

Das Buddhistische Haus

Paul Dahlke - Texts



Edelhofdamm 54  
13465 Berlin  
Telefon 030 401 5580  
Fax 030 401 03227

<http://das-buddhistische-haus.de>  
eMail: [mail@das-buddhistische-haus.de](mailto:mail@das-buddhistische-haus.de)

## Some remarks on Viññāna and Nāmarūpa and the relationship of both

by Dr. Paul Dahlke

***Attadīpā viharatha . . . dhammadīpā viharatha.***  
**Be a light unto yourselves . . . let the teaching be your light.**  
(Sam.-Nik. III, p. 42)

Isn't that a contradiction in terms? If the teaching is to be a light, then I cannot be a light to myself.

You have to understand the Buddha and his teaching in order to understand that there is no contradiction here. Only those who experience the teaching "further independent of the teacher's teaching" (*aparappaccayo satthu sāsane*) as something unique to themselves can say of themselves that they are a *Sakyaputta*, a *Sakyan* son, begotten by him from his own mouth (*oraso mukhato jāto*), a witness of the teaching (*Dhammajo*) (D. 27).

Just as a light must of course be lit by another light in order to be able to burn at all, but then continues to burn independently of this other light, so the spark of the teaching must of course first ignite in the spirit of the other person; but once it has ignited, the teaching continues to burn independently of the teacher.

The living, life-giving act of infection, of one's own ignition, must take place. As long as the teaching is only taught and learned conceptually, passed on and absorbed conceptually, just as a covered basket passes from hand to hand, there is no Buddhism, as long as there is nothing but one philosophical system among many, against which one may argue about value and unvalue with the superiority of logic; the spirit of Buddhism is not in it, one sees nothing but the traces.

Just as one can measure the dead imprint of an elephant's foot in the ground according to length, width and depth, so one can measure the teaching in all directions and measure it against others in purely conceptual terms; but the life of the teaching is as little in it as the living elephant in the elephant's track. Such Buddhism may be philosophy or philology or some other highly erudite, scientific thing - it is not Buddhism.

Just as the flame mocks all attempts to capture it within the framework of definition, not because it is something arbitrary and lawless, but because it is lawfulness, the process of lawfulness itself, so the living Buddha-word mocks all attempts to capture it within the framework of definitions. It is not something that follows the laws of spiritualism, nor is it something that follows the laws of materialism. It is nothing that follows the laws of idealism, but it is also nothing that follows the laws of realism; not because it is something arbitrary and lawless, but because it is lawfulness, the process of lawfulness itself.

Of course, anyone who has not understood that Buddhism is neither a comprehensibility (i.e. object of science, of proof), but the living middle between comprehensibility and incomprehensibility, namely the process of comprehension itself - I say: whoever does not understand Buddhism in this its essence as the middle between and above the opposites (Majjhima Patipadā), will not understand the other either, but that must not prevent him from saying and showing: So it is.

There is only one proof for the cessation of all existence: cessation! Cessation cannot be proven scientifically, it can only be proven by oneself, i.e. by experiencing oneself in realization, in cessation.

At the end of the day, Buddhism is starting! Beginning with cessation and nothing more. But in order to be able to begin cessation seriously, courageously, clearly and consciously, one must have come to an insight into the possibility of cessation, and in order to come to this, all that is required is that one clears away the obstacles that obscure and barricade this possibility of cessation. Buddhism is the teaching of reality, and reality is always there, is always itself, and all that matters is that one takes it impartially for what it is, free from the attachments of the lusts (kāma), the conceptual views (ditthī), the suggestive ceremonies and customs (sīlabbata) that are passed on from generation to generation like a disease, and the self-belief (attavāda).

What is real is what works. Reality is working. Just as what is real in a flame is not the firewood, coal, oil, etc., but the burning, so what is real in life is not the mass of the four basic substances (Mahābhūta) but the working. Of course, the flame can only exist in dependence on its fuel; likewise, life, reality can only exist in dependence on the four basic substances. A flame without fuel, a flame in itself does not exist; likewise: an activity (kamma) without basic substances, an activity in itself does not exist (no kamma without khandhas). But even if the flame burns in dependence on its fuel, cannot exist without this fuel, it does not burn through this fuel; the existence of wood, coal, oil, etc. does not create a flame; a flame can go out despite the existence of any amount of fuel.

