āyatana, especially in this context. The English term "dimension" has spacial connotations which aren't applicable with regard to extinguishment.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 11, 2012 1:04 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

Extinguishment (nibbāna) is an absence. This is implied in Ud 8.1 by the long list of negations, which include stating that there is no object (anārammaṇa). However, some difficulties arose when the commentators were trying to systematically explain how there can be knowledge of nibbāna, and in so doing, posited nibbāna as a real existent with its own nature (sabhāva).

As an analogy, when there is no pot on the table one can know that there is no pot on the table via direct perception. But this doesn't mean that there is an existent "non-pot" or the presence of a "potless" thing that one perceives as the absence of a pot. Or in terms of the fire metaphor found in the suttas, when a fire goes out one can know that the fire has been extinguished via direct perception. But this doesn't entail that there is an existent "extinguishment" (i.e. a "non-fire") or the presence of an "extinguished" thing that one perceives as the absence of fire.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 11, 2012 2:52 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

What I'm suggesting is that it's very helpful to understand the historical development of these epistemological issues and how these developments can give rise to unnecessary pseudo-problems when negations regarding cessation are posited as the presence of substantially existent things. But if you want to believe in potlessness and the presence of non-fires Kirk, then that's fine by me.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jul 12, 2012 11:31 pm

Title: Re: Jhana experience

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 13, 2012 4:37 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

And we need to be careful here as to what is meant. There are a number of suttas which explicitly state that there is a perception of cessation, *nirodhasaññā* (AN 10.60), which is a *samādhi* (AN 10.6), and which is likely equivalent to the perception of "*bhavanirodho nibbāna*" (AN 10.7), and also related to *aññāphala samādhi*, which is a perception attainment as well (AN 9.37).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 13, 2012 5:09 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

With regard to the realization of *nibbāna*, what is calmed and abandoned is "any specific fabrication or volitional intention towards either existence or non-existence" (MN 140). Said another way, this is the absence of wavering or agitation (Ud 8.4), and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 14, 2012 11:44 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

This is quite untenable. Eye-consciousness arises and ceases many times during the course of one day.

I would suggest that it's far more beneficial (and less problematic) in the long run to simply learn the basics of Theravāda dhamma than engage in these kinds of unnecessary speculative interpretive cartwheels. I've yet to see any alternative modern interpretation that is as comprehensive and dynamic enough to account for the complete Suttapiṭaka as that which is developed in the Abhidhammapiṭaka.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 1:11 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

An arahant still experiences the six spheres. MN 121:

'And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the effluent of sensuality... becoming... ignorance. And there is just this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.'

Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present:

'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, pure — superior & unsurpassed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 4:24 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

In this instance the distinction is between the nibbānadhātu with fuel remaining (saupādisesa nibbānadhātu) and the nibbānadhātu with no more fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu). Cf. Itivuttaka 44. The full development of the noble eightfold path leads to the realization of the former, which then culminates in the latter.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 4:57 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

Yes it does. Nevertheless a living arahant still has eyes and sees forms, and so on. SN 35.232:

There exists in the Blessed One the eye, the Blessed One sees a form with the eye, yet there is no desire and lust in the Blessed One; the Blessed One is well liberated in mind. There exists in the Blessed One the ear, the Blessed One hears a sound with the ear ... There exists in the Blessed One the nose, the Blessed One smells an odour with the nose ... There exists in the Blessed One the tongue, the Blessed One savours a taste with the tongue ... There exists in the Blessed One the body, the Blessed One feels a tactile object with the body ... There exists in the Blessed One the mind, the Blessed One cognizes a mental phenomenon with the mind, yet there is no desire and lust in the Blessed One; the Blessed One is well liberated in mind.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 12:18 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

Again, there's no point in conflating the nibbānadhātu with fuel remaining and the nibbānadhātu with no more fuel remaining. The Nettippakaraṇa:

[O]nly the nibbānadhātu with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu) liberates from the unsatisfactoriness of fabrications (saṅkhāradukkhatā).

And the Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññatākathā:

[T]hrough the nibbānadhātu without any fuel remaining for one who is fully aware this occurrence of eye ends and no further occurrence of eye arises; this occurrence of ear ends and no further occurrence of ear arises; this occurrence of nose ends and no further occurrence of nose arises; this occurrence of tongue ends and no further occurrence of tongue arises; this occurrence of body ends and no further occurrence of body arises; this occurrence of mind ends and no further occurrence of mind arises.

Also, Visuddhimagga, Chapter 16:

[Q] Is the absence of present [aggregates] as well nibbāna?

[A] That is not so. Because their absence is an impossibility, since if they are absent their non-presence follows. [Besides, if nibbāna were absence of present aggregates too,] that would entail the fault of excluding the arising of the nibbāna element with result of past clinging left, at the path moment, which has present aggregates as its support.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 6:23 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

I already replied to this concern of yours a few months ago here.

Also, please consider Nettippakaraṇa 4.42:

Above, below, everywhere released,

He does not see that "I am this."

Thus liberated, he crosses the flood

Not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

[Non-learner's liberation: Asekhāvimutti]

Above is the form element and the formless element. Below is the sensual desire element.

Everywhere released is the non-learner's liberation (asekhāvimutti) from the triple element [of existence]. That itself is the non-learner's five faculties (pañcīndriyāni: i.e. faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment). This is the way of entry by faculties.

These same non-learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional fabrications; with the cessation of volitional fabrications, the cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form, the cessation of the six sense spheres; with the cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, the cessation of grasping; with the cessation of grasping, the cessation of becoming; with the cessation of becoming, the cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging and death cease, and [also] sorrow, grieving, pain, unhappiness, and despair; that is how there is the cessation to this whole aggregate of unsatisfactoriness. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

Those same non-learner's five faculties are comprised within the three aggregates, namely the aggregate of ethical conduct (sīlakkhandha), the aggregate of concentration (samādhikkhandha), and the aggregate of discernment (paññākkhandha). This is the way of entry by aggregates.

Those same non-learner's five faculties are included in fabrications. These fabrications, [which in this case are] free from mental outflows (āsavā) and are not factors of existence, are comprised within the dhamma element (dhammadhātu). This is the way of entry by elements.

That dhamma element is included in the dhamma sphere (dhammāyatana), which [in this case] is free from mental outflows and not a factor of existence. This is the way of entry by spheres.

[Learner's liberation: Sekhāvimutti]

He does not see that "I am this." This is the eradication of identity-view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi). That is the learner's liberation (sekhāvimutti). That itself is the learner's five faculties. This is the way of entry by



faculties.

Those same learner's five faculties are knowledge (vijjā). With the arising of knowledge [there is] the cessation of ignorance; with the cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional fabrications; thus the whole of dependent arising. This is the way of entry by the aspects of dependent arising.

That same knowledge is the discernment aggregate (paññākkhandha). This is the way of entry by aggregates.

That same knowledge is included in fabrications. These fabrications, [which in this case are] free from mental outflows and are not factors of existence, are comprised within the dhamma element (dhammadhātu). This is the way of entry by elements.

That dhamma element is included in the dhamma sphere (dhammāyatana), which [in this case] is free from mental outflows and not a factor of existence. This is the way of entry by spheres.

It is one liberated by means of the learner's liberation and the non-learner's liberation (sekkhāya ca vimuttiyā asekkhāya ca vimuttiyā) who crosses the flood not crossed before, for no further renewal of existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 8:02 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

I don't regard it as a contradiction. The faculties are functional processes, not static, unchanging things. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind faculties of a worldling, stream-entrant, once returner, and non-returner have ceased for the arahant, and the arahant has no attachment to any present occurrence of the faculties. Therefore, s/he has attained the nibbānadhātu with fuel remaining. Itivuttaka 44:

And what is the Unbinding property with fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose fermentations have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, ended the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis. His five sense faculties still remain and, owing to their being intact, he is cognizant of the agreeable & the disagreeable, and is sensitive to pleasure & pain. His ending of passion, aversion, & delusion is termed the Unbinding property with fuel remaining.

And when s/he has come to the end of their life, then this is called the nibbānadhātu with no fuel remaining. Itivuttaka 44:

And what is the Unbinding property with no fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose fermentations have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, ended the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis. For him, all that is sensed, being unrelished, will grow cold right here. This is termed the Unbinding property with no fuel remaining.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 15, 2012 11:02 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

Well, then it's probably best to leave it at that then.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 16, 2012 10:41 pm

Title: Re: satipatthana practice?

Content:

There are no hard and fast rules, but it's generally considered effective to pick one of the practices listed under body contemplation and develop it, preferably with the aid of a teacher. Detailed instructions on these various practices can be found in the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga.

All other aspects of the satipaṭṭhānas (i.e. contemplation of feelings, mind, and dhammas) can be related directly to the development of the practices listed under contemplation of the body. Said another way, when contemplation of the body is being developed, the other three are also being developed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 17, 2012 5:47 am

Title: Re: satipatthana practice?

Content:

Yes, the four satipaṭṭhānas are kind of like four "layers" of experience (so to speak) which we can learn to attend to and explore through mindfulness and full awareness. For example, if one's practice is mindfulness of breathing, there is always feeling occurring along with the breath, as well as mind, and the various groupings of dhammas listed under the fourth satipaṭṭhāna. With practice, we can learn how to skillfully relate to feelings as they occur. We can learn how to appreciate the spacious quality of mind that's available when we are relaxed and present. And we can learn how to work with the hindrances when they occur, and so on. There's considerable depth to these four "layers" of experience that can be explored and developed as we expand our enthusiasm and commitment to practice. And this commitment can extend into every aspect of our life, eventually bringing the simplicity of full awareness to every situation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 17, 2012 5:55 am

Title: Re: satipatthana practice?

Content:

Sounds like what you're doing is working well for you. In time you may come to appreciate other aspects of the practice, such as maintaining awareness of the breath during daily activities, and so on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 20, 2012 1:22 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

I would suggest that the first part of this conclusion is, at best, an inaccurate over-generalization. As

for the second part, you haven't offered a much better alternative thus far. By your own admission your interpretations stand in contradiction to sutta passages such as the one previously quoted from MN 121.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 20, 2012 4:33 pm

Title: Re: Jhana Question

Content:

This statement refers to the faculty of meditative composure (*samādhindriya*) of a noble disciple (*ariyasāvaka*). That is, a person who has already attained the noble paths. As such, this statement most likely refers to supramundane *jhāna*.

But at any rate, *ānāpānassatisamādhi* does begin with the breath as object-support (*ārammaṇa*).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 20, 2012 10:29 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

The teachings aren't esoteric. The aggregates, etc., can be understood by worldly *paṇḍitas* (*loka paṇḍitas*) are not restricted to the knowledge of noble disciples (*ariyasāvakas*). SN 22.94: And what is it, *bhikkhus*, that the wise in the world agree upon as existing, of which I too say that it exists? Form that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists. Feeling ... Perception ... Volitional formations ... Consciousness that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists.

The difference for a noble disciple, however, is that they have penetrated conditioned arising in both forward and reverse sequence. They use the teachings as one would use a raft, as MN 22 states, "for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto."

Moreover, a *tathāgata* arahant uses worldly designations in order to teach the way to eliminate unsatisfactoriness. But these are merely designations (*paññattimatta*). In this way, there is nothing to cling to as the basis for a fixed position. MN 72, "A 'position,' *Vaccha*, is something that a *tathāgata* has done away with." And again, MN 22, "A proponent of the dhamma does not dispute with anyone in the world."

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 20, 2012 10:44 pm

Title: Re: Jhana Question

Content:

This interpretation isn't supported by the suttas, the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, nor by the *Peṭakopadesa*: Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 20, 2012 10:46 pm

Title: Re: Jhana Question

Content:

As always, it depends upon whom you ask or where you look for clarification. According to the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā, yes. According to the Visuddhimagga, no.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 21, 2012 2:20 am

Title: Re: Jhana Question

Content:

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī gives the following two registers for vitakka and vicāra (the English equivalents here are those offered by Lance Cousins, who's done an exhaustive survey of all relevant Pāli sources):

vitakka:

1. takka 2. vitakka 3. saṅkappa 4. appanā 5. byappanā 6. cetaso abhiniropanā 7. sammāsaṅkappa

1. speculation 2. thought 3. thought formation 4. fixing 5. firm fixing 6. applying the mind 7. right thought formation.

vicāra:

1. cāra 2. vicāra 3. anuvicāra 4. upavicāra 5. cittassa anusandhānatā 6. anupekkhanatā

1. wandering 2. wandering about 3. repeated wandering about 4. frequenting 5. explorativeness of mind 6. constant examination.

These registers of terms present a spectrum of mental qualities and a range of meaning. What this implies is that there is no need to restrict definitions beyond this inclusive range of terms which correlate to a spectrum of skillful qualities relevant to sammāsamādhi.

Moreover, Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra commentators consistently define vitakka & vicāra as two types of "mental discourse" (manojalpa, lit: "mind-talk"). For example, Vasubandhu defines vitakka as "mental discourse which investigates" (paryeṣako manojalpa) and vicāra as "mental discourse which reflects" (pratyaivekṣako manojalpa). Vitakka is considered to be coarse (cittasyaudārikatā) and vicāra comparatively more subtle (cittasyasūkṣmatā). These definitions accord well with early Pāli sources such as the Peṭakopadesa, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 21, 2012 2:31 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

Already addressed in this reply.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 21, 2012 3:45 am

Title: Re: Jhana Question

Content:

Yes, again the Peṭakopadesa informs us that it's with the second jhāna that one is free from the weariness induced by vitakka & vicāra. This explanation is also likely derived from MN 19.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 22, 2012 2:17 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

As designations (paññatti) designated on the basis of mere appearances as they appear to unimpaired minds. For details, see the passages by Ven. Ñāṇananda quoted here.

Also, from Ven. Ñāṇananda's Magic of the Mind:

Sense-perception at all levels relies largely on signs.... It is due to the processes of grasping and recognition implicit in sense-perception that the sign has come to play such an important part in it.... Lust, hatred and delusion are the 'things' which, according to the teaching of the Tathāgata, are signified by all sense-percepts. 'Lust, friend, is a something; hatred is a something; delusion is a something.' (M i 298, Mahāvedalla S.) 'Lust, friends, is something significative, hatred is something significative, delusion is something significative' (ibid).

And by contemplating impermanence, etc. to the point of inducing dispassion, signs are abandoned. There's then nothing of significance to grasp or cling to. Paṭisambhidāmagga Vimokkhakathā: When he gives attention as impermanent his mind emerges from the sign; his mind enters into the signless.... Gnosis of contemplation of the signlessness of form... feeling... recognition... fabrications... consciousness... etc., is signless deliverance because it liberates from all signs.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 23, 2012 5:00 pm

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

It's a question of interpretation, not a question of language. If you now prefer a realist interpretation, which requires substantially existent unique particulars, that's your choice. But the paññattimatta interpretation has the advantage of not requiring those ontological commitments while still accepting the appearances of functional things.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 23, 2012 11:11 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday Daverupa!!!

Content:

Happy Birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 24, 2012 8:03 am

Title: Re: The Eye is Impermanent.

Content:

An appearance of pleasure, or pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. It's merely a functional thing. There's no need to philosophize.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jul 27, 2012 6:54 am

Title: Re: A Gradual Training

Content:

And this also accords with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, especially the seven factors of awakening and the four noble truths listed under the contemplation of dhammas (dhammānupassanā).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 29, 2012 5:36 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

No, it didn't. The Mahāyāna didn't result from any schism, and has nothing to do with sectarian Buddhism. The Mahāyāna isn't an ordination lineage and has never "split" from any ordination lineage. There are three existing ordination lineages: Mūlasarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, and Theravāda. All three are descended from the ancient Sthaviravāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 29, 2012 5:42 pm

Title: Re: cherry picking the words of the Buddha

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 29, 2012 8:13 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Bullitt or his source is mistaken. The first schism had nothing to do with the eventual rise of the Mahāyāna. Moreover, the early Mahāyāna texts and commentators drew ideas from various Nikāya sects, including those descended from the Sthaviravāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 29, 2012 8:59 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Concerning the first schism, Lance Cousins, The 'Five Points' and the Origins of the Buddhist Schools: What is important is that the picture which now emerges is one in which the earliest division of the saṅgha was primarily a matter of monastic discipline. The Mahāsāṅghikas were essentially a conservative party resisting a reformist attempt to tighten discipline. The likelihood is that they were initially the larger body, representing the mass of the community, the mahāsaṅgha.

Another informative paper on this subject is Śaīkṣa-dharmas Revisited: Further Considerations of Mahāsāṅghika Origins by Charles S. Prebish.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 29, 2012 11:08 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

This isn't conjecture: The first schism had nothing to do with the eventual rise of the Mahāyāna.

It's erroneous to equate the Mahāsāṅghikas with the Mahāyāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 30, 2012 6:27 am

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Since the Prebish paper is silent on the issue, you're probably referring to the Cousins paper. But Cousins doesn't contradict anything I've said. Regarding the historical associations he says (emphasis added):

The later literature on the schools reflects a later situation when the Mahāsāṅghikas had largely adopted the Mahāyāna. Sarvāstivādin writers may attribute Mahāyānist notions to the Mahāsāṅghikas in order to discredit one or both. Mahāyānist writers of a later date (e.g. Paramārtha) associate the two in order to show the antiquity of the Mahāyāna. Probably most later Mahāsāṅghikas believed that their particular tradition had always been Mahāyānist. It is however clear that the Mahāyāna cannot be this early.

Thus, he suggests some motives for later positions taken from various quarters. But he does not say that first schism gave rise to the Mahāyāna. Nor does he say that the Mahāsāṅghikas of this period are to be equated with the Mahāyāna.

Now, to go further into the issue, there is no doubt that certain later Mahāsāṅghika notions were prominent in the historical development of Mahāyāna ideas. But so were trends occurring in other sectarian quarters, most notably Sarvāstivāda sources. For example, Schnithausen has shown that early Mahāyāna Yogācāra texts rely heavily upon the Sarvāstivāda Āgamas. And based on a number of Chanjing texts now only extant in Chinese translation, Deleanu, Yamabe, and Seton have each shown that there were a spectrum of proto-Mahāyāna & Mahāyāna ideas being articulated and developed amongst authors in the first centuries CE who otherwise indicate Sarvāstivāda doctrinal affiliations. Therefore, the historical development of Mahāyāna ideas is quite dynamic, and occurred in various diverse Indian Buddhist communities.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 30, 2012 9:39 am

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

An informative talk. The first hour is relevant to some issues under discussion here. Thanks for posting it.

BTW, Ven. Huifeng also mentions that he was involved in the writing and editing of some of the Wikipedia pages on these subjects.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 7:53 am

Title: Re: Are there any practices in Zen not found in Theravada

Content:

Yes. For example, Changlu Zongze's Zuochanyi:

This one teaching of meditation is our most urgent business. If you do not practice meditation and enter dhyāna, then when it comes down to it, you will be completely at a loss. Therefore, to seek the pearl, we should still the waves; if we disturb the water, it will be hard to get. When the water of meditation is clear, the pearl of the mind will appear of itself. Therefore, the Perfect Enlightenment Sūtra says, "Unimpeded, immaculate wisdom always arises dependent on meditation." The Lotus Blossom Sūtra says, "In a quiet place, he practices the control of the mind, abiding motionless like Mt. Sumeru." Thus, transcending the profane and surpassing the holy are always contingent on the condition of dhyāna; shedding [this body] while seated and fleeing [this life] while standing are necessarily dependent on the power of samādhi. Even if one devotes himself to the practice his entire life, he may still not be in time; how then could one who procrastinates possibly overcome karma? Therefore, an ancient has said, "Without the power of samādhi, you will meekly cower at death's door." Shutting your eyes, you will end your life in vain; and just as you are, you will drift [in saṃsāra].

I remember many years ago Ven. Heng Sure commenting about one monk from the CTTB who would regularly sit in dhyāna for 5+ hours at a time. And there's the reports of Ven. Xuyun remaining in samādhi for extended periods, once for a period of 18 days, and twice for periods of 9 days each: An Inquiry Into Master Xuyun's Experiences of Long-dwelling in Samādhi. Granted, these are exceptional cases, but dhyāna requires a dedicated, refined level of practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 8:31 am

Title: Re: The Beautiful Metteyya Buddha/The Golden Buddha Statue

Content:

Quite beautiful.

Thanks Yawares.



Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 12:51 pm

Title: Chanjing Meditation Manuals

Content:

Here are some links to a few translations and papers on the Chanjing meditation manuals which are preserved in Chinese translation. These texts mainly present ancient Sarvāstivāda descriptions of meditation practices, and are in some ways similar to the better known Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimagga. Florin Deleanu gives a general overview of this group of texts in his paper *Mindfulness of Breathing in the Dhyāna Sūtras*:

The term dhyāna sūtra represents a reconstruction of the Chinese chan jing, which appears in the titles of a certain group of texts as well as in the writings of Chinese Buddhists of the early 5th century AD as Sengrui, Huiyuan, and Huiguan.

This group represents treatises or manuals of meditation belonging to or, at least, partly drawing their inspiration from Sarvāstivāda tradition. We must not forget, however, that many of the dhyāna sūtras are, as it were, a common product of the Buddhist traditions from North-West India, Central Asia, and China. Although the basic material of these texts doubtlessly comes from Indian Buddhism, we must not exclude the possibility that they were compiled in Central Asia or that Buddhist monks from Central Asia, who in most of the cases were those who brought the dhyāna sūtras to China, had a more or less substantial influence on the final form of the scriptures in the process of translating them into Chinese. Kumārajīva would be perhaps the most eloquent example of this case.

Doctrinally, the dhyāna sūtras range from a basically orthodox Sarvāstivāda standpoint to a substantial compromise with Mahāyāna teachings and practices. In some cases, this compromise is so advanced that it is very difficult to make a distinction between such a text and a samādhi sūtra (sammei jing), which represents a purely Mahāyāna scripture....

Although the textual formation of many of these dhyāna sūtras remains a very complicated process, the original texts or, at least, much of the meditation practices and doctrines, especially those associated with Conservative Buddhism, can be traced back to the Kashmirian Yogācāra school belonging to the Sarvāstivāda tradition. Most of these meditation manuals were compiled or, at least, reflect the practice and theory of the Sarvāstivāda Yogācārins of the first four centuries of our era.

To date, the best English language translation of one of these texts is *The Sūtra on the Concentration of Sitting Meditation*, translated by Nobuyoshi Yamabe and Fumihiko Sueki (listed below). Please add any other relevant texts, translations, and studies.

T 15 no. 606 *Xiuxing dao di jing* (Yogācārabhūmi of Saṅgharakṣa)

Demiéville, Paul. 'La Yogācārabhūmi de Sangharakṣa', *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, Tome 44 N°2, 1951.

Seton, Gregory Max. *A Preliminary Study of The Meaning of "Yoga" in Saṅgharakṣa's Yogācārabhūmi and Its Context*. M.A. Thesis, University of California at Santa Barbara, 2009.

T 15 no. 613 *Chan miyao fa jing* (Sūtra of The Secret Essentials of Dhyāna)

Yuanci. *A Study of the Meditation Methods in the DESM and Other Early Chinese Texts*. The Buddhist

Academy of China. n.d.

T 15 no. 614 Zuochan sanmei jing (Dhyānasamādhisūtra)

Yamabe, Nobuyoshi. The Sūtra on the Concentration of Sitting Meditation. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2009.

Guo Cheen. The Sutra of Sitting Dhyāna Samadhi. n.d.

T 15 no. 616 Chanfa yaojie (Essential Explanation of The Method of Dhyāna)

Huynh, Trung (Thich Hang Dat). A Reappraisal of Kumārajīva's Role in Medieval Chinese Buddhism: An Examination of Kumārajīva's Translation Text on "The Essential Explanation of the Method of Dhyana". M.A. Thesis, University of the West, 2011.

T 15 no. 617 Siwei yaolue fa (An Epitome of Meditation)

Mukhopadhyaya, Sujitkumar. An Outline of Principal Methods of Meditation. Santiniketan, 1972. (Originally published in the Visva-Bharati Annals, vol. III, 1950.)

T 15 no. 618 Damoduoluo chan jing (Dharmatrāta Dhyānasūtra)

Other related resources:

Deleanu, Florin. 'Mindfulness of Breathing in the Dhyāna Sūtras', Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan (TICOJ) 37, 1992.

Deleanu, Florin. 'Śrāvakayāna Yoga Practices and Mahāyāna Buddhism', Bulletin of the Graduate Division of Literature of Waseda University, Special Issue No. 20 (Philosophy-History), 1993.

Deleanu, Florin. 'A Preliminary Study of An Shigao's Translation of the Yogācārabhūmi', The Journal of the Department of Liberal Arts of Kansai Medical University, Vol. 17, 1997.

Greene, Eric. Of Bones and Buddhas: Contemplation of the Corpse and its Connection to Meditations on Purity as Evidenced by 5th Century Chinese Meditation Manuals. M.A. Thesis. University of California, 2006.

Yamabe, Nobuyoshi. The Sūtra of the Ocean-Like Samadhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asian as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra. PhD Dissertation. Yale University, 1999.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 4:47 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

What's the merit of your fixation on this term Kirk? If you want to know what it's like to be free from death then apply the practice injunctions and realize the arahant fruition. All of this speculation is quite pointless.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 4:53 pm

Title: Re: Co-dependent Origination?

