

Ven Bhikkhu K Nanananda

Nibbana-The Mind Stilled

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Эта книга является репринтом оригинала, который мы создали специально для Вас, используя запатентованные технологии производства репринтных книг и печати по требованию.

Сначала мы отсканировали каждую страницу оригинала этой редкой книги на профессиональном оборудовании. Затем с помощью специально разработанных программ мы произвели очистку изображения от пятен, клякс, перегибов и попытались отбелить и выровнять каждую страницу книги. К сожалению, некоторые страницы нельзя вернуть в изначальное состояние, и если их было трудно читать в оригинале, то даже при цифровой реставрации их невозможно улучшить.

Разумеется, автоматизированная программная обработка репринтных книг – не самое лучшее решение для восстановления текста в его первозданном виде, однако, наша цель – вернуть читателю точную копию книги, которой может быть несколько веков.

Поэтому мы предупреждаем о возможных погрешностях восстановленного репринтного издания. В издании могут отсутствовать одна или несколько страниц текста, могут встретиться невыводимые пятна и кляксы, надписи на полях или подчеркивания в тексте, нечитаемые фрагменты текста или загибы страниц. Покупать или не покупать подобные издания – решать Вам, мы же делаем все возможное, чтобы редкие и ценные книги, еще недавно утраченные и несправедливо забытые, вновь стали доступными для всех читателей.

*Kuto pahūtā kalahā vivādā,
paridevasokā sahamaccharā ca,
mānātimānā saha pesuṇā ca,
kuto pahūtā te tad iṅgha brūhi.*¹⁰

"Whence do spring up contentions and disputes,
Lamentations, sorrows and envies,
And arrogance together with slander,
Whence do they spring up, pray tell me this."

It is in answer to this basic question that this discourse gradually unfolds itself. In accordance with the law of dependent arising, the cause of contentions and disputes is said to be the tendency to hold things dear, *piyappahūtā kalahā vivādā*. Then the question is about the cause of this idea of holding things dear. The cause of it is said to be desire, *chandaniḍānāni piyāni loke*. Things dear originate from desire. Desire, or interest, makes things 'dear'.

The next question is: What is the origin of desire? Desire is traced to the distinction between the pleasant and the unpleasant. It is in reply to the question regarding the origin of this distinction between the pleasant and the unpleasant that contact is brought in. In fact, it is the question as to the origin of contact, *phasso nu lokasmiṃ kuto niḍāno*, which formed the starting point of our discussion. The answer to that question is name-and-form, *nāmañca rūpañca*. So in this chain of causes, the link that comes next to contact is name-and-form.

Now the verse in question beginning with *na saññasaññī* goes deeper than name-and-form. Even the question about contact has a peculiar wording: *Kismiṃ vibhūte na phusanti phassā*, "When what is not there, do touches not touch?" The question, then, is not just the cessation of contact as such. The answer, too, has the same peculiarity. *Rūpe vibhūte na phusanti phassā*, "It is when form is not there that touches do not touch". It is the subsequent question regarding form that brings out the cryptic verse as the answer.

All this goes to show that the verse in question alludes to a supra-mundane state far transcending the formless or any supposed intermediate stage. The transcendence of pleasure and pain, as well as

perception of form, is implied here. The verse beginning with *na saññasaññī* brings the entire analytical disquisition to a climax. It comes as the thirteenth verse in the series. Usually, such a disquisition leads up to a climax, highlighting *Nibbāna*. It is obvious, therefore, that the reference here is to the *Nibbānic* mind.

We have here four negations: *Na saññasaññī - na visaññasaññī - no pi asaññī - na vibhūtasaññī*. These four negations insinuate a strange supramundane level of perception. In short, it is an attempt to analyse the crux of the *Dhamma* in terms of perception. As to the provocation for such an approach, we may remind ourselves of the fact that, according to the Buddha, release from materiality amounted to a release from the perception of form. Here, we have something really deep.