This means that the reality of the flame is a burning. A flame cannot be there without fuel, but it does not need to be there with the fuel. Likewise, the reality of reality is only the working. The working cannot be there without its precondition, the basic substances in some form, but it does not need to be there with these basic substances. Whoever seeks more in reality than just the working; whoever mixes it with the basic substances bars the door to escape for himself, whoever obstructs the path to the life of purity, to Brahmācariya. Action is cessable, the only cessable thing in reality; but it is also the only real thing in reality. If reality had only as much in it as goes on the tip of a nail that is not working, then a life of purity would of course not be possible, whether that which is not working in it goes upwards into a purely spiritual (spirit in itself, soul) or whether it goes downwards into the purely material (nature in itself), both would be the same.

"Then the Blessed One took a crumb of earth in his hand and said to that bhikkhu thus: 'Not even so much, bhikkhu, of a self-state is attainable (attabhāvatilābho) that is imperishable, permanent, eternal, unchanging, forever the same, thus abiding. If, bhikkhus, even that much of a self-state were attainable that was imperishable, permanent, eternal, unchanging, then a change of purity for the complete destruction of suffering would not be found. But since, monk, not even that much of a self-state is attainable that is imperishable, permanent, eternal, unchanging, then a change in purity for the complete destruction of suffering is to be found.'" (Samyutta Nikāya III p. 44)

Of course the basic elements are there, of course the material-form is there, but they are only there as "old acts" (purānam kammam).

"This body, bhikkhus, is not yours, nor is it anyone else's.

It is to be regarded as an ancient work, bhikkhus, as the result of activity (abhisamkhatam), as a result of single-minded thinking (abhisañcayitam)." (Samyutta Nikāya II p. 64/65)

This body here is not basic material per se, but thinking and willing bound in the fetters of form, enslaved to the enchanting curse, the cursed spell of thinking, fused consciousness, a realization of the word of the Christian Bible: "The Word became flesh" and from this banishment it can be released not through mere instruction, which takes place in concepts, which can be taught, learned and passed on in concepts, but through the living experience of cessation, of being able to be forgiven, which in turn can only become alive again through the living experience of being able to come into being.

Nothing is, everything becomes, but becoming is not taken in the sense of Heraclitus' philosophy or in the sense of modern science, i.e. in the sense of a gradient that ceases of its own accord when differences in gradient have equalized as in a heat process, but becoming is taken in the sense of that living process that resembles the living flame and that experiences itself only in its own consciousness.

This brings me to the reason for writing this essay.

When my last work "Buddhism and its position within the spiritual life of mankind" was published, it was naturally important to me that what I myself had achieved over many years of reflection and made accessible to German readers should also be presented to English readers.

Since I was convinced that Mr. Mc Kechnie (Bhikkhu Sīlacara) was the only one who would be able to give a meaningful translation, such as he had given for my two other books ("Buddhism as World View", "Buddhism as Religion and Morality"), I asked him to come here to Frohnau in "Das Buddhistische Haus" and undertake the translation work.

Mr. Mc Kechnie kindly agreed and began his work at the end of October, which I knew from the outset would place the highest demands on his translation skills.

Of course, there were several verbal discussions about the text. During one such discussion, Mr. Mc Kechnie said to me: "In your book you separate Nāmarūpa and Viññāna. In Burma, however, the view that Viññāna is included in Nāmarūpa is quite valid. Together with Vedanā, Saññā and Sankhācārā it makes up the four Nāma-khandhas, while Rūpa on its own forms the Rūpa-khandha. So you are wrong on this point and would do well to change it, because in Burma they will say: Dr. Dahlke is a fool who does not even know the ABC of Buddhism and still wants to teach Buddhism."

I thanked Mr. Mc Kechnie for his good advice and for his attempt at correction, and told myself that it was best to present this point, which is truly vital to Buddhism and its understanding, in a short treatise, in order to say, as best I could, what I had experienced myself. For the following will show that purely conceptual knowledge is not enough.

In Ceylon (Sri Lanka) the same is taught as in Burma, namely that Viññāna is included in Nāmarūpa as the fourth of the Nāmakhandhas. I myself took this teaching with me from Ceylon and have endeavored for many years to bring the Buddha's words to life from this point of view.

But all attempts failed. The teaching of Nāmarūpa as consisting of the one Rūpakkhandha and the four Nāmakhandhas could be learned and grasped purely conceptually, but it could not be realized and experienced. For Nāmarūpa can only be experienced as the result of Viññānas and Viññāna only as the result of Nāmarūpas.

Here I come back to what I said earlier: Buddhism does not take place in a world of the sensual-physical, purely material as a special case of science; nor does it take place in a world of the supersensual-metaphysical, purely spiritual as a special case of faith religions, but in this unique ametaphysical world, which is neither pure matter nor pure spirit, namely comprehension itself, which the individual himself experiences as consciousness.