Content:

No, they don't.

Here's a suggestion: Set aside this speculative theorizing and practice satipaṭṭhāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 6:07 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

I'm familiar with that passage. And I've already addressed the terms used there in this previous reply. What's your point?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 31, 2012 6:49 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

To encourage you to disengage from this conceptual proliferation which impedes realization. SN 43.14:

And what, monks, is the death-free (amata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the death-free.

End of story.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 01, 2012 4:46 am

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

This is the important bit: "The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion...."

The Asaṅkhata Saṃyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya offers thirty-three epithets for the goal of practice. Each of these epithets is then explicitly and unequivocally defined as the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 01, 2012 7:08 am

Title: Re: Copyright on the Dhamma

Content:

And as you know, ATI offers Ven. Ñāṇamoli's translation of The Path of Purification for free download. And BPS offers many free publications in their Online Library. All things considered, there is a significant number of Pāli texts freely available in English translation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 01, 2012 7:14 am

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

Which are nicely elaborated upon in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Suññatākathā:

Through the stream-entry path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of defilements associated with wrong view; through the once-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of gross defilements; through the non-returner path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of secondary defilements; through the arahant path one who is fully aware terminates the occurrence of all defilements [i.e. ignorance].

Or through the nibbāna component (nibbānadhātu) without any fuel remaining for one who is fully aware this occurrence of eye ends and no further occurrence of eye arises; this occurrence of ear ends and no further occurrence of ear arises; this occurrence of nose ends and no further occurrence of nose arises; this occurrence of tongue ends and no further occurrence of tongue arises; this occurrence of body ends and no further occurrence of body arises; this occurrence of mind ends and no further occurrence of mind arises.

This is the ultimate meaning of emptiness [as it relates to] all kinds of emptiness, which is the terminating of occurrence in one who is fully aware.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 01, 2012 7:31 am

Title: Re: Olympics

Content:

Now, if humanity could be fed, clothed, and sheltered without destroying the planet, that would be worthy of celebration....

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 01, 2012 8:18 am

Title: Re: Olympics

Content:

Sure, I have no problem with celebrating athletics (or academics, arts, philanthropy, etc.).

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Aug 03, 2012 7:47 pm  
Title: Re: Co-dependent Origination?  
Content:

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Aug 04, 2012 3:44 pm  
Title: Re: Ancient Ajanta Cave In Aurangabad, India  
Content:  
360 Degree Virtual Tour of the Ajanta Caves.

Setting the Three Jewels: The Complex Culture of Buddhism at the Ajaṇṭā Caves by Richard Scott Cohen.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Aug 05, 2012 12:19 am  
Title: Re: Early Buddhism resources  
Content:  
Studies in Āgama Literature - With Special Reference to the Shorter Chinese Saṃyuktāgama by Marcus Bingenheimer.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Aug 06, 2012 8:41 pm  
Title: Re: Entering Jhana Without Single Object Absorption  
Content:  
Ekaggatā is a mental factor that occurs with every type of consciousness. It doesn't preclude thinking or activities like walking and talking.

Also, directed thought and evaluation of the first jhāna do have a subtle disturbing effect on the mind and body. The Peṭakopadesa:  
In the case of the first jhāna ... there is directed thought and evaluation [which still] disturb the mind, and the body [still] gets tired there, and when the body gets tired the mind is harassed....

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Aug 07, 2012 10:16 am  
Title: Re: Finally pinned it down...  
Content:  
Then from a pragmatic perspective, this is a good thing to know, and you can practice accordingly.

Plus, there's nothing saying that you can't still draw some inspiration from the Heart Sūtra, etc.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 12:01 am  
Title: Re: Aggregate?  
Content:  
A middle way approach:

- (a) The aggregates are designations that designate aggregations of dhammas.
- (b) Dhammas are designations designated on the basis of mere appearances as they appear to unimpaired minds.
- (c) All teachings and path structures are provisional expedients, oriented towards lessening and eventually eliminating defilements and fetters.

This paññattimatta interpretation has the advantage of not requiring ontological commitments while still accepting the appearances of functional things and the utility of conventional path language and terms.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 12:23 am  
Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?  
Content:

FTR, according to the Mahāyāna Adhyāśayasamcodana Sūtra as quoted by Śāntideva in his Compendium of Training (Śikṣāsamuccaya), four principles indicate that an utterance (or statement, teaching, etc.) is compatible with the speech of the Buddha:

- (i) it is connected with truth, not with what is untrue;
- (ii) it is connected with dharma, not with what is not dharma;
- (iii) it leads to giving up defilement, not to increasing defilement;
- (iv) it points out the praiseworthy qualities of nirvāṇa, not those of saṃsāra.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 2:01 am  
Title: Re: Aggregate?  
Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda has done some of the leg work on this. So did Candrakīrti 1400 years ago.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 4:01 am  
Title: Re: Aggregate?  
Content:

Well, they cover much of the same ground, but Ñāṇananda doesn't take the analysis as far. There's

no real need to.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 7:14 am

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

How do you know what the Buddha said? Were you there?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 8:10 am

Title: Re: Khandas, dhatus and ayatanas are real

Content:

According to the Abhidhamma, consciousness of an object also requires attention and at least a modicum of intention. This is also indicated in MN 28 Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta:

Now if internally the eye is intact but externally forms do not come into range, nor is there a corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

If internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, but there is no corresponding engagement, then there is no appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and externally forms come into range, and there is a corresponding engagement, then there is the appearing of the corresponding type of consciousness.

Thus, for sensory consciousness to occur there needs to be samannāhāra: "corresponding engagement."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 12, 2012 3:52 pm

Title: Re: Khandas, dhatus and ayatanas are real

Content:

It's interesting that Candrakīrti quotes this sutta passage as scriptural support for the Madhyamaka interpretation that the aggregates, etc., are simply designations which accord with worldly conventions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 10:32 am

Title: Re: Concepts, pannati

Content:

It might be more accurate to state that this differentiation is according to Theravāda commentaries. Why? Because said doctrine isn't representative of all teachers and teachings included within the category "Theravāda." For example, at least one contemporary teacher, whose writings have been published by BPS and elsewhere, has devoted considerable time and effort over the past 40 years to questioning the usefulness of this very differentiation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 11:35 am

Title: Re: New Book on Mindfulness by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Content:

There have been and continue to be monastics and scholars -- both ancient and modern -- who don't consider the Kathāvatthu to be canonical. As for the former, in the beginning of the Atthasālinī, Buddhaghosa attempts to argue at length for why the Kathāvatthu should be included in the Tipiṭaka, even though there were others who thought that it should not (whom he refers to as "Vitaṇḍavādī," which may be a pejorative name referring to the monks of the Abhayagirivihāra).

And in recent times, there have been a number of scholars who have suggested, based on internal linguistic, thematic, and structural evidence, that the Kathāvatthu is a composite text that was expanded over a considerable length of time, and therefore the text as we now have it can't be attributed to Moggaliputtatissa in the third century BCE.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 11:58 am

Title: Re: Concepts, pannati

Content:

Yes, I'm aware of the forum guidelines. I have no qualms with people wanting to present and discuss the ideas contained in the commentaries, but I would suggest that it's inaccurate -- both historically and now -- to imply that there is (i) a monolithic "Theravāda doctrine" in the commentaries themselves, or that (ii) the commentaries represent "Theravāda doctrine." Insofar as there is such a category as "Theravāda doctrine," this category is far more heterogeneous than implied in Robert's use of the phrase in the OP.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 12:20 pm

Title: Re: Individual truth

Content:

I think that this may be one of more difficult teachings to communicate in contemporary Theravāda circles. I've attempted to articulate it a number of times (e.g. here), and on occasion I've seen resistance and/or confusion similar to what Ven. Ñāṇananda has himself mentioned in passing: "If there is no sub-stance in any-thing, what is left is empti-ness. But many peo-ple are afraid of words. Like śūnyatā. They want to pro-tect their four." With that 'irrev-er-ent' com-ment about the four para-mattha dhamma-s of the Abhid-hamma, Bhante Ñāṇananda breaks into amused laughter.

"If one does not approach the com-men-tar-ial lit-er-a-ture with a crit-i-cal eye, one would be trapped. Unfor-tu-nately many are. In fact, I had to remove a few pages from the man-u-script of Con-cept and Real-ity on Ven. Nyanaponika's request".

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 1:20 pm



Title: Re: Individual truth  
Content:  
Indeed.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Mon Aug 13, 2012 1:46 pm  
Title: Re: Ancient Commentaries are representative of Theravada?  
Content:  
Sure we can, and we can do so without dismissing or disrespecting the great contributions of the ancient Theras in terms of preserving and continuing the Buddha's dispensation.

To insist otherwise could have the consequence of reducing this vibrant, living tradition to a fixed set of ideological platitudes.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Aug 14, 2012 4:27 am  
Title: Re: re: Gradual training vs Arupa-jhana  
Content:  
It's entirely possible that this sutta is composite, as may be the case with most of the suttas in the MN & DN (i.e. the result of "stitching together" smaller units of text found in the SN & AN and adding narrative). But a couple of points here:

(i) MN 122 doesn't explicitly mention the standard pericopes for the formless attainments (the "imperturbable" is inclusive of the fourth jhāna, cf. MN 66)

(ii) there are indeed indications in the suttas that one can engage in walking meditation, etc., while abiding in jhāna. Cf. AN 3.63 where the Buddha explicitly says that he can walk, etc. while abiding in jhāna, and also AN 4.12 where it's said that one can engage in each of the four postures while free of the hindrances and with the mind "samāhitaṃ cittaṃ ekaggaṃ."

Author: Nyana  
Date: Tue Aug 14, 2012 10:33 pm  
Title: Re: Happy Birthday Lazy Eye  
Content:  
Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Aug 15, 2012 5:52 pm  
Title: Re: New Book on Mindfulness by Thanissaro Bhikkhu  
Content:  
If one wants to be precise "bare attention" is more akin to sampajañña than to sati.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 15, 2012 6:07 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

It seems to me that you've confused yourself by trying to follow too many systems. Firstly, the Vajrayāna is merely a subset of the Mahāyāna employing skillful means. Secondly, the Dzogchen tantras have been considered controversial throughout their history in Tibet and there is no evidence that they were ever propagated or accepted in Buddhist India. Thirdly, I'd suggest that if you want to understand the Mahāyāna on its own terms you find a reputable Gelugpa lama and study Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccaya and Bodhicaryāvatāra for a few years (and practice accordingly).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 15, 2012 7:11 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Yes, well, this isn't an appropriate forum to go into such things, but Bhāviveka, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, et al, have already systematically refuted the views of Vedānta, Mimāṃsā, etc. Of course, you're certainly free to create any conceptual synthesis of different systems that you wish, but it's inaccurate to assert that your hybrids represent Mahāyāna teachings and practices.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 2:02 pm

Title: Re: Aggregate?

Content:

Yeah, this kind of mistaken view that the realization of the third noble truth requires the temporary cessation of the mind is not uncommon in Theravāda circles these days. But in fact, the classical Theravāda ācariyas never accepted this notion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 2:07 pm

Title: Re: Bhante Gunaratana hospitalized

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 8:16 pm

Title: Re: Aggregate?

Content:

In the case of an arahant attaining the noble path & fruition, it doesn't matter which mind model we use to represent the cognitive series, the sixth consciousness is always present in these instances.

For the commentarial version of the path and fruition cognitive series, see The Path of Purification, Chapter 22, pp. 701-707 (PDF edition).

For an overview of the same, see The Seven Stages of Purification and the Insight Knowledges, p. 137.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 8:29 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Irrelevant question, but at any rate, all extant commentarial traditions including the Theravāda maintain that an arahant disciple does not have omniscient knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 9:45 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Monism, pantheism, Vedānta, Mimāṃsā, etc., are all quite incompatible with right view. And without right view there can be no path to bodhi. Again, this has been explained at length by numerous Mahāyāna commentators. Your idiosyncratic opinions are not representative of the Mahāyāna teachings, period.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 16, 2012 10:34 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Well, again, this is at best a tangential point. I don't need to explain guru yoga, but I do think it can be well accounted for without recourse to a pantheistic view. But at any rate, I'd be interested to see the replies if you were to post this assertion on the Dharma Wheel Tibetan Buddhism Forum.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Aug 17, 2012 4:46 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday James the Giant!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 18, 2012 2:45 am

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

This is an over-generalization. The Mahāyāna includes a number of different currents encompassing

many historical developments occurring over a thousand year period in India. There are numerous early Mahāyāna texts that don't make this claim at all. Moreover, there are Tibetan & Western authors who interpret Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti as maintaining that a noble disciple has the same discernment of emptiness as an advanced noble bodhisattva.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 18, 2012 7:19 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Yes, Mahāyāna traditions generally have had to resort to various novel syncretic interpretive strategies to try to make a coherent bodhisattva path out of the vast and diverse body of Indian Mahāyāna texts. Meaningful scriptural authority is problematic in this context. Even more so in this modern era where textual criticism and historical evidences have established that the Mahāyāna texts have no direct link to the historical Buddha.

However, as far as quality of teachings is concerned, and internal consistency, nothing else comes even close to matching the Pāli Nikāyas. Personally, this is why the Nikāyas are the only corpus of Buddhist discourses that I consider to be authoritative, or am willing to recommend to others without reservation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 18, 2012 7:30 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

He's attempting to differentiate between sammāsambodhi and sāvakabodhi.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 19, 2012 5:16 am

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

I'm guessing that you meant to say "not" instead of "now"?

Anyway, I should have read the entire passage in context. Je Tsongkhapa is referring to aspiration, hence although a hīnayāna aspiration will benefit oneself and leads to happiness, it is still an obstacle for a bodhisattva. The larger context is that he is trying to correlate the three vehicle notion with the one vehicle notion (ekayāna) where all paths eventually lead to buddhahood.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Aug 19, 2012 3:15 pm

Title: Re: Is mahayana Buddhism?

Content:

Sure. You won't get any argument out of me. The Mahāyāna criticisms of sāvakas and arahants are baseless, and the use of pejorative language (i.e. "hīnayāna") is a problem for contemporary

Mahāyāna traditions to deal with, not a problem for Theravāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 21, 2012 6:30 am

Title: Re: Similarities of Mahayana and theravada

Content:

Me either.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 21, 2012 10:06 pm

Title: Re: Theravāda Sectarian Attitudes

Content:

It's like meaningfully differentiating between lung cancer and skin cancer. Both are cancers, but they manifest in different locations and different ways. Similarly, there are different types of sectarian attitudes. That which manifests as Theravāda sectarianism is generally based on a different set of assumptions than, say, what manifests as Sōtō Zen sectarianism, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 21, 2012 10:20 pm

Title: Re: Theravāda Sectarian Attitudes

Content:

(i) No one knows what the Buddha said. All we have are different collections of records that are claimed to represent what the Buddha said.

(ii) In your attempts to lump nibbāna together with an eternal consciousness you haven't shown much knowledge of what the Buddha is claimed to have said in the Nikāyas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Aug 21, 2012 11:49 pm

Title: Re: Theravāda Sectarian Attitudes

Content:

It might be worth keeping in mind that your perceptions are your perceptions and no one else's. For example, I don't think that your characterization of this thread is accurate.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 22, 2012 12:36 am

Title: Re: Theravāda Sectarian Attitudes

Content:

Calling into question your understanding of the Nikāyas isn't an ad hom.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 22, 2012 1:17 am

Title: Re: Reunify the Buddhism, is there any way?

Content:

Indeed.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Aug 22, 2012 8:00 pm

Title: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

I reject your interpretation and understanding of the Theravāda and the Mahāyāna. It's really that simple.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Aug 25, 2012 1:01 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

According to Buddhaghosa, consciousness (viññāṇa) has the characteristic of knowing/cognizing (vijānana). Cf. MN 43:

"'Consciousness, consciousness': Thus is it said. To what extent, friend, is it said to be 'consciousness'?"

"'It cognizes, it cognizes': Thus, friend, it is said to be 'consciousness.' And what does it cognize? It cognizes 'pleasant.' It cognizes 'painful.' It cognizes 'neither painful nor pleasant.' 'It cognizes, it cognizes': Thus it is said to be 'consciousness.'"

And SN 22.79:

And why, bhikkhus, do you call it consciousness? 'It cognizes,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called consciousness. And what does it cognize? It cognizes sour, it cognizes bitter, it cognizes pungent, it cognizes sweet, it cognizes sharp, it cognizes mild, it cognizes salty, it cognizes bland. 'It cognizes,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called consciousness.

Ven. Bodhi's endnote to this passage from SN 22.79 states, in part:

Usually in the suttas viññāṇa is presented simply as the basic awareness of an object through one of the sense bases, i.e., as bare "consciousness of" rather than as a discriminative capacity. A parallel treatment of viññāṇa at MN I 292,26-29 defines it through its ability to cognize the three types of feelings (pleasant, painful, neutral); this just shifts the problem to that of distinguishing between viññāṇa and vedanā. Hamilton discusses the problem posed by these passages (Identity and Experience, pp. 53-55, 92-93). She offers the helpful suggestion that although viññāṇa is here defined in a way that encroaches upon the domain of saññā, we should understand that saññā does the actual discrimination (of objects at all five senses) while viññāṇa "is the awareness by which we experience every stage of the cognitive process, including the process of discriminating" (p. 92).

You might not consider this satisfactory, but it works.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Aug 30, 2012 6:29 pm

Title: Re: Gradual training vs Arupa-jhana

Content:

The formless attainments and cessation attainment play a very minor part in the Abhidhammapiṭaka, and have no direct role in the attainment of the noble paths and fruits. The Theravāda commentarial tradition has also consistently maintained this separation.

As for the closing of the canon, I think it's quite possible that suttas were still being written contemporaneously with the formation of the Abhidhamma system. I also think it's possible that the groups advocating the formless attainments may have been in opposition to those who were developing the Abhidhamma to some degree. If I remember correctly this correlates with what people like Gombrich and Bronkhorst have suggested.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 03, 2012 5:44 pm

Title: Re: Visualization

Content:

If it helps to inspire and motivate your study and practice then it's skillful and meritorious. Plus, there are some beautiful visionary images in Pāli texts, such as the Buddhāpadāna: The Tradition of the Previous Excellent Deeds of the Buddha, as well as other practices that can include visualization like the Jinapañjara Gāthā. The Theravāda is a rich tradition with many different practices and meditation methods.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 11, 2012 3:01 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Yes, a buddha's awakening is unsurpassable and perfect (anuttarāsammāsaṃbodhi) and surpasses the awakening of a disciple (sāvaka-bodhi). For example, the Paṭisambhidāmagga explains the following knowledge and abilities that a buddha has developed which are not developed by arahant disciples:

knowledge of the penetration of other beings' faculties

knowledge of other beings' biases and underlying tendencies

knowledge of the twin miracle\*

knowledge of the attainment of great compassion

omniscience & unobstructed knowledge

\*i.e. the ability to produce fire and water from various parts of the body, as well as walk amid an aura of colors while a created image of his body sits or lies down, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 11, 2012 8:00 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your interpretation of the suttas may paint a bit of a different picture. If so, your interpretation differs from that of the ancient Theravāda tradition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 11, 2012 11:45 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your survey is selective, and doesn't take into account a number of sutta passages as well as various texts in the Khuddakanikāya. Regarding suttas, in the context of knowledge there is AN 4.24:

Monks, whatever in the cosmos — with its devas, Maras, & Brahmas, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans royalty & common people — is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That do I know. Whatever in the cosmos — with its devas, Maras, & Brahmas, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people — is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That I directly know. That has been realized by the Tathagata, but in the Tathagata it has not been established.

And SN 56.31:

[T]hose things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught].

And in the context of penetrating others' faculties, dispositions, and underlying tendencies, there is SN 6.1:

Then the Blessed One, having understood Brahma's invitation, out of compassion for beings, surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and those with much, those with keen faculties and those with dull, those with good attributes and those with bad, those easy to teach and those hard, some of them seeing disgrace and danger in the other world.

And in the context of physical qualities, MN 91:

The report that has been spread about Master Gotama is true, sir, and not otherwise; and Master Gotama is one such as this and not otherwise. He possesses the thirty-two marks of a Great Man.

Master Gotama sets his foot down squarely — this is a mark of a Great Man in Master Gotama. On the soles of his feet there are wheels with a thousand spokes and ribs and hubs all complete ... He has projecting heels ... He has long fingers and toes ... His hands and feet are soft and tender ... He has netted hands and feet ... His feet are arched ... He has legs like an antelope's ... When he stands without stooping, the palms of both his hands touch and rub against his knees ... His male organ is enclosed in a sheath ... He is the colour of gold, his skin has a golden sheen ... He is fine-skinned, and because of the fineness of his skin, dust and dirt do not stick on his body ... His body-hairs grow singly, each body-hair growing alone in a hair socket ... The tips of his body-hairs turn up; the up-turned body-hairs are blue-black, the colour of collyrium, curled and turned to the right ... He has the straight limbs of a Brahma ... He has seven convexities ... He has the torso of a lion ... The furrow between his shoulders is filled in ... He has the spread of a banyan tree; the span of his arms equals the height of his body, and the height of his body equals the span of his arms ... His neck and his shoulders are even ... His taste is supremely acute ... He is lion-jawed ... He has forty teeth ... His teeth are even ... His teeth are without gaps ... His teeth are quite white ... He has a large tongue ... He has a



divine voice, like the call of the Karavika bird ... His eyes are deep blue ... He has the eyelashes of an ox ... He has hair growing in the space between his eyebrows, which is white with the sheen of soft cotton ... His head is shaped like a turban - this is a mark of a Great Man in Master Gotama. Master Gotama is endowed with these thirty-two marks of a Great Man.

These are just a few examples, without even taking into consideration passages from the Khuddakanikāya, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 11, 2012 11:54 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The safe bet would be to keep practicing the perfections to the best of one's abilities. There are living Theravāda monks who are considered to be bodhisattas. For example, Ajahn Gavesako mentions having met Luang Phor Jahm in north-east Thailand in 2011:

We stayed at the monastery of Luang Por Jahm nearby; he is 101 years old and a disciple of Luang Por Mun, he used to go wandering through the forests with him. He is also reputed to be a practising bodhisatta, cultivating the perfections (parami) in order to become the future Buddha no. 16, for which he apparently already received a prediction in a past life.

Here's a picture of Luang Phor Jahm blessing visitors:

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 12, 2012 1:14 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I don't know if Luang Phor Jahm teaches on this subject or not. You could PM Ajahn Gavesako to see if he has any more information.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 12, 2012 1:35 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

One can quite rightly infer from this passage, when taken in conjunction with the passages supplied here, that the knowledge and other aptitudes required to give rise to the path previously unarisen is necessarily more extensive than that required by a sāvaka to follow the path to the point of fruition once it has been disclosed and taught in detail. This is precisely what every Buddhist tradition has concluded from the content of the Nikāyas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 12, 2012 3:33 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

For a sāvaka disciple, yes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 12, 2012 3:35 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Already addressed: AN 4.24 implicitly accounts for the stage of omniscience (sabbaññutabhūmi). SN 6.1 implicitly accounts for the knowledge of degrees of maturity in the faculties of sentient beings (indriyaparopariyattañāṇa) and the knowledge of the dispositions and underlying tendencies of sentient beings (āsayānusayañāṇa).

Both explanations are straight out of the Theravāda commentaries on the suttas, and in addition to what was offered from the canonical Psm here, renders your opinion that, "The "enlightenment" -- bodhi -- of the arahant is no different from that of the Buddha," an example of modernist secular revisionism that has no precedent in the history of Theravāda Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 13, 2012 1:52 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Then it might be prudent and certainly more balanced to explain to questioners what the Theravāda teaches instead of hitting them with your opinion that "The "enlightenment" -- bodhi -- of the arahant is no different from that of the Buddha," as if this were truly established. Then questioners might not come away mistakenly thinking that the distinctions between the three types of bodhi is a "taboo" subject.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 13, 2012 9:13 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Yes -- plural. You've presented this opinion on threads in the Discovering Theravāda forum as well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 2:36 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

It's the conclusion that Darwid came to, after having lengthy discussions of this subject with you. It's far more balanced and appropriate to set out the canonical Theravāda viewpoint on a subject, especially to new people inquiring about Theravāda Buddhism, even if one doesn't agree with some of the details.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 2:39 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

If you're referring to his Arahants, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas paper, it's incomplete. For example, any analysis of "pre-sectarian period" ideas needs to include the relevant non-Pāli sources. And in this case sources from the Mahāsāṃghika side might contain some interesting material.