As it was stated in the *Jaṭāsutta*, for the disentangling of the tangle, name-and-form, resistance and perception of form, have to be cut off. This last mentioned perception of form, or *rūpasaññā*, is highly significant. Before the advent of the Buddha the general belief, even among ascetics, was that, in order to be free from form, one has to attain to the formless, *arūpa*. But, as we pointed out in an earlier sermon, this kind of approach to the question of freedom from form, is like the attempt of one who, having imagined a ghost in the darkness of the night, runs away to escape it.¹¹ He is simply taking the fantasy of the ghost with him.

Likewise, perception of form is already implicit in the formless. What has been done is only a pushing away of the perception of form with the help of *saṅkhāras*. It is merely a suppression of form through the power of absorption. It does not amount to a cessation of the perception of form.

What, then, is the message the Buddha gave to the world regarding the abandonment by way of eradication? He pointed out that freedom from form can be won only by comprehending a certain deep normative principle behind perception. Till then, one keeps on going round and round in *samsāra*. Even if one breaks away from form to stay for aeons in formless realms, one swings back to form at the end of that period. Why? Because the ghost of form still haunts the formless. It is precisely because of this fact that pre-Buddhist ascetics could not free themselves from the round of existence.

The *Kalahavivādasutta* as a whole, could be regarded as an extremely deep analysis of the basis of the two views of existence and non-existence. Our departure from the *MahāNiddesa* in regard to the interpretation of this discourse might sometimes be called in question. But let the wise judge its reasonableness on its own merits.

According to our interpretation so far, the thirteenth verse marks the climax of the discourse, with its allusion to *Nibbāna*. This is obvious from the fourteenth verse, in which the questioner confesses: *Yaṃ taṃ apucchimha akittayī no, aññaṃ taṃ pucchāma tad iṅgha brūhi*.¹² "Whatever we have asked you, that you have explained to us. Now we wish to ask you something else, pray, give us an answer to that too."

The question now posed is this: *Ettāvataggaṃ nu vadanti h'eke, yakkhassa suddhiṃ idha paṇḍitāse, udāhu aññaṃ pi vadanti etto?* "Do some, who are reckoned as wise men here, declare the highest purity of the soul with this much alone, or else do they posit something beyond this?" The interlocutor is trying to get the solution restated in terms of the two views of existence and non-existence. The term *yakkha* is used in this context in the sense of an individual soul.¹³ It betrays an assumption based on a wrong view. The question concerns the purity of the individual soul. The interlocutor wants to ascertain whether wise men in the world declare this state as the highest purity of the soul, or whether they go beyond this in postulating something more. Here is an attempt to get the answer already given restated in terms of the soul theory, a sort of anti-climax. The two concluding verses that follow, give the lie to this presumptuous question.

*Ettāvataggaṃ pi vadanti h'eke
yakkhassa suddhiṃ idha paṇḍitāse,
tesaṃ paneke samayaṃ vadanti
anupādisese kusalā vadānā.*

"Some, who are regarded as wise men here,
Call this itself the highest purity of the individual soul,
But there are again some among them, who speak of an annihilation,
Claiming to be experts in the cessation without residue."

*Ete ca ñatvā upanissitā ti
ñatvā munī nissaye so vimaṃsī,
ñatvā vimutto na vivādam eti
bhavābhavāya na sameti dhīro.*

"Knowing that they are dependent on speculative views,
The sage with discernment, with regard to whatever is speculative,
Emancipated as he is through understanding, does not enter into dispute,
A truly wise man does not fall back either on existence or on non-existence."

The concluding verse amounts to a refutation of both these extreme views. The truly wise sage, who is released with proper discernment of the nature of dogmatic involvement, has no disputes with those who are at loggerheads with each other on the issue of existence and non-existence. This, in effect, means that *Nibbāna* as a goal avoids both extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

The *Upasīvasutta* in the *Pārāyanavagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta* provides further proof of the plausibility of the above interpretation. There, *Nibbāna* as the cessation of consciousness in the *arahant*, is compared to the extinction of a flame.