Consciousness is neither a sensual-physical nor a supersensual-metaphysical, but it is a sensing, the giving of meaning itself and as such a nourishing process, nourishment as an experience. Life in the Buddhist view is neither a material-material nor a spiritual-immaterial process, but a conceptual process, that is, nourishment, and consciousness is not a mere spectator of the play of life and an attribute of an ego-self, but a phase of nourishment, the final, concluding phase, which proves itself as such by including the knowledge of itself in the knowledge of the life process.

It is certain that Viññāna is a spiritual group of life in the Nāma-khandha like Vedanā, Saññā and Sankhārā; it is also certain that as such it stands in apparent opposition to the form, the Rūpa-khandha; but it is also certain that Viññāna occupies a special position within the five khandhas.

The phrase: "This body endowed with consciousness" (saviññānako kāyo), likewise the phrase: "Here this my body, form-like, fourfold, subject to impermanence, annihilation, wear and tear, decay, destruction, and there this my consciousness, bound to it, attached to it" (D. I p. 76).

So what is Viññāna's special position within the five khandhas?

I would go so far as to say that it is impossible to understand the Buddha, to realize his teaching, without understanding and experiencing this special position of Viññāna.

In the Khandha Samyutta, the Buddha says: "The mode of form is the home of consciousness (rūpadhātu viññānassa oko), the mode of sensation, the mode of perception, the mode of conception (sankhāradhātu) is the home of consciousness" (Khandha Samyutta 3).

And further: "The inclined (upāya) is unliberated, the non-inclined is liberated. When consciousness as one inclined to form is there, existing, established, craving, then it becomes subject to proliferation, growth, ripening. If consciousness exists, abides, bases, craves as one attached to sensation, perception, concepts, then it becomes subject to proliferation, growth, ripening.

Whoever, bhikkhus, would say thus: 'I will show a coming and going of consciousness without form (aññātra rūpa), without sensation, without perception, without concepts, a fading and re-emerging, a growing, proliferating, maturing' - such a possibility does not exist." (Khandha Samyutta 53)

And further: "Through the arising of food, the arising of form; through the arising of touch, the arising of sensation; through the arising of touch, the arising of perception; through the arising of touch, the arising of concepts (sankhāra); through the arising of mind-form, the arising of consciousness" (nāmarūpa - samudāya viññāna - samudāya) (Khandha-Samyutta 56)

What does all this mean?

It means that on the one hand nāmarūpa and Viññāna belong together, and on the other hand they are in a relationship of dependence, as the Patteccasamuppāda in its ten-part form makes clear: "Nāmarūpapaccayā viññānam, viññānapaccayā nāmarūpam" (Mahāpadāna-Sutta, D. 14).

What does this apparent contradiction of togetherness and separateness, of unity and diversity mean?

Viññāna is the name given to the seed (viññānam b&icircrcjam, A. I p.223). A seed may be germinable. The Khandha Samyutta 54 (bījam) states:

"Just as the ground so are the four consciousness-holds (viññānatthiti) to be regarded. If consciousness were to exist as one inclined to form (rūpupāya), existing, foothold, craving, then it would fall prey to proliferation, growth, ripening. If consciousness were to exist, abide, take root, crave as one inclined to sensation-perception-concepts, then it would succumb to

proliferation, growth, ripening. This means: If consciousness as a seed were to grow into its stops: Form, sensation, perception, concepts enter the soil like the seed, then it comes to proliferate, grow, mature.

In the five khandhas, the Buddha gives an inventory of reality, so to speak, in which consciousness resembles the seed on a tree. Here, life in its five groups resembles a growth process consisting of trunk (rūpa), branches (vedanā), leaves (saññā), blossoms (sankhārā) and fruit (viññāna). But this fruit cannot continue to seed, to proliferate, as long as it is on the tree. Real proliferation, the realization of potency, occurs when the seed finds its suitable soil, i.e. when consciousness, due to the meeting of the eye (ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) with its correspondences, finds new soil in order to continue to proliferate in it.

Just as the tree in its full fivefoldness of trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms and seeds presupposes the seed, so the five Khandhas, including Viññāna, presuppose Viññāna! Viññāna here is the spiritual seed that must enter the womb in order for a new living being to come into being at all, and everything that develops in phases after Viññāna's entry into the womb is Viññāna's form of development, as can be observed in phases in a growing child. In the womb, the new living being is only form; at birth, sensation is added (note: consciousness is already added at conception) (the first unwilling cry); in the growing child, perception (it looks at blankness, it pays attention to ticking, etc.); in the growing child, concepts (it distinguishes things); in the adult child, finally, knowledge of all this: consciousness.