But more importantly, even if a thorough study were to be done, I suspect that text-critical analysis of the sutta strata materials is an insufficient tool to tell us what the Buddha actually thought about himself, his awakening, and his place in history.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 4:13 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

One person who has voiced that conclusion. You've presented this argument to a number of questioners. Again, it's more balanced and appropriate to set out the canonical Theravāda viewpoint on a subject, especially to new people inquiring about Theravāda Buddhism, even if one doesn't agree with some of the details.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 3:25 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Stop posting your novel opinions on the Discovering Theravāda forum.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 8:15 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The four great references set a standard for excluding new ideas that would not be supported by the sutta and vinaya materials. They don't establish criteria for commenting upon and developing what is already present in these collections, whereas the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Peṭakopadesa, and the Nettippakaraṇa do.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 8:23 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I have offered several criticisms, supported by references, but they all relate to one central criticism: Your premise that dhamma principles can be sufficiently analyzed by exclusively relying on sutta strata materials is faulty.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 10:14 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Given that this is a Theravāda forum it's entirely reasonable to give preference to these texts, and if you choose to disagree with what they have to offer then the onus is entirely upon you to demonstrate why they are mistaken and you are not.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 10:23 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The suttas are not a comprehensive, systematic presentation of the dhamma, and there is no evidence that they were ever meant to be. Moreover, there is no evidence that the suttas were ever meant to be understood without recourse to further commentary (oral, then later, written commentary). The four great references don't address these issues at all.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 11:24 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

No, there isn't. But the caveat is that any conclusions that diverge significantly from the received tradition are speculative at best.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 11:31 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The only rebuttal necessary is to point out that your analysis contradicts the Paṭisambhidāmagga, which is an authoritative, canonical Theravāda text.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Sep 14, 2012 11:55 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I'll expand my criteria just for you Dave: The only rebuttal necessary is to point out that tiltbillings' analysis contradicts the Paṭisambhidāmagga as well as every extant Buddhist tradition.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 2:32 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Except for the distinction between the nibbāna component with fuel remaining (saupādisesa nibbānadhātu) and the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu), the Theravāda tradition has always maintained that there are not.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 2:34 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

There is no Buddhist tradition which denies that omniscience was a part of the Buddha's awakening.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 3:43 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your penchant for textual literalism on this issue is both amusing and rather ironic, given that you vehemently object to criticisms of Burmese Vipassanā that employ the strategy of rejecting it because terms such as "momentary concentration" or the technique of "labeling" aren't explicitly stated in the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 4:14 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Okay, so what do you propose this knowledge described in AN 4.24 is the result of? AN 4.24: Whatever in the cosmos — with its devas, Maras, & Brahmas, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmins, their royalty & common people — is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That I directly know.

What do you propose this ability to know others' faculties is the result of? SN 6.1:

Then the Blessed One, having understood Brahma's invitation, out of compassion for beings, surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and those with much, those with keen faculties and those with dull, those with good attributes and those with bad, those easy to teach and those hard, some of them seeing disgrace and danger in the other world.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 6:13 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The term used in SN 6.1 is buddhacakkhu. If SN 6.1 were referring to the divine eye, why wouldn't it explicitly say so, given that the divine eye is a specific type of higher knowledge described in detail elsewhere in the suttas?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 6:58 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

It's a simple question: Do you yourself have direct knowledge of what the Buddha is referring to in this passage from AN 4.24, yes or no?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 7:08 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

A noteworthy passage from the sutta:

Lending ear, he hears the Dhamma. Hearing the Dhamma, he remembers it. Remembering it, he penetrates the meaning of those dhammas. Penetrating the meaning, he comes to an agreement through pondering those dhammas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 8:58 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Are you suggesting that oral commentary which was not included in the sutta collections didn't exist at that time? I think that scenario is rather unlikely.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 9:11 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The distinction of your second point has been highlighted by the Theravāda (and most every other Buddhist tradition) as an important part of the Buddha's awakening. These qualities are specific knowledges unique to the Buddha. The Paṭisambhidāmagga describes six such knowledges:

[1] What is the Perfect One's knowledge of penetration of others' faculties (indriyaparopariyatta ñāṇa)?

Here the Perfect One (tathāgata) sees beings as with little dust on their eyes, as with much dust on their eyes, as with keen faculties, as with dull faculties, as of good parts, as of bad parts, as easy to instruct, as hard to instruct, and also some who see fear in the other world and in what is censurable, and also some who see no fear in the other world and in what is censurable....

[2] What is the Perfect One's knowledge of beings' biases and underlying tendencies (āsayānusaya

ñāṇa)?

Here the Perfect One knows beings' biases, he knows their underlying tendencies, he knows their behaviour, he knows their resolutions, he knows beings as capable and incapable....

[3] What is the Perfect One's knowledge of the Twin Metamorphosis (yamakapāṭihīra ñāṇa)?

Here the Perfect One performs the Twin Metamorphosis, which is not shared by disciples. He produces a mass of fire from the upper part of his body and a shower of water from the lower part of his body: he produces a mass of fire from the lower part of his body and a shower of water from the upper part of his body....

[4] What is the Perfect One's knowledge of the attainment of the Great Compassion (mahākaruṇāsamāpattiya ñāṇa)?

Upon the Enlightened Ones, the Blessed Ones, who see in many aspects, there descends the Great Compassion for beings.

[5 & 6] What is the Perfect One's omniscient knowledge (sabbaññutaññāṇa [ & anāvaraṇañāṇa])?

It knows without exception all that is formed and unformed, thus it is omniscient knowledge: it is without obstruction there, thus it is unobstructed knowledge.

These are just short excerpts. The Psm. describes and explains all of the above in considerable detail. The Paṭisambhidāmagga continues:  
There are fourteen kinds of Enlightened One's knowledge... Of these fourteen kinds of Enlightened One's knowledge, eight are shared by disciples and six are not shared by disciples.

The first eight of these are knowledge of each of the four noble truths and knowledge of each of the four kinds of analytical understanding (paṭisambhidā). The latter six are those listed above.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 9:12 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Interesting.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 9:58 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

That isn't an answer. I'll ask again: What do you propose this knowledge described in AN 4.24 is the result of? AN 4.24:

Whatever in the cosmos — with its devas, Maras, & Brahmas, its generations with their contemplatives & brahmans, their royalty & common people — is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect: That I directly know.

What do you propose this ability to know others' faculties is the result of? SN 6.1:

Then the Blessed One, having understood Brahma's invitation, out of compassion for beings, surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One. As he did so, he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and those with much, those with keen faculties and those with dull, those with good attributes and those with bad, those easy to teach and those hard, some of them seeing disgrace and danger in the other world.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 11:20 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

That message of liberation has always remained intact in the Theravāda teachings. Indeed, knowledge of each of the four noble truths results in elimination of the outflows (āsavakkhaya), but I think there's reason enough to tacitly accept the traditional understanding that the elimination of the outflows alone isn't sufficient to give rise to an entire dispensation of dhammavinaya. Thus, the Buddha's awakening required more prior development of the faculties and resulted in greater knowledge than just the knowledge of elimination (khaṇeñña).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 15, 2012 11:36 pm

Title: Re: The Other Mindfulness Meditations

Content:

Enough of the major Pāli treatises have been translated into English, but most of them primarily deal with issues other than practical meditation instructions. With regard to your initial question, as Alex has already mentioned, the most complete presentation of practice instructions on each of those meditation subjects is found in the Visuddhimagga. Another interesting little text which deals with the contemplations from the Girimānanda Sutta is The Girimānanda Sutta: Ten Contemplations with the Commentary from the Sāratthasamuccaya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 2:44 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Yes. It's explained in A Treatise on the Pāramīs by the Theravāda commentator Ācariya Dhammapāla.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 2:53 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your opinion has a very strong odor of anti-bodhisattvayāna polemics....



Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 3:14 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The Pāli Nikāyas explicitly relate the narratives of previous buddhas. Arahant disciples don't rediscover the dhamma and start a dispensation. It's quite reasonable, even necessary, for the tradition to specify the distinctions between buddhas and arahant disciples as they have, whether you're willing to acknowledge it or not.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 3:45 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

You're just playing the tired sutta-only game that you decry in other instances.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 3:57 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

You obviously do have a problem with the commentaries, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 5:00 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

It's a simple point of fact relevant to the issue at hand: You reject the Paṭisambhidāmagga and commentarial explanations of the buddha-knowledges, therefore you have a problem with the commentaries. To be unwilling to acknowledge this would be a sign of duplicity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 16, 2012 8:17 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The suttas are not a comprehensive, systematic presentation of the dhamma, and there is no evidence that they were ever meant to be. Moreover, there is no evidence that the suttas were ever meant to be understood without recourse to further commentary (oral, then later, written commentary).

The only advantage of excluding the rest of the Tipiṭaka and trying to rely exclusively on the suttas is that this allows one to pursue and develop any novel pet-theory that they wish. Theories that appeal to the notion of a more pristine pre-Tipiṭaka "Early Buddhism" are speculative, and such speculations

only exist in people's imaginations.

The Theravāda tradition is the only Buddhist tradition that has managed to retain and transmit its entire Tipiṭaka, well edited and preserved in an Indic language. Without the significant efforts of Theravāda monastics we'd now be trying to piece together the dhammavinaya from fragmentary collections of different schools, much of which is only available in Chinese translation. Moreover, the Theravāda offers the best opportunity to continue to introduce and maintain monastic Buddhism in the West. Preservation, translation, and engagement with the entire Tipiṭaka is an important part of this transmission.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 17, 2012 4:17 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

"Dance with the one that brung ya." If one is practicing within the Theravāda then the Tipiṭaka is a source of refuge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 18, 2012 3:42 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Sure it does. But given that you don't accept the Pāli Tipiṭaka as an authoritative source of knowledge there is no basis for meaningful discussion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 19, 2012 7:18 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your inability to locate sutta references which explicitly state that a buddha's awakening is qualitatively different from that of an arahant disciple is insufficient to establish your conclusion that: "The "enlightenment" -- bodhi -- of the arahant is no different from that of the Buddha." In short: you haven't proven anything.

Your obstinate unwillingness to simply acknowledge that your conclusion is both speculative and novel is rather hilarious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Sep 20, 2012 4:20 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Yet you have made definitive statements as though your opinion was truly established and incontrovertible....

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Sep 22, 2012 7:38 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

And how do you know this? The Theravāda tradition maintains that it's referring to omniscience. The Theravāda tradition also commonly explains that omniscience is one of the definitions of the term bodhi. Moreover, all Buddhist traditions maintain that the Buddha was omniscient and that this is one of the qualities that differentiates a Buddha's awakening from that of an arahant disciple. You're attempting to reject a foundational Buddhist tenet that's well over 2000 years old, considered important enough to be included in the Pāli canon, as well as in Ven. Walpola Rahula's Basic Points Unifying the Theravāda and the Mahāyāna which was unanimously approved at the First Congress of the World Buddhist Sangha Council.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 23, 2012 2:27 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

A mahābodhisatta is concerned with the long term development of the pāramīs in order to realize sammāsambodhi, not the elimination of the āsavas during this dispensation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Sep 23, 2012 6:01 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I've already answered this question: The suttas were never intended to provide a systematic analysis of every aspect of the dhamma. That is what the Paṭisambhidāmagga, the Peṭakopadesa, and the Nettippakaraṇa are for. Trying to analyze and comment on the suttas without recourse to these texts is like groping around in the dark. This type of interpretive approach is probably the single biggest problem occurring within the context of Theravāda Buddhism today.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 2:59 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Of course you are re-inventing the Buddha -- making a Buddha that's more compatible with your world view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 3:20 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Okay then, which Buddhist school accepts your conclusion?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 3:39 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Then your conclusion has no historical lineage, and is your own conception of the Buddha based on your interpretation of the Pāli suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 4:22 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

A buddha teaches the sāvaka path. A buddha is an example for how to develop the mahābodhiyāna if one so chooses. Different vehicles, different levels of practice, different realization of knowledges.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 6:08 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Can you please provide a reference?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 8:51 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

These passages are good examples illustrating that the suttas are not comprehensive, systematic presentations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Sep 24, 2012 6:58 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Again, this thread pertains to the practice of the perfections in order to attain unsurpassable perfect awakening (anuttarāsammāsaṃbodhi).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 12:24 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Your secular prejudices are obvious.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 12:30 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I relied on the Peṭakopadesa, Nettippakaraṇa, Paṭisambhidāmagga, and Vimuttimaggā when writing that.

At any rate, the assumptions of Western secularism are also open to skeptical criticism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 1:11 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Bodhi, nibbāna, and vimutti do not have identical meanings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 1:12 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 2:20 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Epistemologically, bodhi refers to types of knowledge, nibbāna refers to an object of knowledge, and vimutti is the soteriological result of realizing that knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 2:35 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Well, this is also speculative, but it's possible that there were different teaching styles used by different community leaders and it's also possible that oral commentary (either given to a group or individually) was less systematic and more open to unique, individual interpretations than what we find in the formal versions of the highly systematic exegetical texts.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 2:47 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

You're the one who's throwing around Buddhist terms willy-nilly in support of your thesis that the suttas don't require reference to systematic commentary.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 3:59 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

You can look at them -- there's no shortage of people who are doing just that -- but if you want to avoid all kinds of novel interpretations it is most helpful to refer to the Niddesa, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Vibhaṅga, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 8:28 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

For goodness sake, I'm not insisting that anyone is required to believe in anything. I'm talking about accurately representing the Theravāda teachings on this Theravāda Forum. Period. What you do with those teachings is your business.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Sep 25, 2012 10:20 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

The general Buddhist principles and training precepts that are given in the Tipiṭaka live in the shared thought-world of millions of Buddhists around the world today. Even the more advanced doctrinal aspects would be recognizable for an educated Tibetan geshe or Chinese, Korean, or Japanese Abhidharma specialist.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 26, 2012 1:17 am

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

Again, I'm not limiting this to Theravāda Abhidhamma. I'm talking about a pan-Buddhist worldview regarding such things as kamma, merit, rebirth, multiple realms, the supremacy of the Buddha, conditioned arising, the aggregates, sense spheres, elements, four noble truths, etc., etc. These general principles are common to all extant Buddhist traditions, yet on this DW Forum we see discussions impeded by members who are unwilling to accept well established definitions of

Buddhist terms and general Buddhist principles, often by appealing to some version of an Early Buddhism thesis.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Sep 26, 2012 8:54 pm

Title: Re: Path to Buddhahood

Content:

I acknowledge the theories regarding stratification, and generally accept that there was historical development of Buddhist ideas. However, I don't accept that we can know with any degree of certainty just how and when those developments occurred, and I definitely don't accept that they were all deviations from an earlier pristine teaching. The entire enterprise of historical textual analysis is too imprecise and speculative to warrant a central position in the understanding and practice of the Buddhaddhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 07, 2012 11:48 am

Title: Re: How Theravada is Theravada? Exploring Buddhist Identities

Content:

The Dīpavaṃsa:

Seventeen are the schismatic sects, and there is one that is not schismatic; together with that which is not schismatic, they are eighteen in all. That of the Theravādins, which is even like a great banyan tree, is the most excellent: the complete teaching of the Conqueror, free from omissions or admissions.

The Kathāvatthu commentary:

In that second century only two schools seceded from the Theravāda: the (1) Mahīṃsāsakas and the (2) Vajjiputtakas.

Now seceding from the Vajjiputtakas four other schools arose: the (3) Dhammuttariyas, the (4) Bhadrāyānikas, the (5) Channāgarikas and the (6) Saṃmitiyas. Again, in that second century, seceding from the Mahīṃsāsakas, two schools arose: the (7) Sabbatthivādins and the (8) Dhammaguttikas. Then again, falling off from the Sabbatthivādins, arose the (9) Kassapikas. And the Kassapikas splitting up, the (10) Saṅkantikas came into existence. The Saṅkantikas splitting up, there arose the (11) Suttavādins. Thus, falling off from the Theravādins, arose these eleven schools. These together with the Theravādins were twelve.

Also, the 12th century northern Indian author Daśabalaśrīmitra refers to the Sthaviras and quotes extensively from the Vimuttimaggā which he states is the "Āgama of the Ārya-Sthavira-nikāya." And the 19th century Tibetan author Jamgön Kongtrül also mentions the Sthaviras by name and, relying on Vinītadeva's Nikāyabhedopadeśasaṃgraha, also states that the "Jetavanīyas, Abhayagirikas, and Mahāvihārins are the [three] Sthaviras."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 20, 2012 7:49 pm

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

The cessation of perception and feeling is not the same as nibbāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Oct 20, 2012 9:07 pm

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

The arahant path and fruition can occur after emerging from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling, but even among arahants it's a path less traveled. The suttas tell us that in the Buddha's day there were more arahants liberated through discernment than those who were liberated both ways etc., and there's no reason to think that this situation changed later. E.g. SN 8.7 Pavāraṇā Sutta, informs us that of 500 arahants present on that occasion, 60 had triple knowledge, 60 had the six higher gnoses, 60 were liberated both ways (ubhatobhāgavimuttā, meaning jhānas & formless attainments), and the rest were liberated through discernment (paññāvimuttā). Liberation through discernment doesn't require the development of the formless attainments or the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling.

Moreover, for stream-entry, etc., the supramundane path arises immediately after a desire sphere cognition (kāmaṇvācāra citta) conjoined with appropriate developmental qualities and knowledge.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Oct 21, 2012 5:37 pm

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

In keeping with the Kathāvatthu, the Visuddhimagga maintains that the cessation of perception and feeling, which is also called cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti), is neither supramundane nor not-conditioned (asaṅkhata). Visuddhimagga 23.52:

As to the question: Is the attainment of cessation formed or unformed, etc.? It is not classifiable as formed or unformed, mundane or supramundane. Why? Because it has no individual essence. But since it comes to be attained by one who attains it, it is therefore permissible to say that it is produced, not unproduced.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 22, 2012 4:08 am

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

Sorry, but your equations are a bit off. The cessation attainment (nirodhasamāpatti) is neither fabricated (saṅkhata) nor not-fabricated (asaṅkhata), but it is produced (nipphanna) and not unproduced (anipphanna). Therefore it has no correspondence with the asaṅkhatā dhātu. Moreover, there is no occurrence of consciousness during the cessation attainment, therefore no perception or knowledge. This is why the cessation attainment plays no direct role in the attainment of the supramundane paths and fruitions.



Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Oct 22, 2012 6:18 pm

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

In the Abhidhammapiṭaka, which predates the commentarial use of sabhāva language, nirodhasamāpatti doesn't play any significant part in the path of awakening. Moreover, the Theravāda has never accepted that nirodhasamāpatti is asaṅkhata because that would mean that there are two asaṅkhata-s, and that a produced meditative state is asaṅkhata, and that nirodhasamāpatti would have the same liberating role as the supramundane paths and fruitions, and so on. This is a specific point of controversy in the Kathāvatthu, where all of these alternatives are rejected (see Points of Controversy, pp. 190-91).

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Oct 23, 2012 7:14 am

Title: Re: Mother, how will I know when it's real jhana?

Content:

Well, I think it all fits together quite fine, providing that one remains moderate and doesn't get carried away by either commentarial or modern revisionist extremes.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Oct 24, 2012 3:56 am

Title: Re: MN 117: a counterfeit

Content:

"Early" and "authentic" according to whom?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 05, 2012 7:33 am

Title: Re: Why I am not a Buddhist

Content:

I'd suggest that a more pertinent question is where did he pick up his scientific materialism? The most important aspects of the noble path can't be known through the five senses.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Nov 05, 2012 8:58 am

Title: Re: Why I am not a Buddhist

Content:

Yes, and this doesn't preclude post-mortem good and bad outcomes. Nor does it preclude engaging in recollection of the gods in order to inspire the mind and develop skillful mental qualities. For example, AN 11.12 Paṭhamamahānāma Sutta:

Furthermore, you should recollect the devas: 'There are the devas of the Four Great Kings, the devas

of the Thirty-three, the devas of the Hours, the Contented Devas, the devas who delight in creation, the devas who have power over the creations of others, the devas of Brahma's retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever conviction they were endowed with that — when falling away from this life — they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever virtue they were endowed with that — when falling away from this life — they re-arose there, the same sort of virtue is present in me as well. Whatever learning they were endowed with that — when falling away from this life — they re-arose there, the same sort of learning is present in me as well. Whatever generosity they were endowed with that — when falling away from this life — they re-arose there, the same sort of generosity is present in me as well. Whatever discernment they were endowed with that — when falling away from this life — they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, and discernment found both in himself and the devas, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the [qualities of the] devas. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one who is rapturous, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

Of one who does this, Mahanama, it is said: 'Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the devas.'

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 07, 2012 11:59 am

Title: Re: Why is Satipatthana emphasized over Anapanasati?

Content:

The practices offered in the Pāli canon are far more numerous and diverse than either satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā or ānāpānassati. Ven. Bodhi, The Four Protective Meditations:

For American Buddhists, the Theravada tradition has become so narrowly identified with the style of meditation called “vipassana” that those who practice in this tradition often describe themselves simply as “vipassana practitioners,” discarding the name “Theravada” and even “Buddhism” as Asian accretions to a secular discipline of mindfulness. Others, better acquainted with the Pali canon, assume that the Buddha’s core instructions on meditation are all contained in his “Discourse on the Establishment of Mindfulness” (Satipatthana Sutta) and thus seldom look beyond this text for guidance. If, however, we study the Buddha’s discourses in breadth, we would find that they offer a wide range of meditation subjects, many of which have received scant attention in this country. These constitute a potent battery of spiritual disciplines designed for people with diverse aptitudes and inclinations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 10, 2012 8:53 pm

Title: Re: Why Can't We Agree on ANYTHING?

Content:

Consensus isn't necessary, and should definitely not be desired.

However, orthopraxy in terms of vinaya is to a certain degree required for the ordained sangha.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Nov 11, 2012 12:33 pm

Title: Re: Variations in the meditation practices of early Buddhists

Content:

See this thread for links to sources on a number of ancient meditation manuals preserved in Chinese translation, mostly related to Sarvāstivāda: Chanjing Meditation Manuals.

And here's a copy of the so-called Yogāvacara's Manual. For context on this text see Tantric Theravāda and Aspects of Esoteric Southern Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 13, 2012 4:45 pm

Title: Re: "Skillful Means" and the rhetoric of Mahāyāna proselytism

Content:

Also related:

Skillful Means: The Heart of Buddhist Compassion by John Schroeder.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 15, 2012 3:49 pm

Title: Re: Concentration vs Mindfulness in the Visuddhimagga

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Nov 17, 2012 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Why Can't We Agree on ANYTHING?

Content:

It doesn't really matter what other people say or do. It's your thoughts, words, and deeds that are important for your development.

I suggest reading a few verses from the Suttanipāta, the Dhammapada, the Theragāthā, or the Therīgāthā every day to inspire and orient the mind. Then engage in a regular meditation practice for 20-30 years. That's probably a pretty decent start.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 20, 2012 7:50 pm

Title: Re: Chakras

Content:

Not very authoritative or comprehensive sources. Little wonder your knowledge of the subject revolves around "mummy dust and crazy ideas."

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 20, 2012 9:57 pm

Title: Re: Chakras

Content:

Yep, I've read his books. I'm not dismissing his work or being arbitrary. I said that it isn't authoritative or comprehensive, specifically, in the context of Buddhist systems of yoga.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Nov 20, 2012 10:01 pm

Title: Re: Chakras

Content:

There are no sacred cows in Buddhism, and that includes your sacred cow of a pristine, early Buddhism fully explicated in the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 21, 2012 1:17 am

Title: Re: Why Can't We Agree on ANYTHING?

Content:

In general.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 21, 2012 7:36 pm

Title: Re: Chakras

Content:

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. However, there are Buddhist yogis in this world who are remarkable monks and exceptional meditators and are living examples of the effectiveness of trulkhör, tsalung, and tummo practices.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 28, 2012 9:14 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Nov 28, 2012 9:15 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Firstly, momentariness doesn't preclude the continuation of a mental continuum, either during this life or post-mortem. Secondly, while it is ultimately true that there is no Self, it is conventionally expedient to refer to a particular mental continuum at any given moment during one lifetime as referring to a particular person. This latter mode of speaking doesn't contradict the Buddhist teachings on selflessness because it is merely a conventional expression.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 2:13 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

No, it isn't. Just as you can't step into the same river twice, you can't experience the same mental continuum twice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 3:58 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Fallacious argument.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 5:30 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Specifically, without recourse to analogy, how does your view differ from the following from DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta:

The person is composed of the four great elements; when he dies, earth returns and goes back to the element of earth, water returns and goes back to the element of water, fire returns and goes back to the element of fire, wind returns and goes back to the element of wind, while the senses disappear into space.... Fools and wise alike are destroyed and perish at the breaking up of the body, they do not exist after death.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 5:42 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Specifically, without recourse to analogy, what causes the complete termination of a mental continuum?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 7:01 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

So are you asserting that the "death of a mental continuum" is not a "complete termination" of a mental continuum?

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 8:22 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

So you reject the sutta interpretation and inferences used by Buddhaghosa, Dharmakīrti, et al, yet you cannot disprove their interpretations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 9:13 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

You simply don't know.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 10:01 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

I never said it was. And the phrase "literal rebirth" merely serves to set up a straw man argument in the context of this discussion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 12:52 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

I consider your understanding of causes and conditions to be inadequate and completely unsupported by the Pāli suttas, the Theravāda commentaries, and the Buddhist epistemological tradition of Dignāga & Dharmakīrti, et al.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Nov 29, 2012 2:45 pm

Title: Re: Chakras

Content:

There are complete Buddhist systems of practice in the Indo-Tibetan traditions that integrate breathing practices, body work, chakras, subtle energies, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 30, 2012 11:30 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

What the recognition of anatta negates is a permanent, unchanging Self. This recognition doesn't preclude the use of pronouns as expedient conventional expressions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 30, 2012 11:41 am

Title: Re: Dhammakaya replaces "anatta" with "atta" in their Tipitaka!