*Accī yathā vātavegena khitto
atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkhaṃ
evaṃ munī nāmakāyā vimutto
atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkhaṃ.*¹⁴

"As flame flung on by force of wind,
Reaches its end, comes not within reckoning,
So the sage, released from name-and-form,
Reaches his end, comes not within reckoning."

When a flame goes out, it cannot be reckoned as having gone in any of the directions, like north, east, south, and west. All that can be said about it, is that it has gone out.¹⁵

Even after the Buddha has given this reply, the brahmin youth *Upasīva*, entrenched as he is in the eternalist view, raises a question

which is similar to the one already quoted. He, too, is trying to understand it in terms of the two extreme views of existence and non-existence.

*Atthaṃgato so uda vā so natthi
udāhu ve sassatiyā arogo,
taṃ me munī sādhu viyākarohi,
tathā hi te vidito esa dhammo.*

"Has he reached his end, or is he no more,
Or is he eternally well,
That to me, sage, in full explain,
For this *Dhamma* is well within your ken."

In the discourses we find similar instances of attempts to determine, in terms of those two extreme views, even a conclusive statement of the Buddha on the question of *Nibbāna*. Yet another instance is found in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*. There the Buddha outlines the path to *Nibbāna* from the point of view of perception. The discourse, therefore, is one that highlights the importance of the term *saññā*. In that discourse, the path of training leading to *Nibbāna* is introduced under the heading *anupubbābhisaññānirodhasampajāna-samāpatti*,¹⁶ "the attainment, with full awareness, to the gradual cessation of higher levels of perception".

What is significant in this particular context, is that the invitation for this exposition came from the ascetics of other sects. In response to their request to enlighten them on the subject of the cessation of higher levels of perception, *abhisaññānirodha*, the Buddha gave quite a long account of the course of training required for it. But at the end of that deep exposition, the wandering ascetic *Poṭṭhapāda* raises the following question: *Saññā nu kho purisassa attā, udāhu aññā saññā aññā attā?* "Is perception a man's soul, or is perception something and soul another?" This is typical of their bigotted attitude, which prevented them from understanding this *Dhamma*, free from the soul prejudice.

We went so far as to bring out all this evidence, because the point at issue is fairly important. Even the attempt of the *MahāNiddesa* to explain the verse beginning with *na saññasaññī* is far from conclusive. It is not at all likely that the ascetics of other sects subscribed to

a view that the intermediate stage between the fourth absorption and the first formless absorption is equivalent to the purest state of the soul. Such an interim state is of no account.

As we go on, we might come across further proof of the tenability of this interpretation. The verse beginning with *na saññasaññī* is not easily forgotten, because of its unusual accent on the negative particle. We might have to hark back to it when we come across similar discourses dealing with *Nibbāna*. Till then, let us remind ourselves of two similes we have already given, in order to get a foretaste of the significance of this problematic verse.

Firstly, the Buddha's simile of the magic show as an illustration for consciousness in the *Phenapiṇḍūpamasutta - māyūpamañca viññāṇaṃ*.¹⁷ While describing the five groups, he compares consciousness to a magical performance at crossroads, conducted by a magician or his apprentice. A man with the right type of vision, watching this magic show, understands that it is empty, hollow and void of essence. It is as if he has seen through the tricks and deceptions of the magician.

While watching a magic show, the audience in general reacts to it with gaping mouths and exclamations. But how would a man with radical attention and penetrative wisdom, who is fully aware of the tricks of the magician, watch a magic show? He is simply looking on with a vacant gaze.

This reminds us of the significance of the word *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ*.¹⁸ That gaze is 'endless', *anantaṃ*, in the sense that it does not have the magic show as its object. It goes beyond. It is also 'non-manifestative', *anidassanaṃ*, since the magic show does not manifest itself, as it has now been penetrated through with wisdom. This wisdom is revealing in its 'all lustrous' nature, *sabbato pabhaṃ*, so much so that the tricks are seen - through.