Content:

This is nothing new. Non-Buddhist yogis have been making this same mistaken identification for centuries. It's rooted in a type of wrong view described in DN 2:

That which is called "the eye," "the ear," "the nose," "the tongue," and "the body" — that self is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, subject to change. But that which is called "mind" (citta) or "mentality" (mano) or "consciousness" (viññāṇa) — that self is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and it will remain the same just like eternity itself.

DN 15 gives instructions on how to analyze and begin to see through this kind of self-view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 30, 2012 11:54 am

Title: Re: Worried about Demons/Asuras

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 30, 2012 12:23 pm

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Right. The ego isn't what is being negated by the recognition of anatta. Hence, Jack Engler's phrase: "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody."

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Nov 30, 2012 12:55 pm

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Anatta has been misrepresented both in the direction of over-negation and in the opposite direction of under-negation. Again, anatta negates a permanent, unchanging Self, not the impermanent, changeable, developmental self-structure that is a necessary part of healthy psychological development. No aspect of this latter developmental structure is a permanent unchanging Self. Therefore, no part of it should be grasped at or clung to as a means of salvation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 01, 2012 10:34 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Well, I'm not so sure of that. Worldlings can be "psychologically healthy" by societal standards, yet still hold any number of different identity views that are rejected in the Nikāyas, including views of a permanent unchanging self or soul. A stream entrant, on the other hand, has abandoned identity views, yet still has the underlying tendency of "I am."

Another point you mentioned previously about your concerns regarding "no self": The psychological self-structure doesn't fill the criteria of a "self" in the Nikāyas, therefore I think it's fine to say that the Buddha taught that there is no self. The only caveat I would add is that this isn't something to be dogmatically clung to either.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 01, 2012 12:04 pm

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

I mean a self that would be:

1. not prone to dis-ease
2. fully self-determining (be in complete autonomous control of itself)
3. permanent
4. satisfactory

These four criteria can easily be inferred from the dialogue in SN 22.59.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 01, 2012 2:07 pm

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

In the Nikāyas & Āgamas no transcendent or innate self-nature is ever affirmed. And I'm not saying this as some sort of dogmatic fundamentalist. It's simply not a part of the view expressed in these texts which are almost exclusively apophatic when describing what awakened awareness is like. The Buddha and other speakers in these texts are far more concerned with teaching the path than in describing the fruition of that path. In this sense the Nikāyas are almost the reverse of the Mahāyāna sūtras, which like to go on about awakening at great length.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 02, 2012 5:14 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Yes, there's a lot that could be said on this subject (but this forum isn't the proper place for it). At any



rate, the main Indian Mahāyāna versions of Buddhist hermeneutics treat negations as definitive and affirmations as conventional and provisional.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 02, 2012 5:33 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Most of the Indian philosophical schools are considered Ātmavāda, except the Buddhists and the materialists. That is, all of the others schools posit a existent self (i.e. soul).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 02, 2012 6:46 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

The Sarvadarśanasamgraha is a 14th century compendium of Indian philosophical schools (Buddhism is #2) written by a Vedānta author. The translation is dated but it's of some interest if you like reading dusty old books. There are probably other sources online that are easier to read and understand but I don't know of any.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 02, 2012 10:45 am

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Because liberation in this sense has little concern with "the unconditioned uncaused undisturbed is-ness that is all-pervading and immanent in all ever-changing phenomena." That is quite irrelevant. Oceanic samādhi type experiences can be interesting, even transformative to varying degrees, but from the perspective of the pre-Mahāyāna teachings that isn't the main point.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 02, 2012 12:07 pm

Title: Re: NO self

Content:

Well, there are a number of different Mahāyāna traditions so it's important to not generalize too much. But I don't think that this is the case with the traditions that I'm most familiar with.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 03, 2012 4:50 am

Title: Re: Seventeen thought moments

Content:

Yes, the theory of momentariness is absent from the Abhidhammapiṭaka. David Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis:

It is significant that the Abhidhamma pitaka of the Theravadins makes no mention of either the theory of atoms or the theory of moments. They are certainly not found in either the Pali Nikayas or the Chinese Agamas.

Buddhaghosa seems to have acknowledged this as well. Kalupahana continues:

In his commentary on the Dhammasangani, Buddhaghosa makes a very important remark regarding the theory of moments. He says: "Herein, the continued present (santatipaccuppanna) finds mention in the commentaries (atthakatha); the enduring or long present (addhapaccuppanna) in the discourses (sutta). Some say that the thought existing in the momentary present (khanapaccuppanna) becomes the object of telepathic insight" (DhsA, p. 421). According to this statement, it was 'some people' (keci) who spoke about the momentary present; it was found neither in the discourses nor in the commentaries preserved at the Mahavihara which Buddhaghosa was using for his own commentaries in Pali.

Of course, this hasn't stopped people from reading a theory of momentariness into the Abhidhammapitaka.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 03, 2012 6:23 pm

Title: Re: Metteyya Buddha/Golden Buddha/Medicine Buddha/Crown Buddha

Content:

Very nice.

Thank you Yawares.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 7:49 am

Title: Re: We know about the Dhamma because of the suttas.

Content:

The four main Nikāyas and the sutta sections of the fifth Nikāya display a remarkable degree of internal consistency. I've yet to see an argument regarding inauthenticity that amounts to anything significant. Most such claims are rooted in the biases of the author's own worldview or doctrinal assumptions.

The general advice offered in the suttas is to (i) maintain appropriate ethical conduct, (ii) go to a secluded place to reflect on the teachings and calm the mind, (iii) develop discernment into impermanence, etc., in order to further induce dispassion and letting go of attachments.

The teachings and meditation methods are all means to an end -- liberation from passion, aggression, and delusion. The apparent diversity of methods and inclusiveness of practices illustrated in the Pāli Nikāyas is oriented towards this goal, either directly or indirectly. Methods and practices are provisional, and as long as the application of the practice supports the lessening and eventual elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion, it accords with the Buddha's dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 9:48 am

Title: Re: We know about the Dhamma because of the suttas.

Content:

Yes, in terms of traditional Buddhist hermeneutics this distinction is between sutta statements that are already fully drawn out, explicit, and definitive (nītattha) and those that are provisional (neyyattha). But alongside this analysis there needs to be consideration of the body of texts that are to serve as authentic scriptural authorities and the criteria that are to be used to establish what qualifies as definitive or provisional.

Personally I consider the four main Nikāyas and the sutta sections of the fifth Nikāya to be authentic scriptural authorities (as well as the surviving non-Pāli collections and fragments of collections that parallel these discourses) and I consider the teachings on anatta to be definitive and all other teachings to be provisional.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 12:32 pm

Title: Re: We know about the Dhamma because of the suttas.

Content:

Yes. And?...

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 12:46 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Not only is this interpretation not supported by the suttas, without the view that consciousness continues post-mortem to another birth in one of the realms of saṃsāra the dhammavinaya becomes untenable as a meaningful way to live one's life and something akin to Epicureanism would be far more reasonable.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 1:06 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Feel free to start a new thread if you like.

I'm not sure how much I care to add but it's usually interesting to hear what you and others think.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 1:11 pm

Title: Re: We know about the Dhamma because of the suttas.

Content:

I don't know how you assess it, but I consider the teachings on anatta to be definitive and everything

else to be provisional.

However, just because I consider something to be provisional doesn't mean I think it should be dismissed or rejected. Without the provisional, fabricated path there is no way to realize the unfabricated goal.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 04, 2012 6:27 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

If the consequences of craving doesn't include continued birth and death in saṃsāra then it would be far more reasonable to engage in a life of moderate pleasures than to live a life of ascetic renunciation according to the dhammavinaya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 5:56 am

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

That's good. But what I'm referring to is the purpose of the path of renunciation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 5:58 am

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Not taking the texts seriously on their own terms sells the dhammavinaya short. Even in the context of textual analysis alone, sans lineage, Buddhist scholar Lambert Schmithausen sums it up well: I presuppose that the texts I make use of are to be taken seriously, in the sense that one has to accept that they mean what they say, and that what they mean is reasonable within its own terms.

And at this purely analytical level, without lineage there is no need to believe in the assertions made in the texts nor live by the vinaya precepts.

But if one is going to actually live by the vinaya precepts and various related prescriptions given in the suttas it is far more reasonable and purposeful to accept the possibility that the assertions made in the texts are true.

Said another way, if a person is intent on maintaining some version of scientific materialism then there are other systems of theory and practice that are more compatible with that sort of agenda than the dhammavinaya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 7:17 am

Title: Re: Zazen and the Jhanas

Content:

You may want to check out this thread on Dharma Wheel: Are the jhanas taught in zen/chan?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 9:01 am

Title: Re: Buddhism before Theravada

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 12:33 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Yes. This is also clearly stated in DN 15 as well:

"'From birth as a requisite condition come aging and death.' Thus it has been said. And this is the way to understand how from birth as a requisite condition come aging and death. If there were no birth at all, in any way, of anything anywhere — i.e., of devas in the state of devas, of celestials in the state of celestials, of spirits in the state of spirits, of demons in the state of demons, of human beings in the human state, of quadrupeds in the state of quadrupeds, of birds in the state of birds, of snakes in the state of snakes, or of any being in its own state — in the utter absence of birth, from the cessation of birth, would aging and death be discerned?"

"No, lord."

"Thus this is a cause, this is a reason, this is an origination, this is a requisite condition for aging and death, i.e., birth."

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 2:01 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

It's necessary for liberation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 5:13 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

It's not my view. It's the view of every extant Buddhist tradition and lineage.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 5:21 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

This text addresses your qualms regarding kamma and rebirth: The Truth of Rebirth And Why it Matters for Buddhist Practice by Ven. Ānāpānāsikā.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 05, 2012 7:11 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Thus the view that a continuum of consciousness continues post-mortem to another birth in one of the realms of saṃsāra is simply not denied. This is reasonable and accords with MN 60. However, I think Ven. Ānāpānāsikā goes a bit further than this in the previously linked text of his.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 9:43 am

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

At any rate, in a single lifetime scenario there's no reason to disengage from any hedonistic pleasures as long as one is not causing harm and can rationalize the pleasure to pain ratio in a cost-benefit analysis.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 5:17 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

This has already been acknowledged. The only thing I'd add is that even then it's still prudent to consider actions in the context of post-mortem continuity so as to not engage in what is potentially unskillful in that context. MN 60:

With regard to this, an observant person considers thus: 'If there is the next world, then this venerable person — on the breakup of the body, after death — will reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world. Even if we didn't speak of the next world, and there weren't the true statement of those venerable contemplatives & brahmins, this venerable person is still praised in the here-&now by the observant as a person of good habits & right view: one who holds to a doctrine of existence.' If there really is a next world, then this venerable person has made a good throw twice, in that he is praised by the observant here-&now; and in that — with the breakup of the body, after death — he will reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world. Thus this safe-bet teaching, when well grasped & adopted by him, covers both sides, and leaves behind the possibility of the unskillful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 5:44 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Hedonism can be moderate, i.e. the pursuit of primarily moderate pleasures. Moreover, people who are ascetic renunciates also experience dukkha unless they're arahants.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 8:12 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

I don't see anyone here asserting a permanent unchanging self. Selflessness accounts for both change and continuity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 9:03 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

To state the obvious, this is a discussion pertaining to saṃsāra and related topics such as the right view of the continuity of consciousness, etc. The importance of this subject is explained by Ven.

Dhammanando:

The orthodox understanding is that they have to be taught mundane right view in order to make them ready for ariyan right view. That is to say, there is no possibility of leaping from a state in which wrong view ("there is nothing given, nothing offered...etc.") is ever liable to arise to ariyan right view. Rather, wrong view must be dislodged and the only cause that can effect this is the arising of mundane right view ("there is what is given, there is what is offered...etc."). In effect this means that high attainment in Dhamma is out of the question for those who remain skeptical, agnostic or non-committal regarding the affirmations that constitute mundane right view.

Kammic efficacy and rebirth are part of mundane right view. To reject or doubt rebirth is to suppose that there are some causes that don't yield effects – specifically, that there can be ignorance and craving that will not issue in further becoming. Those of such a view have not understood the conditionality of dhammas even at the intellectual/pariyatti level. To not understand this is to not understand the four noble truths, the three characteristics, or anything else that is of decisive importance in the development of paññā.

If you're interested in this subject then feel free to contribute. If you're not interested then feel free to move on.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 06, 2012 11:52 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Looks to me like you're the one concerned....

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 07, 2012 2:40 am

Title: Re: Is there a school in Buddhism that fits this view?

Content:

This isn't a Buddhist school.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 07, 2012 2:42 am

Title: Re: Is there a school in Buddhism that fits this view?

Content:

No. Karma and rebirth are ubiquitous among all Buddhist schools.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 07, 2012 8:16 am

Title: Re: Is there a school in Buddhism that fits this view?

Content:

The views of those people don't represent the tenets of any Buddhist school. Generally, what modern authors and followers of so-called "Secular Buddhism" etc., are advocating is an appropriation of some aspects of the Buddhadhamma mixed with modern versions of Cārvāka materialist views and epistemology that are flatly rejected by all Buddhist schools.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 4:17 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Indeed. And this also pertains to major statements such as the four noble truths. Materialists can't accept the four noble truths because for them matter is the the origin of suffering, not craving. Thus, materialists with a penchant for some Buddhist practices have to reinterpret all of the statements pertaining to the four noble truths and dependent arising, as well as either reinterpret or dismiss all of the statements pertaining to rebirth and the other realms of existence. That seems like a lot of conceptual effort to exert in order to justify maintaining belief in a questionable worldview.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 4:39 pm

Title: Re: Svasamvedana

Content:

See The Buddhist Theory of Self-Cognition by Zhihua Yao for a comprehensive study on the historical development of svasamvedana/svasamvitti among Indian Buddhist schools and authors.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 5:46 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:



Let's not claim that the dhamma-lite you're advocating is the Buddhadhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 7:12 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

No, they don't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 7:23 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Yes, and this isn't exclusive to Alex Berzin. For example, Ven. Dhammanando:

[T]here is no possibility of leaping from a state in which wrong view ("there is nothing given, nothing offered...etc.") is ever liable to arise to ariyan right view. Rather, wrong view must be dislodged and the only cause that can effect this is the arising of mundane right view ("there is what is given, there is what is offered...etc."). In effect this means that high attainment in Dhamma is out of the question for those who remain skeptical, agnostic or non-committal regarding the affirmations that constitute mundane right view.

Kammic efficacy and rebirth are part of mundane right view. To reject or doubt rebirth is to suppose that there are some causes that don't yield effects – specifically, that there can be ignorance and craving that will not issue in further becoming. Those of such a view have not understood the conditionality of dhammas even at the intellectual/pariyatti level. To not understand this is to not understand the four noble truths, the three characteristics, or anything else that is of decisive importance in the development of paññā.

Ven. Ṭhānissaro:

[T]he terms of appropriate attention — the four noble truths — are not concerned simply with events arising and passing away in the present moment. They also focus on the causal connections among those events, connections that occur both in the immediate present and over time. If you limit your focus solely to connections in the present while ignoring those over time, you can't fully comprehend the ways in which craving causes suffering: not only by latching on to the four kinds of nutriment, but also giving rise to the four kinds of nutriment as well.

This narrow focus places an obstacle in your ability to develop right view — and in particular, your ability to see dependent co-arising as a self-sustaining process. If, in line with the standard materialist view, you regard consciousness as a mere by-product of material processes, then there's no way you can appreciate the full power of consciousness and craving to generate the food that can sustain the processes of suffering indefinitely. And if you don't fully appreciate this power, there's no way that you can effectively bring it to an end.

Ven. Bodhi:

Admittedly, for most of us the primary motivation for entering upon the path of Dhamma has been a gnawing sense of dissatisfaction with the routine course of our unenlightened lives rather than a keen perception of the dangers in the round of rebirths. However, if we are going to follow the Dhamma through to its end and tap its full potential for conferring peace and higher wisdom, it is

necessary for the motivation of our practice to mature beyond that which originally induced us to enter the path. Our underlying motivation must grow towards those essential truths disclosed to us by the Buddha and, encompassing those truths, must use them to nourish its own capacity to lead us towards the realization of the goal.

Our motivation acquires the requisite maturity by the cultivation of right view, the first factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, which as explained by the Buddha includes an understanding of the principles of kamma and rebirth as fundamental to the structure of our existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 8:30 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

I highly doubt that your children or any other children understand the full existential implications of dukkha & taṇhā as these terms are used in the context of the four noble truths. Moreover, it's the trivialization of dukkha & taṇhā that precludes the arising of right view as already indicated by the Buddhist teachers quoted here.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 10:03 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

I've yet to come across a proponent of physicalism who accepts the Buddhist view of rebirth. Again, the consequences of this failure have already been stated above.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Dec 11, 2012 11:10 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Your example trivializes the four noble truths. SN 15.3:

This is the greater: the tears you have shed while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time — crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing — not the water in the four great oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time — crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing — are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father... the death of a brother... the death of a sister... the death of a son... the death of a daughter... loss with regard to relatives... loss with regard to wealth... loss with regard to disease. The tears you have shed over loss with regard to disease while transmigrating & wandering this long, long time — crying & weeping from being joined with what is displeasing, being separated from what is pleasing — are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 12, 2012 2:05 am

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Trying to erase rebirth from the suttas would be a rather nonsensical thing to try to do. Ven. Bodhi: The teaching of rebirth crops up almost everywhere in the Canon, and is so closely bound to a host of other doctrines that to remove it would virtually reduce the Dhamma to tatters. Moreover, when the suttas speak about rebirth into the five realms — the hells, the animal world, the spirit realm, the human world, and the heavens — they never hint that these terms are meant symbolically. To the contrary, they even say that rebirth occurs "with the breakup of the body, after death," which clearly implies they intend the idea of rebirth to be taken quite literally.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 12, 2012 4:35 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Not according to Ven. Thānissaro:

[T]he terms of appropriate attention — the four noble truths — are not concerned simply with events arising and passing away in the present moment. They also focus on the causal connections among those events, connections that occur both in the immediate present and over time. If you limit your focus solely to connections in the present while ignoring those over time, you can't fully comprehend the ways in which craving causes suffering: not only by latching on to the four kinds of nutriment, but also giving rise to the four kinds of nutriment as well.

This narrow focus places an obstacle in your ability to develop right view — and in particular, your ability to see dependent co-arising as a self-sustaining process. If, in line with the standard materialist view, you regard consciousness as a mere by-product of material processes, then there's no way you can appreciate the full power of consciousness and craving to generate the food that can sustain the processes of suffering indefinitely. And if you don't fully appreciate this power, there's no way that you can effectively bring it to an end.

Or Ven. Dhammanando:

[T]here is no possibility of leaping from a state in which wrong view ("there is nothing given, nothing offered...etc.") is ever liable to arise to ariyan right view. Rather, wrong view must be dislodged and the only cause that can effect this is the arising of mundane right view ("there is what is given, there is what is offered...etc."). In effect this means that high attainment in Dhamma is out of the question for those who remain skeptical, agnostic or non-committal regarding the affirmations that constitute mundane right view.

Kammic efficacy and rebirth are part of mundane right view. To reject or doubt rebirth is to suppose that there are some causes that don't yield effects — specifically, that there can be ignorance and craving that will not issue in further becoming. Those of such a view have not understood the conditionality of dhammas even at the intellectual/pariyatti level. To not understand this is to not understand the four noble truths, the three characteristics, or anything else that is of decisive importance in the development of paññā.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 12, 2012 4:37 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

I don't think it is. Rather, suggesting that a small child can comprehend the first two noble truths is an example of a superficial understanding of the dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 12, 2012 4:44 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

The quotations from Dhammanando & Thānissaro provide epistemological and soteriological context. E.g.: "To reject or doubt rebirth is to suppose that there are some causes that don't yield effects – specifically, that there can be ignorance and craving that will not issue in further becoming."

This is one of the reasons why Buddhist epistemology places emphasis on both inferential and direct perception.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Dec 12, 2012 6:47 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

This again shows your lack of understanding of the Buddhadhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 13, 2012 12:45 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

There's nothing any more "supernatural" about any of those realms than there is about the human & animal realms.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 13, 2012 1:41 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

The very sutta you cited (MN 79) goes on to state that disciples can realize the higher knowledges of recollection of past lives and the passing away & reappearance of beings.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 13, 2012 2:42 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Because, among other things, I've yet to see any textual example of an agnostic arahant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 13, 2012 2:54 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

It's reasonable to separate (a) first hand contemplative experiences of other realms and/or beings, from (b) how the descriptions of these experiences were eventually formulated and systematized in ancient oral and written traditions. The former doesn't require the narrative and various literary devices found in the latter.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Dec 13, 2012 3:37 pm

Title: Re: What is the taint of being?

Content:

It's referring to the āsava of existence (bhavāsava). It's related to craving existence (bhavaṭaṇhā). IIRC the commentaries correlate it with passion for existence in the form realms (i.e. rūparāga), but I'd have to look that up to be sure.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Dec 14, 2012 11:49 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

There are two aspects of nibbāna. The nibbāna component with fuel remaining (saupādisesa nibbānadhātu) is attained while an arahant is still alive. Itivuttaka 2.44:

And what is the nibbāna component with fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose outflows have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, ended the fetter of existence, and is liberated through right gnosis. His five sense faculties still remain and, owing to their being intact, he is cognizant of the agreeable and the disagreeable, and experiences pleasure and pain. His elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion is termed the nibbāna component with fuel remaining.

And the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining (anupādisesa nibbānadhātu) occurs upon the death of the arahant. Itivuttaka 2.44:

And what is the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose outflows have ended, who has reached fulfillment, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, ended the fetter of existence, and is liberated through right gnosis. For him, all that is sensed, not being relished, will grow cold right here. This monks, is termed the nibbāna component with no fuel remaining.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 15, 2012 5:55 am

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

It's not my interpretation. It's explicit in the suttas previously quoted and maintained by the commentarial tradition.

Now, you're entirely free to do and think whatever you want, but merely following the whims of your own head-trip isn't the Buddha's teaching.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 15, 2012 6:45 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

It's what the suttas and every Buddhist tradition says.

There are a couple of ways of working with skepticism about rebirth:

(1) acknowledge that rebirth is an integral part of the teachings while recognizing that the teachings on rebirth don't resonate with oneself at this time and setting them aside so as to practice other aspects of the Buddha's teaching to the best of one's abilities, or

(2) dismiss the teachings on rebirth and attempt to reinterpret the entire Buddhist tradition without reference to it, asserting that the teachings on rebirth are not important.

The first approach is actually recommended to skeptics in the suttas. The second approach is never recommended in the suttas and amounts to trying to remake the Budhadhamma in one's own image.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 15, 2012 7:02 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

Setting it aside and engaging in other practices is mentioned in #1 above.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 4:47 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

SN 42.13 doesn't exist in isolation, it exists embedded in the rest of the sutta corpus. And in this larger context rebirth is repeatedly affirmed. Moreover, in this larger context the view affirming the next world isn't qualified as a distraction, but as a practical concern.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 5:24 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Not thinking in terms of inappropriate attention and the six views arising therefrom doesn't preclude appropriately considering rebirth through inferential cognition. The former is incompatible with paṭiccasamuppāda, while the latter is entirely consistent with paṭiccasamuppāda where a mental continuum continues until craving and ignorance are eliminated, and is not terminated by physical conditions (e.g. brain death).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 5:36 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Sorry, I should have been clearer. By "the former" was meant "thinking in terms of inappropriate attention and the six views arising therefrom" which is incompatible with paṭiccasamuppāda.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 6:08 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

This concern has already been addressed in the quotations previously offered from Dhammanando & Thānissaro. E.g.: "To reject or doubt rebirth is to suppose that there are some causes that don't yield effects – specifically, that there can be ignorance and craving that will not issue in further becoming."

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 6:12 pm

Title: Re: Is hell and hungry ghost realm to be taken literally?

Content:

To maintain that there is an actual debate within the Buddhadhamma about rebirth is a false assumption. There is no such debate. Every strata of Buddhist dhamma (Sutta, Abhidhamma, Commentary) asserts rebirth.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 8:24 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

The quotations already provided don't just pertain to rejection or doubt. "Setting aside" has similar limitations that preclude full penetration of the four noble truths.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 9:51 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

In The Truth of Rebirth Ven. Ṭhānissaro supports it from a number of perspectives. For example: [T]he terms of appropriate attention — the four noble truths — are not concerned simply with events arising and passing away in the present moment. They also focus on the causal connections among those events, connections that occur both in the immediate present and over time. If you limit your focus solely to connections in the present while ignoring those over time, you can't fully comprehend the ways in which craving causes suffering: not only by latching on to the four kinds of nutriment, but also giving rise to the four kinds of nutriment as well.

This narrow focus places an obstacle in your ability to develop right view — and in particular, your ability to see dependent co-arising as a self-sustaining process. (Emphasis added.)

This is a significant limitation of failing to contemplate the truth of suffering and the truth of origin as continuing unabated without full application of the noble eightfold path. Accordingly, suffering continues until craving and ignorance are eliminated, and is not terminated by physical conditions (e.g. brain death).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Dec 16, 2012 9:55 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Yes, of course.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 17, 2012 1:23 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Not at all. Disenchantment and dispassion aren't the result of mental non-engagement. This is a point that differentiates Buddhism from other yogic traditions that propose stopping the mind and/or stopping all action as the primary method for attaining liberation.