So this man with discernment is watching with a vacant gaze. Now how would such a person appear to one who is deluded and enchanted by the magic show? The latter might regard the former as an inattentive spectator who misses the magic show. Or else, he might think that the other is out of his senses, or insensate.

What the riddle verse beginning with *na saññasaññī* refers to, is such a vacant gaze. That is to say, the person referred to is not one with the ordinary worldling's perception, which is deluded, nor has he fainted and become unconscious, *na saññasaññī na visaññasaññī*. He is not in a trance, devoid of perception, *no pi asaññī*, nor has he put an end to perception, *na vibhūtasaññī*. What these four negations highlight, is that vacant gaze of the one who is emancipated through wisdom.

Somewhat on the lines of the simile used by the Buddha, we might reintroduce, as a flashback, the simile of the cinema.¹⁹ Though it has a modernistic flavour, it could perhaps be more easily understood. Let us suppose that a matinee show of a technicolour film is in progress with closed doors and windows. Suddenly, by some technical defect, the doors and windows are flung open. What would be the change of perspective in the spectator now? He, too, would be looking on with a vacant gaze. Though still the show is going on, he is no longer seeing it. A sort of 'cessation' has occurred, at least temporarily.

The theme as well as the objective of all our sermons is expressed in the quotation beginning with "This is peaceful, this is excellent" (etc.), which forms the rubric, as it were, for each sermon. The change that occurs in the spectator now, is somewhat reminiscent of it. Though not all preparations, at least those preparations connected with the film show are momentarily 'stilled'. Whatever assets in the form of the bundle of experiences on which the film show is evaluated, are 'relinquished'. The craving or the desire for the show has gone down. The colourful show has 'faded away', making way for detachment. The film show has 'ceased' for him. It is also extinct for him, since his burning desire has cooled off now. In this way, we can understand the four puzzling negations in that riddle verse as an attempt to describe the vacant gaze of this spectator, and that man with discernment at the magic show.

Another aspect of special significance in this riddle verse emerges from the last line, *saññānidānā hi papañcasāṅkhā*, which could be tentatively rendered as "for [whatever are termed] *papañcasāṅkhā* have perception as their source". *Papañca* is a term with a deep philosophical dimension in Buddhism. In fact, even the rise of many

Buddhist sects could be put down to an insufficient appreciation of its significance. In our own philosophical tradition, too, much of the confusion with regard to the interpretation of *Nibbāna* seems to have come about due to a lack of understanding in this particular field. Therefore we propose to devote sufficient time and attention to clarify the significance of this term *papañca*.

To begin with, we can bring up clear evidence of the fact that the word *papañca* is used in the discourses to convey some deep idea. As a rule, whenever the Buddha presents a set of ideas pertaining to some *Dhamma* topic, the deepest or the most important of them is mentioned last. This feature is quite evident in the *Aṅuttara Nikāya*, where very often a sermon is seen to unfold itself in an ascending order, leading to a climax. In an enumeration of items 'the last but not the least', happens to be the most important. Granted that this is the general trend, we can trace as many as nine such contexts among the *suttas* in which *papañca* is counted last.²⁰ This itself is a clue to its importance.

One of the most telling instances is to be found in the Eights of the *Aṅuttara Nikāya*. It is called *Anuruddhamahāvittakkasutta*. There we are told that to Venerable *Anuruddha*, once meditating in solitude in *Pācīnavaṃsa* Park, the following seven thoughts occurred, concerning *Dhamma*.

*Appicchassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo mahicchassa; santuṭṭhassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo asantuṭṭhassa; pavivittassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo saṅgaṇikārāmaṃsa; āraddhaviriyassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo kusītassa; upaṭṭithasatissāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo mutṭhassatissa; samāhitassāyaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo asamāhitassa; paññavato ayaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo dappaññassa.*²¹

"This *Dhamma* is for one who wants little, not for one who wants much; this *Dhamma* is for one who is contented, not for one who is discontent; this *Dhamma* is for one who is secluded, not for one who is fond of society; this *Dhamma* is for the energetic, not for one who is lazy; this *Dhamma* is for one who has set up mindfulness, not for one who is laggard in mindfulness; this *Dhamma* is for one who is composed, not for one who is flustered; this *Dhamma* is for one who is wise, not for one who is unwise."