Also, I don't see any good reason to compartmentalize the teachings. The sutta collections are a complete package, and restricting oneself to only a limited subset of sutta teachings erects an artificial, self-imposed barrier. Setting aside the teachings on rebirth is a case of deliberately ignoring them. Deliberately ignoring these teachings entails ignoring certain implications of the teachings on kamma & paṭiccasamuppāda, not in awakening to the Buddha's dhamma.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 17, 2012 3:29 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate



Content:

These objections are rather irrelevant and not very coherent. Each of the main Nikāyas was memorized by a group of monastics. Even those of lesser intelligence would know that things like marriage advise don't apply to monastics. But if you're implying that teachings on rebirth, the unimaginable beginnings of saṃsāra, etc., weren't given to monastics, it's plainly stated that they were indeed given to monastics.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Dec 17, 2012 3:31 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

(Forgot to include this in the previous reply.) SN 42.11:

Headman, by means of this principle that is seen, understood, immediately attained, fathomed, apply the method to the past and to the future thus: 'Whatever suffering arose in the past, all that arose rooted in desire, with desire as its source; for desire is the root of suffering. Whatever suffering will arise in the future, all that will arise rooted in desire, with desire as its source; for desire is the root of suffering.'

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Dec 22, 2012 10:11 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

This reply of yours is utter nonsense.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jan 10, 2013 11:35 am

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

I think there's no need to place too much emphasis on a phrase that only occurs twice in the entire Suttapiṭaka. According to the commentaries this phrase refers to a consciousness of nibbāna.

Ven. Ñāṇananda has probably explored this phrase in more detail than most, and I generally agree with his analysis. However, he misinterprets at least one of the two commentarial explanations and sets up a bit of a straw man argument against the commentary. Recourse to the sub-commentary would have prevented this misinterpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 21, 2013 8:22 pm

Title: Re: bardo...

Content:

Although anecdotal reports of NDEs neither prove nor disprove the existence of a postmortem intermediate state (antarabhāva), they do indicate the possibility of such an event as well as the role of kamma and conditioning in the content and interpretation of such experiences. For example, see

Eleven Thai Near Death Experiences.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 21, 2013 9:15 pm

Title: Re: what gets reborn

Content:

A point that should probably be acknowledged is that believing in the philosophy of physicalism based on the current scientific knowledge of consciousness is quite unsatisfactory. Physicalism and emergentism are problematic theories that fail to adequately account for how non-experience can give rise to experience. Jerry A. Fodor, *The Big Idea: Can There Be a Science of the Mind*: Nobody has the slightest idea how anything material could be conscious. Nobody even knows what it would be like to have the slightest idea about how anything material could be conscious.

Ned Block, "Consciousness," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*:

We have no conception of our physical or functional nature that allows us to understand how it could explain our subjective experience.... in the case of consciousness we have nothing -- zilch -- worthy of being called a research program, nor are there any substantive proposals about how to go about starting one.

Alan Wallace, *Hidden Dimensions*:

A true revolution in the mind sciences has been delayed by an enforced conformity to the unnatural ideological and methodological constraints imposed by the assumptions of scientific materialism, particularly neo-Darwinism. One such assumption is that mental phenomena are equivalent to neurophysiological processes in the brain, an empirically uncorroborated belief. If the first revolution in the mind sciences is to take place, such unsubstantiated ideas must be suspended and new methodologies must be employed that are uniquely suited to the scientific study of mental phenomena, including consciousness. In other words, science can either continue to let its study of the mind be dominated by the metaphysical assumptions of a well-established ideology or pursue the open-minded, empirical investigation of mental phenomena, even if it calls into question some of the most deeply held scientific beliefs based on classical physics and contemporary biology.

Some of the issues involved are investigated in *Mind and Its Place in the World: Non-Reductionist Approaches to the Ontology*.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 22, 2013 2:17 am

Title: Re: what gets reborn

Content:

Maybe, but collapsing experience into neurological processes and declaring causal closure hasn't resolved the issue, and there are scientists and philosophers who think that this reductivism (which includes a number of so-called "non-reductive" approaches) is part of the problem. Thus, there's good reason to think outside of these reductivist boxes. John Searle, quoted in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*:

At our present state of the investigation of consciousness, we don't know how it works and we need to try all kinds of different ideas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 22, 2013 5:30 pm

Title: Re: No believing in God is not such a good idea.

Content:

Issues and ideologies related to nationalism and communism -- both quite godless -- were responsible for far more slaughter in the 20th century than religion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 22, 2013 8:14 pm

Title: Re: No believing in God is not such a good idea.

Content:

Yes, well, antisemitism wasn't the cause of WW II. And of the approx. 60 million war casualties, approx. 20 million were soldiers and 40 million were civilians (and of the approx. 11 - 17 million civilians who were killed as a result of Nazi ideological policies, 6 million were Jewish).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 26, 2013 2:30 am

Title: Re: Man with no brain

Content:

Language is a tool, or a weapon....

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jan 26, 2013 10:31 pm

Title: Re: Man with no brain

Content:

I've been around....

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 28, 2013 12:48 am

Title: Re: Intellectual Integrity

Content:

What "facts" are those, and how does one go about establishing them objectively?

Let's remember that the Indians -- including Buddhists -- debated epistemology for hundreds of years without ever reaching any consensus.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 28, 2013 5:17 am

Title: Re: Intellectual Integrity

Content:

The application of the noble eightfold path leading to dispassion makes a difference.

BTW, while no version of Buddhist epistemology maintains that concepts & thoughts are a substitute for non-conceptual awareness, they do accept the role of inference (anumāna) in orienting one towards right view concerning conditionality. Even Nāgārjuna acknowledges that without using conventions the ultimate can't be taught, and without the ultimate, liberation can't be achieved. Your penchant for anti-intellectualism leaves little room for the stages of discernment obtained through hearing (śrutamayā paññā) and discernment obtained through reflection (cintāmayā paññā) -- both of which are important for learning how to integrate a developmental path.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 28, 2013 5:47 am

Title: Re: Intellectual Integrity

Content:

I think there's little point in talking to you. To me, your posts read like a poorly translated Zen text.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jan 28, 2013 11:14 am

Title: Re: Intellectual Integrity

Content:

Well, just as one can't step into the same river twice, one can't duplicate the same experience twice. It seems to me that path structures and formulated descriptions are generalized approximations at best. Thus, path structures are merely provisional expedients. The canonical discourses employ nominal designations to point the way towards utterly non-referential dispassion. But there is a significant amount of diversity in the actual practices offered in the discourses to attain this end. And in terms of individuals there is an even greater diversity of aptitudes and past conditioning.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jan 29, 2013 1:15 am

Title: Re: Intellectual Integrity

Content:

The recognition of the cessation of mental outflows is only available to noble ones and doesn't exist independent of a particular mental continuum. As worldlings, we can experience the temporary suppression of the hindrances through the development of samādhi & paññā, and can infer from this that the complete termination of the mental outflows would be peaceful, but this is still an inferential cognition on our part. This can be very useful as a way of pointing us in the right direction. But it is a pointer, and not an observable objective fact.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 30, 2013 12:57 am

Title: Re: The causes for wisdom

Content:

It's probably more precise to say that sati arises together with volitional intention (cetanā) and other mental factors. Thus, mindfulness, volitional intention and attention (manasikāra) work in concert to focus the mind. These concomitant mental factors can occur in any of the four postures, including sitting on a cushion with one's legs crossed, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 30, 2013 4:50 am

Title: Re: The causes for wisdom

Content:

This neatly gets to the heart of the matter.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jan 30, 2013 2:03 pm

Title: Re: nimitta for jhana

Content:

Given that MN 128 is the only sutta that mentions an obhāsanimitta and rūpanimitta in that context, and given that the commentaries and the Vimuttimagga consider that MN 128 is primarily about the development of the divine eye, and not jhāna per se, there's no reason to tie MN 128 to other uses of the term "nimitta" in the suttas or to the development of jhāna, unless one thinks that a mental image as a counterpart representation (paṭibhāganimitta) is a necessary prerequisite for developing jhāna. And not even the Visuddhimagga makes that claim.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 01, 2013 1:14 pm

Title: Re: "The Buddha did not teach it..."

Content:

In addition to the input of well vetted contemporary teachers, I'd say that some awareness of the commentaries and treatises is also very useful in order to avoid unnecessary sidetracks and bogus interpretations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 02, 2013 1:26 am

Title: Re: nimitta for jhana

Content:

Using a prepared kasiṇa maṇḍala is an effective method for developing samatha. And it seems that light nimittas, etc., are important for developing the divine eye. However, although light nimittas, etc., can and often do occur when developing samatha, such phenomena aren't necessary for attaining jhāna, and I'm not aware of any Buddhist tradition that says otherwise.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Feb 02, 2013 7:56 pm

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

Depends on how you want to define "religion." It's a rather slippery term.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 03, 2013 8:28 am

Title: Re: the first jhana and thinking.

Content:

It's difficult to try to ascertain the definitions of terms entirely through reading the suttas alone. Firstly, there are many diverse meditation subjects offered in the suttas. And secondly, without recourse to the early strata of commentary, modern interpretations can be based on certain assumptions not present in the suttas themselves.

We see in the canonical and para-canonical commentaries that the analysis and defining of terms often give a spectrum of meanings, which illustrates a developmental path, not a rigid "one-size-fits-all" type of approach. For example, the canonical Dhammasaṅgaṇī gives the following two registers for vitakka and vicāra (the English equivalents here are those offered by Lance Cousins, who's done an exhaustive survey of all relevant Pāli sources):

vitakka:

1. takka 2. vitakka 3. saṅkappa 4. appanā 5. byappanā 6. cetaso abhiniropanā 7. sammāsaṅkappa

1. speculation 2. thought 3. thought formation 4. fixing 5. firm fixing 6. applying the mind 7. right thought formation.

vicāra:

1. cāra 2. vicāra 3. anuvicāra 4. upavicāra 5. cittassa anusandhānatā 6. anupekkhanatā

1. wandering 2. wandering about 3. repeated wandering about 4. frequenting 5. explorativeness of mind 6. constant examination.

Additionally, Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra ābhidharmikas consistently define vitakka & vicāra as two types of "mental discourse" (manojalpa, lit: "mind-talk"). For example, Vasubandhu defines vitakka as "mental discourse which investigates" (paryeṣako manojalpa) and vicāra as "mental discourse which reflects" (pratyavekṣako manojalpa). Vitakka is considered to be coarse (cittasyaudārikatā) and vicāra comparatively more subtle (cittasyasūkṣmatā). Compare with the Theravāda Peṭakopadesa, which gives a detailed word analysis of these terms in the context of the jhāna formula:

Vitakka is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Vicāra is like him simply contemplating it (anupassati). Vitakka is like non-comprehension (apariññā). Vicāra is like full comprehension (pariññā). Vitakka is the analytical understanding of language and the analytical understanding of knowledge. Vicāra is the analytical understanding of dhamma and the analytical understanding of meaning. Vitakka is the mind's skill in pleasantness. Vicāra is the mind's skill in endeavor. Vitakka is about this being skillful, this unskillful, about this to be developed, this to be abandoned, this to be verified. Vicāra is like the abandoning, the development, the verification.

Some kinds of meditation, such as mindfulness of breathing, are primarily non-discursive from the outset. This is why mindfulness of breathing is suggested as an antidote for excessive discursive

thinking. However, other meditation subjects (e.g. Buddhānussati, brahmavihārā, asubhasaññā, etc.) can incorporate the repetition of set textual formulas as a method for focusing the mind, at least in the initial stages. Once the mind begins to settle the repetition can be simplified and then suspended.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 03, 2013 8:40 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

That still seems unnecessarily restrictive. In his paper *Atheism and Religion*, Michael Martin summarizes the defining factors of the concept of religion as philosophical, ethical, and soteriological responses to certain questions, as offered by Monroe and Elizabeth Beardsley in *Philosophical*

*Thinking: An Introduction*:

Arguing that one cannot define "religion" in terms of a belief in god or in a soul because such beliefs are not found among all religions, they propose that "religion" be defined in terms of the attempt to answer basic religious questions. These are the following:

- (1) What are the fundamental characteristics of human beings and the chief problems they face?
- (2) What are the characteristics of nonhuman reality that are of greatest significance for human life?
- (3) Given the nature of man and the universe, how should men try to live?
- (4) Given the answers to the first three questions, what practices will best develop and sustain in men an understanding of the nature of human and nonhuman reality and a dedication to the ideal of human life?
- (5) In seeking true answers to the first four questions, what method or methods should be used?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 03, 2013 11:28 am

Title: Re: John Peacock: Will the Real Buddha Please Stand Up?

Content:

"Religion" is a slippery term. In the paper *Atheism and Religion*, Martin addresses this as follows: Beardsley and Beardsley reject the objection that their definition is too broad in that there are sets of interrelated beliefs, attitudes, and practices that meet their specifications and are not recognized as world religions. On the one hand, they say that a restriction on the meaning of religion in terms of the content of beliefs, attitudes, or actions cannot be given. On the other hand, they point out that increased cultural and historical knowledge has tended to broaden what is counted as a religion and that their usage is in harmony with this trend. They also maintain that a term is needed to refer to all serious attempts to answer the basic religious questions and that "religion" is the appropriate one to use. And finally, they say that their definition is in harmony with common usage, in that it includes all those sets of beliefs, emotions, and actions that have been commonly called a "religion."

Beardsley and Beardsley admit that there are controversial cases of religion, and they put both humanism and Marxism in this category. Although their definition includes the disputed case of humanism, they leave open the question of whether Marxist communism is a religion.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 04, 2013 4:17 am

Title: Re: nimitta for jhana

Content:

BTW, AN 8.64 explicitly connects the perception of light and the seeing of forms to seeing devas, i.e. the development of the divine eye.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 04, 2013 7:37 am

Title: Re: nimitta for jhana

Content:

It seems that it likely connects with the second of the four types of samādhībhāvanā described in AN 4.41.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 06, 2013 2:43 am

Title: Re: ajahn brahm meditation methods

Content:

The cessation of perception and feeling is not the same as nibbāna. Liberation through discernment (paññāvimuttā) doesn't require the development of the formless attainments or the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling. The suttas tell us that in the Buddha's day there were more arahants liberated through discernment than those who were liberated both ways etc., and there's no reason to think that this situation changed later. For example, SN 8.7 Pavāraṇā Sutta, informs us that of 500 arahants present on that occasion, 60 had triple knowledge, 60 had the six higher gnoses, 60 were liberated both ways (ubhatobhāgavimuttā, meaning jhānas & formless attainments), and all of the rest were liberated through discernment.

The arahant path and fruition can occur after emerging from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling, but even among arahants it's a path less traveled.

And in the Abhidhammapiṭaka the cessation of perception and feeling doesn't play any significant part in the path of awakening. There is no occurrence of consciousness during the cessation attainment, therefore no perception or knowledge. This is why the cessation attainment plays no direct role in the attainment of the supramundane paths and fruitions.

Moreover, the Theravāda has never accepted that the cessation of perception and feeling is not-conditioned (asaṅkhata) because that would mean that there are two not-conditioned dhammas, and that a produced meditative state is not-conditioned, and that the cessation of perception and feeling would have the same liberating role as the supramundane paths and fruitions, and so on. This is a specific point of controversy in the Kathāvatthu, where all of these alternatives are rejected.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 06, 2013 2:58 am

Title: Re: the first jhana and thinking.

Content:

This isn't the Pāli sub-forum. The relevant passage in English is as follows:

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he thinks the thought of renunciation. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression he thinks the thought of non-aversion. Here, for fulfilling non-delusion he thinks the



thought of harmlessness.

Here, for fulfilling non-passion he is secluded from sensual pleasures. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression and fulfilling non-delusion he is secluded from unskillful phenomena. And so he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

Directed thought: There are three kinds of directed thought, namely the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-aversion, and the thought of harmlessness.

Here, directed thought is the first instance while evaluation is the evaluation of what is thereby received.

Just as when a man sees someone approaching in the distance he does not yet know whether it is a woman or a man, but when he has received [the recognition] that “it is a woman” or “it is a man” or that “it is of such color” or that “it is one of such shape,” then when he has thought this he further scrutinizes, “How then, is he ethical or unethical, rich or poor?” This is examination. With directed thought he fixes. With examination he moves about and turns over [what has been thought].

And just as a winged bird first accumulates [speed] and then accumulates no more [speed when gliding], so too, directed thought is like the accumulation, and evaluation is like the outstretched wings which keeps preserving the directed thought and evaluation....

Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it. Directed thought is like a lack of full comprehension. Evaluation is like full comprehension. Directed thought is the analytical understanding of language and the analytical understanding of knowledge. Evaluation is the analytical understanding of dhamma and the analytical understanding of meaning. Directed thought is the mind’s skill in pleasantness. Evaluation is the mind’s skill in endeavor. Directed thought is about this being skillful, this unskillful, about this to be developed, this to be abandoned, this to be verified. Evaluation is like the abandoning, the development, the verification.

This entire section is a word-commentary on the first two jhāna factors of the first jhāna formula. And that’s exactly how it’s used in the Vimuttimaggā where these same descriptions and similes are given explicitly in the context of describing the jhāna factors of the first jhāna.

Buddhist meditation is far more diverse, dynamic, and multidimensional than you seems willing to admit. Not only is this diversity evident in the textual records of the Suttapiṭaka, the Abhidhammapiṭaka, and the commentaries, it’s also evident in the methods taught by the teachers of the Thai forest tradition, the Burmese Vipassanā tradition, and every other Buddhist meditative tradition. Meditation is a tool to calm the mind so that dhammas can be seen clearly, leading to discernment and dispassion. It isn’t an end in itself.

And the entire path is provisional from beginning to end. It’s up to each individual to walk the path and figure out how to make the necessary adjustments to their personal situation as they go along. The path isn’t going to develop in precisely the same way for any two people. Trying to pin down meditation in the most restrictive terms possible by interpreting the texts in the most extreme terms possible in order to attempt to somehow disprove or discredit other well tested modes of practice displays a fixation that’s rooted in a fiction. The path is more inclusive than that.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Feb 06, 2013 4:33 am

Title: Re: the first jhana and thinking.

Content:

I quoted almost the entire passage here more than two years ago. In the previous reply in this thread I simply quoted that particular excerpt from the Peṭakopadesa as a comparison to how vitakka & vicāra are defined as two types of "mental discourse" (manojalpa) in non-Pāli sources.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 08, 2013 10:02 pm

Title: Re: ajahn brahm meditation methods

Content:

There's no need for herrings of any color. There are a number of suttas which give a complete explanation of the path and awakening without ever mentioning the formless attainments or the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling. Moreover, even when the nine meditative attainments are given, such as the the sequence from AN 9.47 to AN 9.51, the cessation of perception & feeling isn't equated with nibbāna. The relevant phrase in this case being "and having seen with wisdom, his taints are utterly destroyed." This seeing with wisdom and elimination of āsavas occurs after one has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Feb 10, 2013 7:48 pm

Title: Re: the first jhana and thinking.

Content:

That's fine.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 11, 2013 10:53 am

Title: Re: the first jhana and thinking.

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 12, 2013 10:59 am

Title: Re: Strategies for Cultivation

Content:

There are many practices given in the Pāli suttas, such as recollection of the Buddha (Buddhānussati), the development of loving-kindness (mettābhāvanā), the recognition of unattractiveness (asubhasaññā), the recognition of impermanence (aniccasaññā), and many more. Ten of these practices are included in AN 10.60. These and more have been collected together and commented

upon in the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Feb 14, 2013 7:32 pm

Title: Re: which dhamma texts would you pick?

Content:

The Dhammapada: Teachings of the Buddha

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha

Food for the Heart: The Collected Teachings of Ajahn Chah

The total for these three comes in under \$60. Money well spent.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Feb 15, 2013 2:56 pm

Title: Re: which dhamma texts would you pick?

Content:

It's a useful collection of teachings that cover various aspects of conduct and practice.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 18, 2013 2:10 am

Title: Re: which dhamma texts would you pick?

Content:

I don't understand why you started this thread. But when someone asks me what books I would recommend to people who "know almost nothing about the dhamma," I often recommend the Dhammapada.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Feb 25, 2013 9:12 pm

Title: Re: ajahn chah explanation of jhana?

Content:

Ajahn Chah gives instructions on mindfulness of breathing and discusses the jhāna factors in a talk titled Monastery of Confusion:

It's like this: if we get attached to the ideals and take the guidelines that we are given in the instructions too literally, it can be difficult to understand. When doing a standard meditation such as mindfulness of breathing, first we should make the determination that right now we are going to do this practice, and we are going to make mindfulness of breathing our foundation. We only focus on the breath at three points, as it passes through the nostrils, the chest and the abdomen. When the air enters it first passes the nose, then through the chest, then to the end point of the abdomen. As it leaves the body, the beginning is the abdomen, the middle is the chest, and the end is the nose. We merely note it. This is a way to start controlling the mind, tying awareness to these points at the beginning, middle and end of the inhalations and exhalations.

Before we begin we should first sit and let the mind relax. It's similar to sewing robes on a treadle sewing machine. When we are learning to use the sewing machine, first we just sit in front of the machine to get familiar with it and feel comfortable. Here, we just sit and breathe. Not fixing awareness on anything, we merely take note that we are breathing. We take note of whether the breath is relaxed or not and how long or short it is. Having noticed this, then we begin focusing on the inhalation and exhalation at the three points.

We practice like this until we become skilled in it and it goes smoothly. The next stage is to focus awareness only on the sensation of the breath at the tip of the nose or the upper lip. At this point we aren't concerned with whether the breath is long or short, but only focus on the sensation of entering and exiting.

Different phenomena may contact the senses, or thoughts may arise. This is called initial thought (vitakka). The mind brings up some idea, be it about the nature of compounded phenomena (sankhārā), about the world, or whatever. Once the mind has brought it up, the mind will want to get involved and merge with it. If it's an object that is wholesome then let the mind take it up. If it is something unwholesome, stop it immediately. If it is something wholesome then let the mind contemplate it, and gladness, satisfaction and happiness will come about. The mind will be bright and clear; as the breath goes in and out and as the mind takes up these initial thoughts. Then it becomes discursive thought (vicāra). The mind develops familiarity with the object, exerting itself and merging with it. At this point, there is no sleepiness.

After an appropriate period of this, take your attention back to the breath. Then as you continue on there will be the initial thought and discursive thought, initial thought and discursive thought. If you are contemplating skillfully on an object such as the nature of sankhāra, then the mind will experience deeper tranquility and rapture is born. There is the vitakka and vicāra, and that leads to happiness of mind. At this time there won't be any dullness or drowsiness. The mind won't be dark if we practice like this. It will be gladdened and enraptured.

This rapture will start to diminish and disappear after a while, so you can take up the initial thought again. The mind will become firm and certain with it - undistracted. Then you go on to discursive thought again, the mind becoming one with it. When you are practicing a meditation that suits your temperament and doing it well, then whenever you take up the object, rapture will come about: the hairs of the body stand on end and the mind is enraptured and satiated.

When it's like this there can't be any dullness or drowsiness. You won't have any doubts. Back and forth between initial and discursive thought, initial and discursive thought, over and over again and rapture comes. Then there is sukha (bliss).

This takes place in sitting practice. After sitting for a while, you can get up and do walking meditation. The mind can be the same in the walking. Not sleepy, it has the vitakka and vicāra, vitakka and vicāra, then rapture. There won't be any of the nīvarana, and the mind will be unstained. Whatever takes place, never mind; you don't need to doubt about any experiences you may have, be they of light, of bliss, or whatever. Don't entertain doubts about these conditions of mind. If the mind is dark, if the mind is illumined, don't fixate on these conditions, don't be attached to them. Let go, discard them. Keep walking, keep noting what is taking place without getting bound or infatuated. Don't suffer over these conditions of mind. Don't have doubts about them. They are just what they are, following the way of mental phenomena. Sometimes the mind will be joyful. Sometimes it will be sorrowful. There can be happiness or suffering; there can be obstruction. Rather than doubting, understand that conditions of mind are like this; whatever manifests is coming about due to causes ripening. At this

moment this condition is manifesting; that's what you should recognize. Even if the mind is dark you don't need to be upset over that. If it becomes bright, don't be excessively gladdened by that. Don't have doubts about these conditions of mind, or about your reactions to them.

Do your walking meditation until you are really tired, then sit. When you sit determine your mind to sit; don't just play around. If you get sleepy, open your eyes and focus on some object. Walk until the mind separates itself from thoughts and is still, then sit. If you are clear and awake, you can close your eyes. If you get sleepy again, open your eyes and look at an object.

Don't try to do this all day and all night. When you're in need of sleep let yourself sleep. Just as with our food: once a day we eat. The time comes and we give food to the body. The need for sleep is the same. When the time comes, give yourself some rest. When you've had an appropriate rest, get up. Don't let the mind languish in dullness, but get up and get to work - start practicing. Do a lot of walking meditation. If you walk slowly and the mind becomes dull, then walk fast. Learn to find the right pace for yourself.

Question: Are vitakka and vicāra the same?

Ajahn Chah: You're sitting and suddenly the thought of someone pops into your head - that's vitakka, the initial thought. Then you take that idea of the person and start thinking about them in detail. Vitakka is picking it up, vicāra is investigating it. For example, we pick up the idea of death and then we start considering it: "I will die, others will die, every living being will die; when they die where will they go?" Then stop! Stop and bring it back again. When it gets running like that, stop it again; and then go back to mindfulness of the breath. Sometimes the discursive thought will wander off and not come back, so you have to stop it. Keep at it until the mind is bright and clear.

If you practice vicāra with an object that you are suited to, you may experience the hairs of your body standing on end, tears pouring from your eyes, a state of extreme delight, many different things as rapture comes.

Question: Can this happen with any kind of thinking, or is it only in a state of tranquility that it happens?

Ajahn Chah: It's when the mind is tranquil. It's not ordinary mental proliferation. You sit with a calm mind and then the initial thought comes. For example, I think of my brother who just passed away. Or I might think of some other relatives. This is when the mind is tranquil - the tranquility isn't something certain, but for the moment the mind is tranquil. After this initial thought comes then I go into discursive thought. If it's a line of thinking that's skillful and wholesome, it leads to ease of mind and happiness, and there is rapture with its attendant experiences. This rapture came from the initial and discursive thinking that took place in a state of calmness. We don't have to give it names such as first jhāna, second jhāna and so forth. We just call it tranquility.

The next factor is bliss (sukha). Eventually we drop the initial and discursive thinking as tranquility deepens. Why? The state of mind is becoming more refined and subtle. Vitakka and vicāra are relatively coarse, and they will vanish. There will remain just the rapture accompanied by bliss and one-pointedness of mind. When it reaches full measure there won't be anything, the mind is empty. That's absorption concentration.

We don't need to fixate or dwell on any of these experiences. They will naturally progress from one to the next. At first there is initial and discursive thought, rapture, bliss and one-pointedness. Then initial and discursive thinking are thrown off, leaving rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness. Rapture is

thrown off, then bliss, and finally only one-pointedness and equanimity remain. It means the mind becomes more and more tranquil, and its objects are steadily decreasing until there is nothing but one-pointedness and equanimity.

When the mind is tranquil and focused this can happen. It is the power of mind, the state of the mind that has attained tranquility. When it's like this there won't be any sleepiness. It can't enter the mind; it will disappear. As for the other hindrances of sensual desire, aversion, doubt and restlessness and agitation, they just won't be present. Though they may still exist latent in the mind of the meditator, they won't occur at this time.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 26, 2013 5:54 am

Title: Re: Another voice in the jhana debates

Content:

The Mahāvibhāṣa Śāstra, the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, the Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra, etc., all explicitly state that samatha & vipassanā are optimally balanced in the four jhānas and that penetration of the four noble truths optimally occurs within the four jhānas. The first three formless attainments and access concentration are not considered optimal because of limited vipassanā in the former and limited samatha in the latter. The authors of these texts were relying on source materials that parallel the Pāli suttas. They understood the Indic languages that they were using, and they most certainly weren't relying on English translations.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 26, 2013 12:52 pm

Title: Re: Another voice in the jhana debates

Content:

The notion of the presence of vipassanā in the jhānas isn't the result of grammatical confusion. It has ancient roots in mainstream Indian Buddhism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 26, 2013 11:12 pm

Title: Re: My Brush With Death, Hospitalization

Content:

Serious illness. Take care of yourself. Glad to hear that you're on the mend.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Feb 26, 2013 11:35 pm

Title: Re: Happy Birthday bodom!!!!!!

Content:

Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Feb 27, 2013 10:55 am  
Title: Re: Happy Birthday Greggorious!!!  
Content:  
Happy birthday!!!

Author: Nyana  
Date: Wed Feb 27, 2013 11:30 pm  
Title: Re: Is Critical Thinking Active Vipassana?  
Content:  
Thinking is generally conditioned by wrong views and perversions (Cf. AN 4.49). Sense restraint is important with regard to mental objects just as it is with regard to other sensory objects.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Feb 28, 2013 1:59 am  
Title: Re: My Brush With Death, Hospitalization  
Content:  
As a Canadian, I find U.S. health care difficult to fathom....

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Feb 28, 2013 2:36 am  
Title: Re: Is Critical Thinking Active Vipassana?  
Content:  
How many of these are directly relevant to realizing the four noble truths? And at any rate, there are other faculties found in the suttas and collected together in the Abhidhamma & commentaries.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 01, 2013 8:03 am  
Title: Re: differences in defining nibbana between schools  
Content:  
For the Theravāda, nibbāna is an ultimately real dhamma (paramatthadhamma) and the only dhamma that is not conditioned (asaṅkhata). It is an object of supramundane cognition (lokuttaracitta) and is included in the mental phenomena sensory sphere (dhammāyatana) and the mental phenomena component (dhammadhātu). The four paths, four fruits, and nibbāna are classified as the unincluded level (apariyāpanna bhūmi), that is, not included in the sensual realm, the form realm, or the formless realm. According to the Visuddhimagga, nibbāna "has peace as its characteristic. Its function is not to die; or its function is to comfort. It is manifested as the signless; or it is manifested as non-diversification (nippapañca)."

According to the Sarvāstivāda, nirvāṇa is an analytical cessation (pratisaṃkhyānirodha) that is a disjunction from impure dharmas that occurs through analysis (pratisaṃkhyāna), which is a specific type of discernment (prajñā). This analytical cessation is substantially existent (dravyasat) and ultimately exists (paramārthasat).

For Sautrāntika commentators nirvāṇa as an analytical cessation (pratisaṃkhyānirodha) is a merely a conceptual designation (prajñapti) and doesn't refer to an entity or state that is substantially existent (dravyasat). It is a non-implicative negation (prasajyapraśeḍha), that is, a negation that doesn't imply the presence of some other entity. Therefore nirvāṇa simply refers to a cessation that is the termination of defilements that are abandoned by the correct practice of the noble path.

According to the Yogācāra, for those on the bodhisattva path, nirvāṇa is non-abiding (apraṭiṣṭha nirvāṇa). The dependent nature (paratantrasvabhāva) is the basis (āśraya) of both defilement and purification. The all-basis consciousness (ālayavijñāna) is the defiled portion (saṃkleśabhāga) of the dependent nature. Purified suchness (viśuddhā tathatā) is the purified portion (vyavadānabhāga) of the dependent nature. Synonyms for purified suchness are the perfected nature (pariniṣpanna) and non-abiding nirvāṇa. Non-abiding nirvāṇa is the revolved basis (āśrayaparāvṛtti) that has eliminated defilements without abandoning saṃsāra.

Madhyamaka authors accept the notion of non-abiding nirvāṇa, but they don't use the three natures model used by the Yogācāra. Rather, they simply consider all things to be conceptual designations (prajñapti) that are empty of nature (svabhāva). For them, conceptual designations are relative truth (saṃvṛtisatya) and only emptiness is ultimate truth (paramārthasatya).

Zen, Pure Land, Vajrayāna, etc., are practice traditions more so than doctrinal schools, and authors writing from any of these perspectives would generally rely on Yogācāra or Madhyamaka śāstras or a specific Mahāyāna sūtra.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 01, 2013 9:12 am

Title: Re: early school who rejected abhidhamma entirely?

Content:

The Sarvāstivādins acknowledged that their canonical Abhidharma texts were composed by disciples but still generally considered them to be the word of the Buddha (buddhavacana). Saṃghabhadra's Abhidharmavyākhyānusāra:

As the abhidharma [texts] were compiled by the great disciples on the basis of the Buddha's teaching, they are approved by the Buddha; they are also buddha-vacana. As they are in accord with the knowledge which knows fully the causes and effects of defilement and purification, they are like the sūtra-s. If what has been approved by the Buddha is not called buddha-vacana, then innumerable sūtra-s would have to be abandoned!

That is, all of the suttas spoken by Sāriputta, etc., would also have to be dismissed if one is going to dismiss everything that wasn't spoken directly by the Buddha.

It was the Dārṣṭāntika and Sautrāntika authors who didn't accept the Abhidharma as the word of the Buddha, although they often still used similar abhidharma concepts and categories. It seems that the earliest extant text that refers to Sautrāntika ideas and interpretations by name is Vasubandhu's auto-commentary on his Abhidharmakośa called the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya. However, these Sautrāntika ideas likely predate Vasubandhu's auto-commentary.



Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 01, 2013 10:12 pm

Title: Re: differences in defining nibbana between schools

Content:

Given the definition given in SN 38.1, SN 43.1-44, and Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga 184, I would say that it's a designation (paññatti, prajñapti) referring to the elimination of passion, aggression, and delusion. Or with regard to the four paths (stream-entry, etc.), a designation referring to the elimination of fetters terminated by each path. This is similar to the Sautrāntika interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 02, 2013 12:22 am

Title: Re: Is Critical Thinking Active Vipassana?

Content:

Ven. Ñāṇananda's Concept & Reality in Early Buddhist Thought offers one of the most thorough studies of papañca so far undertaken. One would be hard pressed to find a positive use of papañca in the suttas. AN 8.30:

This Dhamma is for one who delights in non-proliferation (nippapañca), who takes delight in non-proliferation, not for one who delights in proliferation (papañca), who takes delight in proliferation.

SN 43.12 gives the absence of papañca (nippapañca) as the goal of the noble path, an epithet defined as equivalent to nibbāna:

And what, monks, is the unproliferated (nippapañca)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the unproliferated.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 03, 2013 10:34 am

Title: Re: buddha nature...

Content:

The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra:

O Mahāmati, with a view to casting aside the heterodox theory, you must treat the tathāgatagarbha as not self.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 05, 2013 11:58 am

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

As you suggest, the same passages occur in DN 2. A relevant section:

He drenches, steeps, fills, and permeates this very body with the joy and pleasure born of seclusion so that there is no part of his whole body that is not permeated by joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

The commentary explains these phrases as follows:

"This very body:" this body born of action [i.e. born of kamma]. "He drenches:" he moistens, he extends joy and pleasure everywhere. "Steeps:" to flow all over. "Fills:" like filling a bellows with air. "Permeates:" to touch all over.

“His whole body:” in this monk’s body, with all its parts, in the place where acquired [material] continuity occurs there is not even the smallest part consisting of skin, flesh, and blood that is not permeated with the pleasure of the first jhāna.

This accords well with the Vimuttimagga:

Just as the bath-powder when inside and outside saturated with moisture, adheres and does not scatter, so the body of the meditator in the first jhāna is permeated with joy and pleasure from top to bottom, from the skullcap to the feet and from the feet to the skullcap, skin and hair, inside and outside. And he dwells without falling back. Thus he dwells like a Brahma god.

[Q.] Joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) are said to be formless phenomena (arūpa-dhamma). How then can they stay permeating the body?

[A.] Name (nāma) depends on form (rūpa). Form depends on name. Therefore, if name has joy, form also has joy. If name has pleasure, form also has pleasure.

Again, form born from joy causes tranquility of body, and when the entire body is tranquilized there is pleasure due to the tranquility of form. Therefore there is no contradiction.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 06, 2013 5:24 am

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

Compare the underlined portion of AN 9.37:

Sister, the concentration that does not lean forward and does not bend back, and that is not reigned in and checked by forcefully suppressing [the defilements] -- by being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, one is not agitated. The Blessed One said this concentration has final knowledge as its fruit.

With the underlined portion from SN 22.53, 54, & 55:

When that consciousness is unestablished, not coming to growth, nongenerative, it is liberated. By being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, he is not agitated. Being unagitated, he personally attains nibbāna. He understands: 'Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.'

It seems that we are dealing with a very specific, liberational samādhi in both cases. Specifically with regard to the content of AN 9.37, the likely samādhi is explained in AN 10.6:

"Bhante, could a bhikkhu obtain such a state of concentration that (1) he would not be percipient of earth in relation to earth; (2) of water in relation to water; (3) of fire in relation to fire; (4) of air in relation to air; (5) of the base of infinity of space in relation to the base of the infinity of space; (6) of the base of infinity of consciousness in relation to the base of the infinity of consciousness; (7) of the base of nothingness in relation to the base of nothingness; (8) of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception in relation to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; (9) of this world in relation to this world; (10) of the other world in relation to the other world, but he would still be percipient?"

"He could, Ānanda."

"But how, Bhante, could he obtain such a state of concentration?"

"Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu is percipient thus: 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishment of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.' It is in this way, Ānanda, that a bhikkhu could obtain such a state of concentration...."

This samādhi is probably equivalent to the perception of "bhavanirodho nibbāna" described in the next sutta, AN 10.7, and the perception of cessation (nirodhasaññā) described in AN 10.60, and in this way is related to the aññāphala samādhi of AN 9.37.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 06, 2013 9:56 am

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

Are you suggesting that MN 140 and these other suttas that use the pericope: "Unagitated, he is totally unbound right within. He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world,'" require the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling for realization to occur?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 06, 2013 1:39 pm

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

The commentary accounts for the other interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Mar 06, 2013 4:22 pm

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

These five AN suttas and the relevant part of AN 9.37 and all of the sutta passages related to the, "Being unagitated, he personally attains nibbāna. He understands: 'Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being,'" pericope, are formalized attempts to articulate what it's like to completely and fully let go and be utterly done with everything in the world. However, formalized statements are merely formalized statements. The actual experience of being utterly done with everything is for each person to realize for him or herself.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 07, 2013 6:12 am

Title: Re: MN 39 similes

Content:

According to the commentary AN 9.37 is referring to the arahant fruition samādhi (arahattaphalasamādhi) and AN 10.6 is referring to the post-awakening fruition attainment samādhi (phalasamāpattisamādhi). But even if one were to relegate the AN 9.37 samādhi to the arahant path

instead of the fruition, the arahant path attainment and fruition attainment are both supramundane jhānas which take cessation as object.

Related to this, the Nettippakaraṇa classifies the "not reigned in and checked by forcefully suppressing" samādhi as vipassanā:

Herein, any samādhi that is presently pleasant and any samādhi that has a future pleasant result are samatha. And any samādhi that is noble and non-carnal, and any samādhi that is not practiced by lowly persons, and any samādhi that is peaceful and sublime, gained by full tranquilization, attained to unification, and not reigned in and checked by forcefully suppressing [the defilements], and any [samādhi of which one is aware] 'I enter this samādhi mindfully and I emerge from it mindfully', are vipassanā.

Be that as it may, this group of suttas does help to illustrate the different perceptual operations that occur with different modes of practice. A jhāna which examines an object-support (ārammaṇūpanijjhāna), a jhāna which examines characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna), and a supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna) each engage in a different perceptual operation.

In sutta terms, a jhāna which examines an object-support includes, for example, the actual refined perception of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā). A jhāna which examines characteristics (lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna) includes, for example, the perception of impermanence (aniccasaññā). And a supramundane jhāna includes the perception of cessation (nirodhasaññā).

If I were to analyze the pericope you brought up, I would differentiate the segment, "it is not reigned in and checked by forcefully suppressing [the defilements]" (AN 3.101) as indicating either a jhāna which examines an object-support or a jhāna which examines characteristics; that segment with the addition of the segment, "by being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, one is not agitated" (AN 9.37) as indicating the arahant supramundane path attainment; and the segment, "being unagitated, he personally attains nibbāna. He understands: 'Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being'" (SN 22.53) as indicating the arahant supramundane fruition attainment. This last segment could even be further subdivided and differentiated.

However, this type of textual analysis is speculative and too closely allied with conceptual realism and other cognitive ills to be of much value.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 08, 2013 12:28 pm

Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis

Content:

No, it's explicitly stated in the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 08, 2013 2:38 pm

Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis

Content:

The most common terms are upapatti (rebirth) and punabbhava (renewed existence).

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 08, 2013 2:40 pm  
Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis  
Content:  
It's explicitly asserted.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 08, 2013 4:11 pm  
Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis  
Content:

In SN 42.13 rebirth is still to be included as a part of the disciple's contemplation:  
He reflects thus, '... since I am restrained in body, speech, and mind, and since, with the breakup of the body, after death, I shall be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.' [As he reflects thus] gladness is born. When one is gladdened, rapture is born. When the mind is elated by rapture the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated.

If one were to take SN 42.13 as a guide for practice, then this would include frequently reflecting on rebirth as a part of one's dhammasamādhī.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Fri Mar 08, 2013 7:01 pm  
Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis  
Content:  
Rebirth is never questioned in the commentarial glosses of dhammasamādhī.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Sat Mar 09, 2013 6:48 am  
Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis  
Content:

As we have no direct access to what the Buddha actually taught during his lifetime, there is no way of substantiating appeals to "original Buddhism." Aside from that, it seems that there are a couple of related questions here.

First, what is the function of meditation in the Buddhist path of liberation according to the extant sources that claim to be the teachings of the Buddha (and that are generally agreed upon by the ancient Buddhist traditions and modern scholars to be the earliest records)?

And second, what is the place and function of the teachings on rebirth in relation to the Buddhist path of liberation?

In order to develop an intellectual understanding of the role of meditation in the Buddhist path of

awakening, I would recommend the following:

1. On the Practice of Buddhist Meditation According to the Pāli Nikāyas and Exegetical Sources by Rupert Gethin.
2. The Four Satipaṭṭhānas in Early Buddhism by Tse-fu Kuan.\*
3. Wings to Awakening: An Anthology from the Pāli Canon by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.
4. The Buddhist Path to Awakening by Rupert Gethin.

For sources on the role of the teachings on rebirth, there is the following:

1. Dhamma Without Rebirth? by Bhikkhu Bodhi.
2. Does Rebirth Make Sense? by Bhikkhu Bodhi.
3. The Truth of Rebirth: And Why it Matters for Buddhist Practice by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.
4. Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist by B. Alan Wallace.

\* Toward the end of this paper there are a couple of dubious statements about saññā & saṅkhāra which were abandoned by the author himself in later publications. Otherwise, it is a decent survey of the suttas on the subject of the satipaṭṭhānas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 09, 2013 8:07 pm

Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis

Content:

Indeed. These issues of rebirth, kamma, and merit (puñña) are also connected to the relevance and sustainability of the Buddhadhamma in general, and the monastic saṅgha in particular. For example, if one were to reject the teachings on these issues, then what is the point of retaining and transmitting the Pāli Tipiṭaka? What is the purpose for entering the monastic path of renunciation and transmitting the pāṭimokkha? And what are the ethical motivations of the laity to provide for the material needs of monastic renunciates?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 09, 2013 8:08 pm

Title: Re: REAL Meditation: The Originalist Thesis

Content:

No, it doesn't.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Mar 14, 2013 10:40 am

Title: Re: Teachers teaching Jhana as whole-body awareness?

Content:

Also, Ven. Ñāṇananda, Nibbāna Sermon 01:

Even though he is able to recognize objects by their conventional names, for the purpose of

comprehending name-and-form, a meditator makes use of those factors that are included under 'name': feeling, perception, intention, contact and attention. All these have a specific value to each individual and that is why the Dhamma has to be understood each one by himself -- paccattam veditabbo. This Dhamma has to be realized by oneself. One has to understand one's own world of name-and-form by oneself. No one else can do it for him. Nor can it be defined or denoted by technical terms. [Emphasis added.]

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Mar 15, 2013 6:15 pm

Title: Search function?

Content:

It seems that the search function isn't what it used to be before the last few rounds of site maintenance. One used to be able to search within an individual thread or search within an individual member's posts. Now, it seems that every search includes all results from all threads. Can this be fixed?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Mar 19, 2013 12:56 am

Title: Re: V-bulletin

Content:

My goodness -- there's a forum for skyscraper enthusiasts!... And it has 3096 current active users online!...

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Mar 23, 2013 2:16 pm

Title: Re: Here's an interesting one for you...

Content:

Crowley considered Buddhism to be part of what he called the "Black tradition." And in contrasting it to his preferred "White tradition," it seems that he considered Buddhism to be an insufficient or deficient path of liberation.

With his preferred "White tradition" requiring the initiate to transform the Buddha's first noble truth into "everything is joy," it seems clear that Crowley never accepted the four noble truths of the Buddhadhamma.

Even if Crowley did attain some sort of temporary cessation state, because he never actually engaged the noble eightfold path, any such attainment would at best be merely a non-percipient attainment (asaññasamāpatti) which could lead to rebirth as a mindless god.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Mar 24, 2013 5:34 pm

Title: Re: Emptiness and tge Abbhidhamma

Content:

The Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka is compatible with the Madhyamaka view of the ultimate. Of course, one needs to have a basic comprehension of Madhyamaka in order to understand this.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Mar 25, 2013 12:15 am

Title: Re: Emptiness and tge Abbhidhamma

Content:

What I said above requires differentiating between (1) the contents of the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka, and (2) the Pāli commentarial (Aṭṭhakathā) and sub-commentarial (Tikā), etc., interpretations of the Abhidhammapiṭaka and the Suttapiṭaka. The vast majority of available resources and studies on the Abhidhamma don't make this differentiation. Therefore, to do so you would need to read the Abhidhammapiṭaka texts themselves and form your own conclusions.

The Abhidhammapiṭaka texts don't explicitly make statements that entail metaphysical realism. The Abhidhammapiṭaka doesn't even refer to conditioned phenomena as paramattha dhammā or paramattha sabhāva. The former does occur once in the Kathāvatthu but it's hardly a ringing endorsement for how this notion of paramattha dhamma later came to be applied and interpreted.

However, the Pāli commentaries and other post-canonical treatises are closer to Vaibhāṣika tenets in many respects than even to Sautrāntika tenets (e.g. in the Visuddhimagga Buddhaghosa explicitly argues against nibbāna being just a designation). Therefore, one would be rather hard-pressed if attempting to reconcile this strata of post-canonical commentary with Madhyamaka.

As for English language translations, most of the seven Abhidhammapiṭaka texts have been translated and published by the Pali Text Society. I would recommend reading U Thiṭṭila's translation of the Vibhaṅga first, followed by U Kyaw Khine's translation of the Dhammasaṅgani (not published by PTS). These books are expensive, but if you have access to a library with an inter-library loan service you should be able to acquire copies that way.

The Book of Analysis, translated by Ven. U Thiṭṭila.

The Dhammasaṅgani: Enumeration of the Ultimate Realities, translated by U Kyaw Khine (Volume 2).

To begin to get some idea of what the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka is like, here is the Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga from the Vibhaṅga, translated by Ven. Ānandajoti.

If you can read Pāli, the entire Tipiṭaka in Roman script is available online here: <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>. Other scripts here: <http://tipitaka.org/>.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 7:48 am

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

Do you not think it's possible to rebuke, reprove, reprimand, censure, criticize, or admonish someone without being angry?



Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 9:47 am  
Title: Re: global warming  
Content:  
Skepticism doesn't establish anything.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 7:08 pm  
Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.  
Content:  
Does disliking or denouncing wrong behavior require the presence of anger?

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 8:06 pm  
Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.  
Content:  
I don't share your belief.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 8:53 pm  
Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.  
Content:  
There are a number of Buddhist practices which include developing revulsion toward things that induce craving and clinging. E.g. the list of perceptions described in AN 7.46 (AN 7.49 in NDB). If developing dislike and revulsion in this way required developing anger, then these practices would be unskillful and never result in liberation.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 10:53 pm  
Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.  
Content:  
If you're referring to SN 51.15, it's hardly a paradox. Rather, it's a matter of differentiating between what is skillful and what is unskillful. Chanda (desire) in the context of developing the noble path is skillful.

Author: Nyana  
Date: Thu Apr 04, 2013 10:59 pm  
Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.  
Content:

I think you'd be hard-pressed to find any recommendations for developing anger or aggression as a practice or as part of the path in the Nikāyas. Anger is regarded as unskillful, and unskillful mental qualities don't lead to liberation. For example, the well known verse from Dhammapada 1.5:

Hatred never ends through hatred.

By non-hate alone does it end.

This is an ancient truth.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 05, 2013 6:11 am

Title: Re: The Problem With Pali

Content:

Without learning the foundational principles of the teachings and the path structure of how to apply the teachings, examining direct experience can lead in any number of directions which may be quite fruitless.

Fortunately, the Buddha's teachings aren't all that hard to learn and understand conceptually. They aren't esoteric and are not embedded in a highly specialized technical or philosophical language. The main potential difficulties are: (i) the teachings are somewhat unsystematically spread across four large Nikāyas (and the oldest parts of the fifth Nikāya); and (ii) some people are unwilling to accept certain parts of the teachings and seek to impose their own novel interpretations.

But now that we have full translations of almost the entire Tipiṭaka and a number of large post-canonical treatises, there's no pressing need to understand Pāli in order to learn the foundational principles and the path structure of how to apply the teachings. And in addition to this, we also have access to a fairly large number of modern studies, commentaries, dhamma talks, etc., primarily in English or English translation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 05, 2013 8:42 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

I think it is. Dislike, disenchantment, and revulsion don't require anger or any other unskillful mental qualities. The path does involve renouncing mental qualities and actions that are harmful and unskillful, but I'd suggest that your phrase "push away or reject something" might be phrased in a more nuanced way as "relax one's grip on something" in order to learn how to let it go.