When these seven thoughts occurred to him, Venerable *Anuruddha* kept on pondering over them for a long while, probably with some *Dhamma* zest. He might have even felt confident that this is a perfect set of *Dhamma* thoughts, since the number is seven and wisdom comes last. However, the Buddha was monitoring his behaviour of mind from *Bhesakaḷāvanae*, many leagues away, and found that this set of seven is far from complete. So he appeared before Venerable *Anuruddha* through his psychic power and, having first commended Venerable *Anuruddha* for those seven thoughts, calling them ‘thoughts of a great man’, *mahāpurisavitakka*, gave him an eighth to add on to them and ponder upon. The eighth thought of a great man is:

Nippapañcārāmassāyaṃ Dhammo nippapañcaratino, nāyaṃ Dhammo papañcārāmassa papañcaratino. "This *Dhamma* is for one who likes and delights in *nippapañca* and not for one who likes and delights in *papañca*." Following the Buddha's instructions in this concern, Venerable *Anuruddha* attained *Arahant*-hood, and uttered two verses as a paean of joy. From the two verses it becomes clear that the Buddha's helpful hint regarding *nippapañca* - whatever it may mean - was what triggered off his attainment.

*Yathā me ahu saṅkappo,
tato uttari desayi,
nippapañcarato Buddhho,
nippapañcaṃ adesayi.
Tassāhaṃ Dhamma maññāya,
vihāsiṃ sāsane rato,
tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṃ Buddhassa sāsanaṃ.*²²

"Whatever thoughts I had on my own,
Going far beyond them the Lord preached to me,
The Buddha, who delights in *nippapañca*,
Preached *nippapañca* to me.
Understanding his *Dhamma*,
I dwelt delighting in his admonishment,

The three knowledges are attained,
Done is the Buddha's behest."

The words of Venerable *Anuruddha* clearly reveal the immense significance attached to the term *papañca* and its relevance to the question of attaining *Nibbāna*. It is noteworthy that a number of *suttas* like *Kalahavivādasutta*, *Sakkapañhasutta*, *Cūlasīhanādasutta*, and *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* give prominence to the term *papañca* by listing it as the last.²³ One of the most important discourses throwing light on the significance of this term *papañca* is the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. We shall therefore proceed to discuss this particular *sutta* at some length.

The *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* is in fact a discourse that unfolds itself in three stages, like a three act play. It might not be inapt to say something about the title of this discourse by way of introduction, before we get down to an analysis of it. At the conclusion of the discourse, Venerable *Ānanda* makes the following comment on its significance before the Buddha: "Lord, just as if a man overcome by hunger and exhaustion came upon a honey-ball, and, from whatever side he goes on licking it, he would get a sweet delectable flavour which remains unimpaired, so too, Lord, any nimble witted monk, from whatever angle he examines with wisdom the meaning of this discourse on the *Dhamma*, he would find satisfaction and gladness of mind. What is the name of this discourse, Lord?"²⁴ It was then that the Buddha gave this name to the discourse, saying: "Well, then, *Ānanda*, you may remember this discourse on the *Dhamma* as the 'honey-ball discourse'."

We might not have the ability to assimilate fully the flavour of this discourse, and in any case we might not even have sufficient time for it today. However, if we are to make a start, we may begin with the first act, that is, where we find the Buddha spending his noon-day siesta at *Mahāvana* in *Kapilavatthu*. The *Sakyan Daṇḍapāṇi*, so called because he used to carry a staff in hand, comes to see the Buddha and puts the following short question to him: *Kiṃvādī samaṇo kimakkhāyi?* "What does the recluse assert, what does he proclaim?"

The Buddha's reply to it is rather long and winding, so much so that it is not easy to render it clear enough: *Yathāvādi kho, āvuso, sa-*