I also think it's reasonable to differentiate between (i) the learner who is still developing the noble path and (ii) the non-learner who has completed the path and attained fruition. The non-learner likely no longer needs to develop disenchantment and revulsion in order to induce dispassion, whereas the learner does.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 06, 2013 3:23 am

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

In addition, as far as I know, Dīpa Ma never claimed to be an arahant nor did she claim that an arahant can experience lust, hatred, irritation, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 06, 2013 4:09 am

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

Just considering Ingram's eighth point:

Here are a number of bogus myths and falsehoods about arahats, each of which violates one of more of the First Principles in addition to simply being untrue:

8. Arahats cannot feel the following emotions: lust, hatred, irritation, restlessness, worry, fear, pride, conceit, desire for the formless realms, desire for the formed realms, or any other "bad" emotion.

This is a dismissal of the very criteria that establish the arahant path and fruition. SN 38.2:

"Friend Sāriputta, it is said, 'arahantship, arahantship.' What now is arahantship?"

"The destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion: this, friend, is called arahantship."

Or again, in terms of the ten fetters the arahant path and fruition terminates the fetters of passion for form existence, passion for formless existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance (the first five fetters having already been eliminated on the lower paths). If such emotions could still arise after the arahant fruition, the underlying tendencies would still have to be intact. And if the underlying tendencies are still intact, one is still fettered and not fully liberated.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 06, 2013 6:16 am

Title: Re: The Problem With Pali

Content:

There's the statement from Cv 5.33 (Vin ii, 139):

I allow you, monks, to learn the speech of the Awakened One according to his own dialect.

This subject has been somewhat controversial. For elaboration see Ven. Ñāṇananda's *Concept & Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, pp. 45-47. But more generally, the discourses are composed of conventional expressions and designations, and there's no reason why they can't adequately be translated into any modern language, dependent, of course, on the skill of the translator (and the capacity of the reader). A good translation of a given passage is generally no more vague than the Pāli passage, and the translation is sometimes made more specific than the Pāli due, in part, to the translator's interpretation.

SN 1.25:

Though the wise one has transcended the conceived,

He still might say, 'I speak,'

He might say too, 'They speak to me.'

Skilful, knowing the world's parlance,

He uses such terms as mere expressions.

DN 9:

Thus, Citta, there are these worldly expressions, worldly terms, worldly conventions, worldly concepts, which the Tathāgata uses without grasping them.

Compare with your man Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 120:

When I talk about language (words, sentences, etc.) I must speak the language of every day. Is this language somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? Then how is another one to be constructed?—And how strange that we should be able to do anything at all with the one we have!

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 06, 2013 9:38 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

I think Ingram's notion of an "arahant" is not an arahant at all. There's no actual liberation there -- just more wandering on through saṃsāra. Of course, there are plenty of misguided gurus in this world who claim to be enlightened, and no shortage of people who will follow them.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 07, 2013 1:25 am

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

Ven. Bodhi's endnote in MLDB is relevant here:

Since the arahant has eradicated all the defilements along with their underlying tendencies, in this passage the three terms -- the agreeable, etc. -- must be understood simply as the feelings that arise through contact with sense objects, and not as the subtle traces of liking, aversion, and indifference relevant to the preceding passage.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 07, 2013 9:26 am

Title: Re: Anatta = not Atman or No-Self

Content:

Those who believe this hold an annihilationist view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 07, 2013 6:07 pm

Title: Re: Mahayanists and the historical record

Content:

The Theravāda commentators acknowledge that there are different vehicles for different levels of awakening. The path of a bodhisatta includes the development of the perfections over a very long period of time. This is explained in *A Treatise on the Pāramīs* by the Theravāda commentator Ācariya Dhammapāla:

We now undertake a detailed explanation of the pāramīs for clansmen following the suttas who are

zealously engaged in the practice of the vehicle to great enlightenment (mahābodhiyāna), in order to improve their skilfulness in accumulating the requisites for enlightenment....

In detail, to those whose minds are disposed towards the enlightenment of disciples, he gives a discourse establishing and purifying them (in progress towards their goal) by elaborating upon the noble qualities of whichever among the following topics is appropriate.... So too, for beings whose minds are disposed towards the enlightenment of paccekabuddhas and of perfectly enlightened Buddhas, he gives a discourse establishing and purifying them in the two vehicles (leading to these two types of enlightenment) by elaborating upon the greatness of the spiritual power of those Buddhas, and by explaining the specific nature, characteristic, function, etc., of the ten pāramīs in their three stages.

And Dhammapāla adds:

Since it [i.e. the great aspiration to realize mahābodhi] has as its object the inconceivable plane of the Buddhas and the welfare of the whole immeasurable world of beings, it should be seen as the loftiest, most sublime and exalted distinction of merit, endowed with immeasurable potency, the root-cause of all the qualities issuing in Buddhahood. Simultaneous with its arising, the Great Man enters upon the practice of the vehicle to great enlightenment (mahābodhiyānapaṭipatti). He becomes fixed in his destiny, irreversible, and therefore properly gains the designation “bodhisattva.” His mind becomes fully devoted to the supreme enlightenment in its completeness, and his capacity to fulfill the training in the requisites of enlightenment becomes established. For when their aspiration succeeds, the Great Men correctly investigate all the pāramīs with their self-evolved knowledge which prefigures their future attainment of omniscience. Then they undertake their practice, and fulfill them in due order, as was done by the wise Sumedha when he made his great aspiration.

The development of the perfections and the bodhisatta's aspiration are explained in A Manual of the Excellent Man by Ven. Ledi Sayādaw:

I shall now outline the ten ordinary perfections, the ten higher perfections, and the ten supreme perfections....

One who can fulfil only the first ten attains the enlightenment of a Noble Disciple. One who can fulfil only the first ten and the second ten attains the enlightenment of a Solitary Buddha. One who can fulfil all thirty attains Supreme Self-Enlightenment...

What is meant by “the Noblest Aspiration”? It is the verbal and mental undertaking that the bodhisatta had made at some point of time aeons before taking up the perfections. It was made in these terms:

“As a man who knows his own strength, what use is there to get to ‘the yonder shore’ (nibbāna) alone? I will attain to Supreme Knowledge and then convey men and devas to the yonder shore.”

That was the pledge that sent the ten thousand universes reeling and echoing in applause. That was the bodhisatta’s earnest wish. For he intensely aspired to Supreme Self-Enlightenment thus:

“Knowing the Truth, I will let others know it. Freeing myself from the world, I will free others. Having crossed over, I will enable others to cross.”

This fervent and most daring aspiration is called “the Noblest Aspiration.”

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 07, 2013 6:46 pm

Title: Re: Mahayanists and the historical record

Content:

According to the Mahāyāna Adhyāśayasamcodana Sūtra as quoted by Śāntideva in his Compendium of Training (Śikṣāsamuccaya), four principles indicate that an utterance (or statement, teaching, etc.) is compatible with the speech of the Buddha:

- (i) it is connected with truth, not with what is untrue;
- (ii) it is connected with dharma, not with what is not dharma;
- (iii) it leads to giving up defilement, not to increasing defilement;
- (iv) it points out the praiseworthy qualities of nirvāṇa, not those of saṃsāra.

It's important to understand that the Mahāyāna is not a single school or tradition, and that Mahāyāna ideas likely developed over a considerable period of time. Historically, going back to the texts of Indian authors we can surmise that the Mahāyāna movements were not universally accepted by all Buddhists, even as late as the 6th - 8th centuries CE. Mahāyāna authors during this time period still felt compelled to engage in Mahāyāna apologetics in order to defend the Mahāyāna teachings. One of the most thorough defenses of the Mahāyāna is found in the fourth chapter of Bhāviveka's Tarkajvālā (6th century CE). He states Śrāvaka objections to the Mahāyāna and offers various replies giving reasons in defence of the Mahāyāna. It's an informative read for anyone interested in this aspect of Buddhist history.

Of course, long before Bhāviveka there are defences of the Mahāyāna in numerous Mahāyāna texts - some of which include impassioned, defensive posturing and rather indignant name-calling. It's been suggested that this defensive rhetoric is a characteristic of small, embattled groups existing on the margins of more established, mainstream groups. For more see Rhetoric of a Marginalized Yāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 07, 2013 8:25 pm

Title: Re: A Critique of the Hardcore Dharma Movement.

Content:

I don't think he's dumb either. I think he has quite intentionally realigned the criteria for arahantship to conform with his own claim of being an arahant. IMO this is ill-conceived, but that doesn't mean he's dumb.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Apr 09, 2013 10:55 pm

Title: Re: Mahayanists and the historical record

Content:

Also:

An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism by Ronald M. Davidson.

Authority and Orality in the Mahāyāna by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

Historical Consciousness as an Offering to the Trans-historical Buddha by John J. Makransky.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 10, 2013 12:29 am

Title: Re: Baroness Margaret Hilda Thatcher

Content:

It seems to me that the current crop of American conservative teabaggers are far to the right of Thatcher on a whole number of issues (e.g. taxes, health care, social security, etc.).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 10, 2013 5:52 am

Title: Re: Mahayanists and the historical record

Content:

Historically, there have been numerous times and places where these questions have arisen. Each Buddhist author and group was situated in, and influenced by the various conditions of their time and place, just as we are. And investigating how they related to questions of authenticity, authority, and "the Word of the Buddha" adds to and informs contemporary dialogue -- even as we acknowledge that we are embedded in our own unique social and cultural situation, just as the Indian Mahāyāna apologists were embedded in their own unique social, cultural, and historical situations.

There have also been papers published that attempt to address assumptions about these issues pertaining to the Theravāda and other Śrāvaka traditions. For example:

How Theravāda is Theravāda? Exploring Buddhist Identities edited by Peter Skilling, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza, and Santi Pakdeekham.

On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon by Steven Collins.

Scriptural Authenticity and the Śrāvaka Schools: An Essay towards an Indian Perspective by Peter Skilling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 17, 2013 2:43 pm

Title: Re: Vipassanā: What Is Dissolution, Really?

Content:

It's for each of us to discern if what we are directly perceiving or inferring on the basis of direct perception is valid or invalid, useful or not. If one thinks the idea of momentariness is a valid representation of their own experiential cognitive processes, and this aids in the development of disenchantment and dispassion, then it's useful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 17, 2013 3:05 pm

Title: Re: Buddhism, Hinduism and the caste system

Content:

This should begin to address your questions: Buddhism and the Race Question by G. P. Malalasekera & H. N. Jayatilleke.

In recent times there is also the life of B. R. Ambedkar who became a Buddhist and was responsible for thousands of his fellow Mahar Dalits going for refuge as well.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 17, 2013 3:34 pm

Title: Re: In simple Terms

Content:

What's a quasi-mādhyaṃika?... Whatever it is, for a mādhyaṃika it would ultimately be niḥsvabhāvatā.

Mādhyaṃikas don't limit their criticism just to the Sarvāstivāda theory of tri-temporal existence. They're also critical of Sautrāntika and Yogācāra tenets (and those of the non-Buddhist Indian philosophical traditions as well).

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 17, 2013 4:47 pm

Title: Re: Maine hermit discovered after 27 years

Content:

Christopher Knight, Maine Hermit, Attracts Wedding Proposal:

Knight has drawn international interest since his arrest, with an offer of marriage, an offer of bail and a ballad written in his honor. Attorneys in and outside Maine have expressed an interest in representing him, and one person wanted to provide him housing, officials said.

There's even a book deal in the works.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 17, 2013 6:35 pm

Title: Re: Discovering Buddhavamsa

Content:

No, he won't come again. The next buddha will be Metteyya.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 4:56 am

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

This seems to me to be a pretty inaccurate dichotomy that you're attempting to establish here. The



traditional Theravāda worldview and cosmology has much in common with the traditional Mahāyāna worldview(s), and in Tibetan traditions at least, the Sarvāstivāda cosmology is widely taught in Tibetan monastic colleges, which is every bit as "orthodox" as Theravāda cosmology. I'd also question your characterization that one tradition is more rational and the others less rational. Mahāyāna traditions have well developed systems of logic and epistemology, etc. As for compatibility with science, HH the Dalai Lama and senior Tibetan and Western students have initiated and engaged in Mind & Life Conferences with cognitive scientists, psychologists, physicists, and philosophers for the past three decades.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 7:51 am

Title: Re: Discovering Buddhavamsa

Content:

A couple of questions: (1) How do you know that all of the contents of the first four Nikāya's are earlier than all of the contents of the Khuddakanikāya? (2) If you consider the first four Nikāya's to be the word of the Buddha, do you accept everything stated in these suttas?

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 1:25 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

Define what you mean by "Theravadin practice."

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 2:12 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

I think "Theravāda practice" covers a broader range of practices than what's covered in that book.

Examples from ancient times would include chanting DN 20. From Ven. Ṭhānissaro's Introduction to this sutta:

This discourse is an interesting example of the folklore of the Pali canon. It shows that the tendency of Asian popular Buddhism to regard the Buddha as a protective figure, and not just as a teacher, has its roots in the earliest part of the tradition....

The Commentary reports the belief that the devas enjoy hearing this discourse chanted in Pali. Until recently it was part of many monks' standard memorized repertoire, to be chanted at weddings and the dedication of new buildings. Even today, as many of the traditions of memorization in Asia seem to be falling by the wayside, there are a few monks and laypeople who chant this discourse regularly.

Somewhat more modern examples would include The Victor's Cage and The Divine Mantra. There are numerous other examples. As Lance Cousins states in his paper Aspects of Esoteric Southern Buddhism:

There is a surprisingly widespread notion that Theravāda Buddhism is, at least doctrinally, a rather uniform, if not monolithic, type of Buddhism. This is certainly a mistaken impression.

And not only doctrinally, but in terms of practice as well. In *The Treasures of the Theravāda: Recovering the Riches of Our Tradition*, Gil Fronsdaal adds:

When it comes to meditation practices, Theravada Buddhism has a much more rich and varied repertoire than is obvious from what is offered at Western or even Southeast Asian vipassana centers. While not as elaborate as some Tibetan visualization practices, there are a wide variety of Theravada meditations involving mental imaging of buddhas; bodhisattvas, arhats, celestial realms, corpses, and the primary colors and elements....

Recently, many diverse Theravada practices were brought to Spirit Rock through the visit of Achaan Jumnien, a sixty-year-old monk from the jungles of Southern Thailand. In the course of nine days he taught thirty different practices. These included chakra practices (opening of the wisdom-eye and the heart center), skeleton practices (on the nature of the body), and meditations with the elements of earth, air, fire, water and space. He trained people to understand emptiness by resting in what he called the "Original Mind" or the "Natural State" and he offered practices unifying participants' consciousnesses with his own. He also performed many kinds of blessings, described exorcisms, taught chants, and offered protection rituals, visualizations and vows (including bodhisattva vows, practice vows and refuge vows).

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 2:21 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

He also accepts causal closure of the physical.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 4:23 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

Your faith in materialism may be steadfast, nevertheless there are numerous modern philosophical arguments against materialism. There are also well educated physicists, cognitive scientists, psychologists, etc., who don't subscribe to materialism or physicalism.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 4:29 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

The Mahāyāna sūtras were composed over multiple centuries by different groups of people, sometimes with different preoccupations. Thus, they include all sorts of things. One point about the Lotus Sūtra: Although it attained widespread popularity and status in China, Korea, and Japan, there's no evidence that it enjoyed such popularity in India. Jan Nattier has described it as "a very atypical text" even among Mahāyāna sūtras. In this article she tells the story of a Tibetan geshe enrolled in one of her classes who was so shocked by some of the passages in the sūtra he had to go look up the Tibetan text to make sure the translation wasn't way off.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 19, 2013 7:27 pm

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

Is there an "empirically demonstrable explanation" for the existence of consciousness that can withstand rigorous questioning? If there were, the "hard problem" would have already been solved.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 20, 2013 5:18 am

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

So you're a skeptic. Skepticism and demands for empirically demonstrable proof will leave a lot of questions unresolved. Skepticism doesn't establish anything.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 20, 2013 5:36 am

Title: Re: Distorted Visions of Buddhism: Agnostic and Atheist

Content:

I've read a bit about Stapp's ideas, but I haven't read his books.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 24, 2013 4:25 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

This thread was split off from another discussion and titled by a moderator.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Apr 24, 2013 6:44 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Often the source of eternalist views entering into discussions of the Buddhadhamma in contemporary discourse is some sort of contact with notions of a perennial philosophy. As for Buddhist traditions, the Indian commentarial sources generally maintain that all consciousnesses are impermanent and there is no such thing as an eternal, universal consciousness. As for the different Buddhist commentarial traditions take on nibbāna, see [here](#).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 25, 2013 10:53 am

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

No, it isn't. Which is what I've said throughout.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Apr 25, 2013 12:34 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Bhāvivēka's Tarkajvālā:

To say that there is "pervasion by [the essence of] the Tathāgata" means that [the Tathāgata's] knowledge encompasses all objects of cognition, not that he is omnipresent like Viṣṇu.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 12:15 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Nibbāna is not the same as the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling. The four paths and fruitions are always conscious and percipient attainments.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 1:44 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Emptiness doesn't mean anything goes. Functional things still function according to causes and conditions. Therefore, there is no negation of causal efficacy in terms of correct conventions. This is why it's possible to differentiate between correct conventions (tathyaśaṃvṛti) based on appearances apprehended by clear sense faculties, on the one hand, and false conventions (mithyāśaṃvṛti) which occur due to impaired sense faculties or false philosophical speculation, on the other. Examples of the latter would include an experience of double vision due to impaired faculties, or positing an omnipotent creator god due to upholding a wrong view.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 1:46 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Not all arahants are liberated both ways. Arahants liberated through discernment do not attain the formless attainments, and therefore do not attain the cessation of perception and feeling. Nevertheless, they have realized nibbāna and are fully liberated.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 2:04 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

The sequential progression of meditative attainments is implicit in the suttas, and explicit in Theravāda exegesis.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 3:16 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

According to the Theravāda commentators, it's possible for even commoners to enter into a non-percipient attainment (asaññasamāpatti) from the fourth jhāna, but such an attainment is not sammāsamādhī.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 3:27 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

I mention it because non-percipient attainments don't terminate fetters. Therefore, there's no reason to equate a non-percipient attainment or the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling with nibbāna.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 3:42 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

I haven't equated the two. According to Theravāda commentary, they are different attainments. A non-percipient attainment can be entered from a jhāna, the cessation of perception & feeling can be entered from the fourth formless attainment.

At any rate, there are a number of suttas which give a complete explanation of the path and awakening without ever mentioning the formless attainments or the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling. Moreover, even when the nine meditative attainments are given, such as the the sequence from AN 9.47 to AN 9.51, the cessation of perception & feeling isn't equated with nibbāna. The relevant phrase in this case being "and having seen with wisdom, his taints are utterly destroyed." This seeing with wisdom and elimination of āsavas occurs after one has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception & feeling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Apr 26, 2013 5:57 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

I would suggest that the notion of consciousness existing outside the realm of time is itself meaningless. Consciousness is designated according to the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. If there are no such conditions, there is no basis for designating the existence of any

consciousness whatsoever. MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta:

Bhikkhus, consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises.

When consciousness arises dependent on the eye and forms, it is reckoned as eye-consciousness;

when consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds, it is reckoned as ear-consciousness;

when consciousness arises dependent on the nose and odors, it is reckoned as nose-consciousness;

when consciousness arises dependent on tongue and flavors, it is reckoned as tongue-consciousness;

when consciousness arises dependent on body and tangibles, it is reckoned as body consciousness;

when consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind-objects, it is reckoned as mind-consciousness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 27, 2013 2:57 am

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

According to Mahāyāna sūtras such as the Sūtra of the Prophecy Bestowed upon Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, even though these buddhas have extremely long lives, they do eventually enter parinirvāṇa:

Good man, although Amitābha Buddha's lifespan will last innumerable hundreds, thousands, and koṭis of kalpas, it will finally come to an end. Good man, after incalculable distant kalpas to come, Amitābha Buddha will enter parinirvāṇa.

According to commentators such as Bhāviveka, buddhas display parinirvāṇa so that beings will become disgusted with saṃsāra and decide to take up the noble eightfold path. Related to this is the story, common to all schools, that Śākyamuni Buddha could have extended his life, but Ānanda failed to make the request in time.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 27, 2013 12:22 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

The fire metaphor most commonly refers to the three fires of passion, aggression, and delusion. If the Indian Buddhist understanding of fire was really that an extinguished fire goes into a "latent state," then these three fires could re-combust within an arahant's mind as long as there is fuel remaining (i.e. saupādisesa nibbānadhātu: nibbāna element with fuel remaining). Of course, this would render nibbāna quite meaningless.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 27, 2013 12:40 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Yes, it's also attainable by non-returners who have developed the formless attainments.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Apr 27, 2013 9:42 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

Not at all. Conventionally speaking, nibbāna is considered an object of mental perception. AN 10.6: "Bhante, could a bhikkhu obtain such a state of concentration that (1) he would not be percipient of earth in relation to earth; (2) of water in relation to water; (3) of fire in relation to fire; (4) of air in relation to air; (5) of the base of infinity of space in relation to the base of the infinity of space; (6) of the base of infinity of consciousness in relation to the base of the infinity of consciousness; (7) of the base of nothingness in relation to the base of nothingness; (8) of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception in relation to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; (9) of this world in relation to this world; (10) of the other world in relation to the other world, but he would still be percipient?"

"He could, Ānanda."

"But how, Bhante, could he obtain such a state of concentration?"

"Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu is percipient thus: 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishment of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.' It is in this way, Ānanda, that a bhikkhu could obtain such a state of concentration...."

This same meditative state is called the perception of cessation (nirodhasaññā) in AN 10.60. There's no need to posit some sort of dimension existing outside time and space to account for viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ or Buddhist liberation. The very assertion of such things is contrary to the answer given in SN 48.42 (and elsewhere):

"But master Gotama, what is it that nibbāna takes recourse in?"

"You have gone beyond the range of questioning, brāhmaṇa. You were unable to grasp the limit of questioning. For, brāhmaṇa, the holy life is lived with nibbāna as its ground, nibbāna as its destination, nibbāna as its final goal."

Any view regarding the postmortem existence or non-existence of an awakened arahant is not conducive to actually attaining the goal. It does not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calmness, direct gnosis, full awakening, nibbāna. It's considered a fetter of view (diṭṭhisamyojana).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 28, 2013 2:53 am

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

To say that Sāriputta realized nibbāna at a certain time and place isn't meaningless at all.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 28, 2013 1:32 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

And that is precisely where he is off into conceptual proliferation (papañca) about non-proliferation

(nippapañca = nibbāna). By describing something.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Apr 28, 2013 3:30 pm

Title: Re: Nibbana = universal consciousness?

Content:

By saying that "the arahant experiences after this life" he is asserting existence.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 01, 2013 1:53 am

Title: Re: Happy Birthday WWW

Content:

Remember the old library card catalog?

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 03, 2013 1:54 am

Title: Re: Is there a gnostic element to the goals of Buddhism?

Content:

There is no realization of nibbāna without knowledge/gnosis of nibbāna (nibbāna ñāṇa), which in the suttas is sometimes also called the knowledge/gnosis of elimination/destruction (khayeññāṇa), that is, the knowledge that the outflows, fetters, etc. have been terminated.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 03, 2013 5:45 am

Title: Re: Whose Buddhism is the truest?

Content:

It was discussed in this thread: Mahayana split.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 06, 2013 2:56 pm

Title: Re: The causes for wisdom

Content:

I don't think Ñāṇavīra was necessarily being malicious, but I don't think that he was being "incisively accurate" either. It seems to me that Ñāṇavīra's view as quoted in the above passage is an extremist position.

Extreme #1: All Pāli commentaries are useless and have no positive value.

Extreme #2: All Pāli commentaries are perfect and essential.



Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 06, 2013 3:04 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana: formal practice or technique or daily life?

Content:

All of these notions, except perhaps the one pertaining to etymology, have precedents in the Nikāyas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 06, 2013 6:59 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana: formal practice or technique or daily life?

Content:

So what do you have confidence in?

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 06, 2013 7:27 pm

Title: Re: Vipassana: formal practice or technique or daily life?

Content:

I think consideration of the implications and consequences of these issues is relevant to the topic.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 07, 2013 4:44 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Discussing the Buddha's dhamma isn't speculation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 07, 2013 7:48 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Yes. More specifically, the assertion that discernment is only developed through meditation (bhāvanā) fails to account for the developmental process by which discernment is initially obtained through hearing (sutamayā paññā) and through reflection (cintāmayā paññā). To fully account for the development of discernment through gradual training these other modes of development need to be included and accounted for.

And integral to this developmental process are the three kinds of valid knowledge. These are listed by Steven Collins in *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*:

Indian philosophy acknowledges three common "means of knowledge" (pramāṇa):

- (i) pratyakṣa (Pali paccakkha), perception or experience,
- (ii) anumāna, inference or logical proof, and
- (iii) śabda (Pali sadda) or śruti (Pali suti), verbal testimony (=scriptural authority; in Buddhism often

Buddha-vaccana, the Word of the Buddha, or some equivalent).

In terms of scriptural authority there are many suttas where physical birth, death, and rebirth are explicitly stated. In the SN there are entire saṃyuttas largely devoted to rebirth (e.g. Saṃyutta 15, 29, 30, 31, 32).

In terms of inferential knowledge, there are passages such as the following from SN 42.11 where one is instructed to develop inference regarding both the past and the future following from direct perception:

Headman, by means of this principle that is seen, understood, immediately attained, fathomed, apply the method to the past and to the future thus: 'Whatever suffering arose in the past, all that arose rooted in desire, with desire as its source; for desire is the root of suffering. Whatever suffering will arise in the future, all that will arise rooted in desire, with desire as its source; for desire is the root of suffering.'

And related to this, SN 12.34 gives a comprehensive analysis of paṭiccasamuppāda including analysis of past and future conditions:

Bhikkhus, what are the seventy-seven cases of knowledge?

The knowledge: 'Aging-and-death has birth as its condition.' The knowledge: 'When there is no birth, there is no aging-and-death.' The knowledge: 'In the past too aging-and-death had birth as its condition.' The knowledge: 'In the past too, had there been no birth, there would have been no aging-and-death.' The knowledge: 'In the future too aging-and-death will have birth as its condition.' The knowledge: 'In the future too, should there be no birth, there will be no aging-and-death.' The knowledge: 'That knowledge of the stability of the Dhamma is also subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away, and cessation.'

The knowledge: 'Birth has existence as its condition.' ... The knowledge: 'Volitional formations have ignorance as their condition.' The knowledge: 'When there is no ignorance, there are no volitional formations.' The knowledge: 'In the past too volitional formations had ignorance as their condition.' The knowledge: 'In the past too, had there been no ignorance, there would have been no volitional formations.' The knowledge: 'In the future too volitional formations will have ignorance as their condition.' The knowledge: 'In the future too, should there be no ignorance, there will be no volitional formations.' The knowledge: 'That knowledge of the stability of the Dhamma is also subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away, and cessation.'

Other discourses that include consideration of future results are MN 41, MN 46, MN 135, MN 149, SN 12.33, SN 22.5, SN 22.9, SN 22.10, SN 22.11, AN 4.232, AN 8.33, AN 8.35, AN 8.36, etc.

The use of scriptural authority, inference, and reasoning (yutti) are also recommended for developing discernment pertaining to paṭiccasamuppāda and rebirth in the Visuddhimagga (Ch. 17), the commentary on the Vibhaṅga (Ch. 6) and the sub-commentary on DN 15. And in non-Pāli Buddhist sources there are a number of treatises explaining direct perception and inference.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 08, 2013 9:49 pm

Title: Re: Sujin Boriharnwanaket discussion...

Content:

I'm not altogether familiar with Sujin Boriharnwanaket's teachings other than what has been

discussed here on DW, but from what has been discussed here I don't see any significant connections between her teachings and the Prajñāparamitā sūtras & Indian Madhyamaka treatises either in terms of view or practice.

In terms of view, the two truths of classical Theravāda commentaries which Sujin Boriharnwanaket accepts are not the same as the two truths of Nāgārjuna, et al. The ultimates according to the Theravāda commentaries are considered to be conventional according to mādhyamikas. As such, they are merely conceptual designations.

In terms of practice, both the Prajñāparamitā sūtras and Madhyamaka treatises emphasize the development of meditation as an integral and necessary part of the bodhisattva path. This is explicit in Madhyamaka sources such as the Śikṣāsamuccaya compendium of training compiled by Śāntideva and the three Bhāvanākramas by Kamalaśīla, which are instructions specifically on how to engage in the stages of meditation practice (i.e. bhāvanākrama).

It seems to me that Kosuta hasn't understood the view or practice as presented in the Prajñāparamitā sūtras and Madhyamaka treatises in their own traditional exegetical context.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 08, 2013 10:38 pm

Title: Re: No Piti, No Sukkha, No Vipassana?

Content:

Rapture and pleasure can only arise concurrently with conscious awareness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 09, 2013 3:01 am

Title: Re: No Piti, No Sukkha, No Vipassana?

Content:

The sub-commentary on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta passage in question further explains that mind-produced form suffuses the entire area of the physical body:

Mind-produced form (cittajarūpa) suffuses every area where there is kamma-produced form (kammajarūpa).

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 09, 2013 6:12 am

Title: Re: Sujin Boriharnwanaket discussion...

Content:

Yes, I read through it. The differences are significant and I don't see any meaningful parallels.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri May 10, 2013 12:01 am

Title: Re: No Piti, No Sukkha, No Vipassana?

Content:

And how do you suppose the nirodhadhātu does that?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 11, 2013 3:36 am

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Faith and critical thinking can also be applied together. Faith and discernment are two of the five faculties.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 11, 2013 6:06 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

Just because you may not personally know something doesn't mean that it is unknowable. But until it is known, seen, understood, realized, and contacted with discernment, faith is considered to be indispensable according to the Buddha's dhamma. SN 48.44 Pubbakotṭhaka Sutta:

Good, good Sāriputta! Those who have not known, seen, understood, realized, and contacted with discernment, they would have to go by faith in others that the faculty of faith ... the faculty of energy ... the faculty of mindfulness ... the faculty of meditative composure ... the faculty of discernment, when developed and cultivated, has the death-free as its ground, the death-free as its destination, the death-free as its final goal.

Faith is both a faculty and a strength included in the requisites of awakening (bodhipakkhiyā dhammā). Ven. Ñāṇatiloka:

Faith is called the seed (Sn. v. 77) of all wholesome states because, according to commentarial explanations, it inspires the mind with confidence (okappana, pasāda) and determination (adhimokkha), for 'launching out' (pakkhandhana; s. M. 122) to cross the flood of saṃsāra.

Unshakable faith is attained on reaching the first stage of holiness, 'stream-entry' (sotāpatti, s. ariyapuggala), when the fetter of sceptical doubt (vicikicchā; s. samyojana) is eliminated. Unshakable confidence (avecca-pasāda) in the Three Jewels is one of the characteristic qualities of the Stream-winner (sotāpannassa angāni, q.v.).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 11, 2013 7:21 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

That's good. Do you understand that kamma and rebirth are implicit in the second noble truth?

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 11, 2013 8:11 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

I don't think the Buddha would have given numerous teachings on the subject if it was unimportant.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat May 11, 2013 9:33 pm

Title: Re: the great rebirth debate

Content:

I consider the entirety of the Buddha's dhamma to be provisional expedients from soup to nuts. This allows one to freely accept all of the foundational teachings of the suttas.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 13, 2013 11:40 pm

Title: Re: Need references on Theravada view of self liberation

Content:

The Theravāda also has teachings pertaining to the bodhisattva vehicle, which includes the development of the perfections as is explained in A Treatise on the Pāramīs by the Theravāda commentator Ācariya Dhammapāla:

We now undertake a detailed explanation of the pāramīs for clansmen following the suttas who are zealously engaged in the practice of the vehicle to great enlightenment (mahābodhiyāna), in order to improve their skilfulness in accumulating the requisites for enlightenment....

In detail, to those whose minds are disposed towards the enlightenment of disciples, he gives a discourse establishing and purifying them (in progress towards their goal) by elaborating upon the noble qualities of whichever among the following topics is appropriate.... So too, for beings whose minds are disposed towards the enlightenment of paccekabuddhas and of perfectly enlightened Buddhas, he gives a discourse establishing and purifying them in the two vehicles (leading to these two types of enlightenment) by elaborating upon the greatness of the spiritual power of those Buddhas, and by explaining the specific nature, characteristic, function, etc., of the ten pāramīs in their three stages.

And Dhammapāla adds:

Since it [i.e. the great aspiration to realize mahābodhi] has as its object the inconceivable plane of the Buddhas and the welfare of the whole immeasurable world of beings, it should be seen as the loftiest, most sublime and exalted distinction of merit, endowed with immeasurable potency, the root-cause of all the qualities issuing in Buddhahood. Simultaneous with its arising, the Great Man enters upon the practice of the vehicle to great enlightenment (mahābodhiyānapaṭipatti). He becomes fixed in his destiny, irreversible, and therefore properly gains the designation "bodhisattva." His mind becomes fully devoted to the supreme enlightenment in its completeness, and his capacity to fulfill the training in the requisites of enlightenment becomes established. For when their aspiration succeeds, the Great Men correctly investigate all the pāramīs with their self-evolved knowledge which prefigures their future attainment of omniscience. Then they undertake their practice, and fulfill them in due order, as was done by the wise Sumedha when he made his great aspiration.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 14, 2013 2:35 am

Title: Re: Need references on Theravada view of self liberation

Content:

If one has previously made such an aspiration it should be possible.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 14, 2013 8:20 am

Title: Re: Sujin Boriarnwanaket discussion...

Content:

For the Theravāda commentaries, mind (citta), mental factors (cetasika), form (rūpa) and nibbāna are all ultimately existent and real. It's a realist school.

For mādhyamikas (there's no need to distinguish between prasaṅgika & svāntrika here), mind and form, etc., are conventional and not ultimates.

The ultimates according to the Theravāda commentaries are considered to be conventional according to mādhyamikas.

Is that clear enough?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue May 14, 2013 4:30 pm

Title: Re: Sujin Boriarnwanaket discussion...

Content:

I think Madhyamaka can be useful, and doesn't contradict anything in the Pāli Nikāyas. And as Tilt suggests, there's no need to posit dhammas as "ultimate realities" in the first place.

As for whether or not mādhyamikas have made their case: they have if you accept mādhyamika reasoning. Of course, not everyone does accept mādhyamika reasoning, and that's fine too.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed May 15, 2013 5:55 pm

Title: Re: Sujin Boriarnwanaket discussion...

Content:

Sure.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu May 16, 2013 8:07 am

Title: Re: Sujin Boriarnwanaket discussion...

Content:

Yes, that's what was being implied.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 19, 2013 6:55 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

Yes, that is one commentarial interpretation. Elsewhere in the Visuddhimagga Buddhaghosa is primarily arguing against the Sautrāntika interpretation, given, for example, in the

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya:

The Sautrāntikas say that whatever is not-conditioned (asaṃskṛta) is not a substance, for it is not a distinct entity like form and feeling.

Thus, the reading of these relevant suttas that has been offered here by Tilt and others is not novel. It is supported by ancient commentators who were Sthaviras.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun May 19, 2013 10:59 pm

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

For Sarvāstivāda & Sautrāntika commentators nirvāṇa is considered to be an analytical cessation (pratisaṃkhyānirodha), which is a disjunction from impure dharmas that occurs through correct analysis, which is a specific type of prajñā. Thus, there are as many analytical cessations as there are defilements to be terminated in an individual mental continuum. In addition, sautrāntikas consider an analytical cessation to be just a conceptual designation (prajñapti) which doesn't refer to an entity that is substantially existent. It is a non-implicative negation (prasajyapraśiṣṭha), i.e. a negation that doesn't imply the presence of some other entity.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 20, 2013 12:55 am

Title: Re: "The Deathless" (amata)

Content:

I think the sautrāntikas probably got it about right.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon May 27, 2013 4:40 am

Title: Re: Pali Term: Nirodha

Content:

Pratisaṃkhyānirodha and apratisaṃkhyānirodha are given in both the Dharmaskandha-śāstra and the Prakaraṇapāda-śāstra of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmapiṭaka, and therefore predate any Sanskrit Mahāyāna development by a number of centuries.

The textual history of the Nettipakaraṇa is a matter of speculation, but it and the Peṭakopadesa may have been composed or influenced by exegetical traditions other than those who composed and redacted the texts in the Pāli Abhidhammapiṭaka as we now have them.

Author: Nyana

Date: Fri Jun 07, 2013 3:09 pm

Title: Re: What the Zennies say...?

Content:

It's also taught in the Arthaviniścaya Sūtra and the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra (one of the main sūtras outlining the bodhisattva path), as well as in a number of śāstras included in the Chinese canon.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 17, 2013 2:37 pm

Title: Re: Can the Bhikkhuni Sangha be revived as per the Vinaya?

Content:

Just to clarify: The Mahāyāna isn't an ordination lineage. There are three extant ordination lineages: the Theravāda, the Dharmaguptaka, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda, all of which have descended from the ancient Sthaviras of the second council, and are therefore Sthaviravāda. Of these three, the Dharmaguptaka still has an intact bhikkhunī ordination lineage, and the Theravāda bhikkhunī ordination lineage has been reinstated.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 17, 2013 3:26 pm

Title: Re: The Problem With Pali

Content:

If one has studied to the point where they need to go to non-translated commentaries in order to further differentiate this or that point of commentarial interpretation, then I would suggest that they've probably gone far enough down that particular rabbit hole and more study likely won't do much to further their actual realization of the paths and fruits.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 17, 2013 3:27 pm

Title: Re: The Problem With Pali

Content:

Well, the Protestant Reformation and European Enlightenment have already happened, so that ship has sailed.

But in principle, the translation of the Pāli corpus into English and other European languages is no different than the translation of the Pāli corpus and other Indic language Buddhist texts into other Asian languages -- a process that goes back 2000+ years, and which occurred independent of European history. And it's also worth keeping in mind that even within ancient India various interpretations of the sutta literature evolved.

That said, I completely agree that it's a misguided and probably quite modern phenomenon where a person reads a few suttas (in whatever language) and thereby thinks they are in a position to disregard all traditions of exegesis, and are somehow on par with the likes of Buddhaghosa and Vasubandhu.



Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 17, 2013 3:33 pm

Title: Re: The Problem With Pali

Content:

To clarify: Buddhaghosa translated the Mahāvihāra commentaries back into Pāli.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jun 17, 2013 7:10 pm

Title: Re: Can the Bhikkhuni Sangha be revived as per the Vinaya?

Content:

According to Ven. Bodhi here, there isn't any clear prohibition preventing it:

Further, if we pay close attention to the wording of the Vinaya passage concerned with bhikkhunī ordination, we would notice that the text does not lock this rite into a fixed and immutable form sealed with inviolable imperatives: "You must do it in this way and never in any other way." In fact, grammatically, the Pāli passage uses, not the imperious imperative, but the gentler gerundive or optative participle, "it should be done thus." But grammar aside, the text is simply describing the normal and most natural way to conduct the ordination when all the normal requisite conditions are at hand. There is nothing in the text itself, or elsewhere in the Pāli Vinaya, that lays down a rule stating categorically that, should the Bhikkhunī Sangha become extinct, the bhikkhus are prohibited from falling back on the original allowance the Buddha gave them to ordain bhikkhunīs and confer upasampadā on their own to resuscitate the Bhikkhunī Sangha.

To me this seems to be the crucial point: Only if there were such a clear prohibition would we be entitled to say that the bhikkhus are overstepping the bounds of legitimacy by conducting such an ordination. In the absence of such a decree in the text of the Vinaya Piṭaka and its commentaries, the judgment that an ordination by bhikkhus is in violation of the Vinaya is only an interpretation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 18, 2013 1:15 pm

Title: Re: Buddha's Rebirths - Possible Paradox

Content:

Was this derogatory comment an example of acting with appropriate attention?

There's a whole lot of open space between dogmatic literalism and cynical derision. You should check it out sometime.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 18, 2013 2:09 pm

Title: Re: Buddha's Rebirths - Possible Paradox

Content:

It seems you're suggesting that dhamma narratives were developed by reciters motivated by what the puthujjana would find enticing. But why should these dhamma narratives be relegated to such lowly status -- being segregated from Buddhavacana and not relevant to noble disciples? Why should

anyone accept a post-modern relativistic revision of Buddhist history? Might there be more intelligent and compelling ways to relate to this narrative material than by dismissing it as "woo-woo"?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 18, 2013 4:34 pm

Title: Re: Buddha's Rebirths - Possible Paradox

Content:

It's a big subject. Is a secular framework the only way to enter the noble path in this day and age? Is a secular framework ever an efficacious way to approach the dhammavinaya? There are numerous modern examples of traditional ascetic Theravāda practitioners who have gone very far towards the goal or possibly even reached the goal in this life. But I've yet to come across one such example among secular revisionists, even though there is at least one person who claims to be an arahant, and who, quite conveniently, also claims that there's no need for an arahant to abstain from lust or sex.

As I implied earlier, I think there's plenty of room for appreciating dhamma narratives that doesn't require subscribing to a rigid dogmatic literalism, and at the same time, doesn't strip them of meaning and value either.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 18, 2013 6:56 pm

Title: Re: Buddha's Rebirths - Possible Paradox

Content:

So how do you appreciate them?

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jun 18, 2013 10:02 pm

Title: Re: Buddha's Rebirths - Possible Paradox

Content:

Personally, I don't spend much time thinking about those particular things. I also don't feel compelled to go on Buddhist discussion forums and attempt to rewrite Buddhist historical narratives according to secular academic trends.

I think the Pāli suttas are prescriptive and descriptive. They primarily designate a path to develop in order to realize the cessation of dukkha. The teachings are tools to be used -- provisional expedients from beginning to end.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jun 19, 2013 2:30 pm

Title: Re: Samadhi (best English translation?)

Content:

Why do you continue to suggest that this is an error created by English language readers? Ven. Bodhi,

Ven. Ṭhānissaro, Ven. Guṇaratana, and the entirety of the ancient Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra commentarial traditions all either read Pāli or other ancient Indic languages.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 20, 2013 2:07 am

Title: Re: Samadhi (best English translation?)

Content:

The suttas aren't systematic expositions Sylvester. They aren't meditation manuals or epistemology treatises either. If one wants to investigate authoritative Buddhist expositions on these issues one has to look to source texts beyond the sutta collections.

With regard to vipassanā, the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda traditions both maintain that samatha and vipassanā are united within jhāna on the noble path. If you don't agree, then it seems to me that that's your problem.

Author: Nyana

Date: Thu Jun 20, 2013 2:50 am

Title: Re: Samadhi (best English translation?)

Content:

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jun 22, 2013 9:17 pm

Title: Re: Ekayana

Content:

I don't think so. But one version or another was eventually absorbed into most or all Indo-Tibetan and East Asian Mahāyāna exegetical traditions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 01, 2013 1:53 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

This seems like a pretty limited perspective with regard to all that has gone on in the name of philosophy in the Western tradition. Ancient philosophy was often considered to be integral to all aspects of one's life. In *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises From Socrates to Foucault*, Pierre Hadot summarizes some of the main features of the ancient Western philosophical traditions as follows:

In the view of all philosophical schools, mankind's principal cause of suffering, disorder, and unconsciousness were the passions: that is, unregulated desires and exaggerated fears. People are prevented from truly living, it was taught, because they are dominated by worries. Philosophy thus appears, in the first place, as a therapeutic of the passions.... Each school had its own therapeutic method, but all of them linked their therapeutics to a profound transformation of the individual's mode of seeing and being. The object of spiritual exercises is precisely to bring about this

transformation.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 01, 2013 2:53 am

Title: Re: On Thanissaro Bhikkhu's anatta teachings

Content:

There are some similarities in ancient Western variations of askēsis to aspects of Buddhist practice. And Buddhist practice has also been informed by ethics, epistemology, logic, etc. Although the ancient Buddhists didn't develop ethical theories the way that the Greeks did, they did have an interest in epistemology and logic, culminating in the writings of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and the commentaries on their works. Similar ideas were also taken up by Pāli commentators.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 01, 2013 10:28 pm

Title: Re: Sotappana: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

Nibbāna means extinguishment. With the fruition of stream-entry a stream entrant has realized the extinguishment of the first three fetters. They know that they have realized this extinguishment. This knowledge of extinguishment differentiates them from ordinary people.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 02, 2013 4:13 pm

Title: Re: Sotāpanna: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

The difference is that the path and fruition consciousnesses occur together with both perception and feeling and nibbāna as the object of the path and fruition consciousnesses is distinctly different from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 02, 2013 9:11 pm

Title: Re: Sotāpanna: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

Yes, from the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Kathāvatthu, etc.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 02, 2013 10:50 pm

Title: Re: Sotāpanna: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

If the six senses are shut down there is no path consciousness nor fruition consciousness.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 03, 2013 12:53 am

Title: Re: Sotāpanna: the path and fruit taught by the Buddha

Content:

I suppose the usefulness of dhamma discussions on internet forums is an open question, but it seems to me that mistaken assertions are never useful.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 03, 2013 5:51 pm

Title: Re: Are first three fetters fully eliminated by a Sotapanna?

Content:

Are you implying that there are contradictory and incompatible schemes provided in the suttas?

And are you suggesting that there are some sotāpannas who are equivalent to fruit-attainers but who haven't terminated the three fetters?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 03, 2013 6:15 pm

Title: Re: Are first three fetters fully eliminated by a Sotapanna?

Content:

So then the differentiation you are making is between the sotāpanna path-attainer and the sotāpanna fruit-attainer?

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 03, 2013 6:59 pm

Title: Re: Are first three fetters fully eliminated by a Sotapanna?

Content:

Well, it seems to me that differentiating between the sotāpanna path-attainer and the sotāpanna fruit-attainer resolves this issue: the former has not yet eliminated the three fetters whereas the latter has eliminated them.

Author: Nyana

Date: Wed Jul 03, 2013 8:00 pm

Title: Re: Are first three fetters fully eliminated by a Sotapanna?

Content:

According to the Puggalapaññatti a faith-follower and a dhamma-follower are both developing the noble path to realize the sotāpanna fruition. This reference to the noble path is generally understood to imply that they are therefore both path attainers (although this label isn't explicitly used). When a faith-follower attains the fruit they are referred to as "liberated-by-faith" (saddhāvimutta). When a dhamma-follower attains the fruit they are referred to as "attained-to-view" (diṭṭhipatta).

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 06, 2013 4:53 am

Title: Re: Dhammapada Story : early schools

Content:

I'm not sure that there are any existing commentaries other than the Pāli. An overview of the extant versions of Dhammapada texts is given by Ven. Ānandajoti here: [A Study of the Dhammapada Collection](#).

Here's a multilingual presentation of the Udānavarga (the English translation by William Woodville Rockhill is from the 1880s and is therefore quite dated).

Here's Gareth Sparham's translation of The Tibetan Dhammapada.

Here's Ven. Dhammajoti's translation of The Chinese Version of the Dhammapada.

Here's John Brough's study of The Gāndhārī Dharmapada.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sat Jul 06, 2013 8:34 pm

Title: Re: Logical Fallacies in Cardinal's Speech

Content:

Indeed. Cynicism, doubt, and unremitting skepticism are quite common -- probably more pervasive than actual logical fallacies.

Author: Nyana

Date: Sun Jul 07, 2013 9:58 pm

Title: Re: Why do Buddhists always revert back to siddhartha gautam

Content:

I don't think that acknowledging Buddhism as a religion closes off the opportunities for enriching and developing knowledge, either with regard to the main knowledge claims that are ubiquitous across authoritative Buddhist sources, or with regard to the types of knowledge acquired through secular disciplines.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 08, 2013 1:46 am

Title: Re: Why do Buddhists always revert back to siddhartha gautam

Content:

Yes, it makes sense. I think that "religion" and "philosophy" can be rather slippery terms in a global, pluralistic world. And both are sometimes treated with scorn in some secular circles. This can include creating inaccurate caricatures and then attacking these caricatures as representative of all religion and/or all philosophy. I'm not suggesting that you're doing this, but it's worthwhile mentioning it in order to discuss what these terms encompass.

Personally, I don't think religion, philosophy, and science are necessarily opposed to one another, although (and in part because) the aims and disciplinary approaches of each may differ depending on context. Specifically with respect to Buddhism, Buddhist sources claim that the Buddha directly realized the kinds of knowledge needed to (i) attain liberation from saṃsāra, and (ii) skillfully teach others how to attain this liberation. Modern science doesn't assert these same goals, and doesn't possess the epistemic tools that could either verify or refute these Buddhist knowledge claims.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 08, 2013 2:38 am

Title: Re: Nine blasts in Bodhgaya this morning: terror attack?

Content:

I think it's highly unlikely that all other religions will fizzle out or be destroyed in the next 37 years.

But at any rate, secular ideologies (e.g. nationalism, fascism, communism, neoliberalism) have lead to far more violence and death in the last 100 years than religious ideologies have.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 08, 2013 7:06 pm

Title: Re: This is becoming a real problem now...

Content:

I'd suggest simplifying things to their basic components as mental qualities, i.e. the mental qualities of calm (samatha) and insight (vipassanā). All aspects of Buddhist samādhi are included within the development of samatha and the development of vipassanā. This is clearly stated in the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra:

Know that śamatha and vipaśyanā include all of the many aspects of the states of meditative concentration which I have taught for śrāvakas, bodhisattvas, and tathāgatas.

The purpose of developing samatha is to abandon the hindrances and thereby compose the mind. The purpose of developing vipassanā is to eliminate the fetters and thereby attain liberation from saṃsāra.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 08, 2013 8:25 pm

Title: Re: This is becoming a real problem now...

Content:

Sounds to me like thoughts and memories. Thoughts and memories can be thieves that rob us of sammāsamādhi.

Author: Nyana

Date: Mon Jul 08, 2013 8:50 pm

Title: Re: SECOND JHANA - i have some questions about it

Content:

I think consistency in practice is one of the most important factors for developing samādhi. If you

find your teacher's approach to be helpful for abandoning the hindrances and developing mental composure then that's a probably a good approach for you at this time. It might be more useful to ask your teacher these questions.

Author: Nyana

Date: Tue Jul 09, 2013 1:43 pm

Title: Re: Nine blasts in Bodhgaya this morning: terror attack?

Content:

Thanks pegembara, this is both timely and appropriate.