Above all, you have to know that: Consciousness is not something that has itself, as consciousness for itself, as an object, but something that understands itself by understanding the four other groups. Consciousness means being aware of form, sensation, perception and concepts. This is what is meant when it is said that the four khandhas are the stops (thiti) of consciousness. They are the real counter-stance of consciousness, that against which consciousness exists, on which consciousness relies in order to be there. The fact that the knowledge of these four groups is also the knowledge of this knowledge is also the essence of reality as a pure activity. Consciousness is aware of everything, including itself.

It is as if a person leans on his own body with his hand when he stands up. The hand may lean on the foot, the knee, etc., in short, on its own body, but it cannot lean on itself. However, by leaning on its own body, it is in turn indirectly leaning on itself. After all, the hand is also part of the body. Likewise, consciousness can rely on form, sensation, perception and concepts, but not on itself. But by relying on form, sensation, perception and concepts, it is indirectly relying on itself, since form, sensation, perception and concepts are nothing more than a growth phase of consciousness.

This is why the Anāthapindikovāda Sutta (M. 143) states: "Thus, householder, this is how you are to train yourself: I will not cling to form (sensation, perception, concepts), I will not cling to consciousness, and my consciousness will not be bound to consciousness (viññānissitam)." (M. III, p.260)

Consider this: when consciousness knows itself with knowing the four khandhas, this is not a confrontation of consciousness with itself and as such an identification or contrasting of itself, of consciousness, but like everything else, it is a growing on, a rolling on, a special case of nourishment: nourishment as experience, that unique experience in which it can pass directly from nourishment to de-nourishment. "Sensing the mind (cittapatisamvedī) I will breathe in, satisfying the mind (abhippamodayam cittam) I will breathe in, unifying the mind (samādaham cittam) I will breathe in, unbinding the mind (vimocayam cittam) I will breathe in".

This means: That spiritual height and that point of suspension has been reached from which it leads down quietly and lightly into the wide, free plain of abandonment, like the wanderer who,

after overcoming rough mountain heights with all their dangers and resistances, descends quietly and lightly into the wide plain that spreads out before him in the splendor of a more beautiful sun: "In close contemplation of impermanence (aniccānupassī) I will breathe in, etc. In close contemplation of renunciation (virāgānupassī) I will inhale; In close contemplation of cessation (nirodhānupassī) I will inhale; In close contemplation of renunciation (patinissaggānupassī) I will inhale, etc."

Consciousness can never stand opposite itself. Self-consciousness is not a consciousness facing itself, which would thus identify itself as a being before itself, but a rolling process of experience. However, consciousness can experience its own cessation.

"Consciousness inclined to form (sensation, perception, concepts), etc., would grow, increase, ripen, etc. But when a monk's craving for form (rūpadhātu), for sensation, for perception, for concepts, for consciousness (viññānadhātu) is uprooted, there is no longer any foothold of consciousness". (Khandha Samyutta. 53)

Just as all reality can be understood differently, because it is not a big picture, but reality with a diameter, with a living body (as chemistry according to its components, as physics according to its force processes, as philosophy according to its conditions of origin), so the Buddha as teacher teaches reality in three types of understanding (upaparikki): the understanding according to force processes (āyatanaso) and the understanding according to conditions of origin (paticca-samuppādaso) (Khandha-Samyutta 57). See also M. 115.

Just as chemistry cannot be transferred to physics and philosophy without further ado, because it is a different kind of conception, so the conception according to Dhātus, according to components, cannot be transferred to the conception according to āyatanas and according to the Paticcasamuppāda without further ado. Consider this beforehand: The khandhas are groups, components of life; admittedly not in the sense of purely material-material values (the difference between force and substance ends where substance is no longer substance per se, but force in potential, latent form); the khandhas are components of life in the sense of forms of action, as they arise in the observational inventory, for example, as in a burning flame the color layers red, yellow, violet, blue and to the innermost colorless are, of course, components of the flame, but not in the sense of material-material values, but in the sense of forms of action, as they arise in the observational inventory. Nāmarūpa, on the other hand, is a Nidāna that does not want to be considered dhātuso, according to constituents, but paticcasamuppādaso, according to conditions of origination. Certainly, the five khandhas can be summarized under a generic term; but this generic term is then not called Nāmarūpa, but Sakkāya (personality).

"I will show you the personality (sakkāya), bhikkhus, the origin of the personality, the destruction of the personality, and the path leading to the destruction of the personality. . . . And what is personality? The five groups of apprehension are to be designated thus, namely the apprehension group of form, the apprehension group of sensation, the apprehension group of perception, the apprehension group of concepts, and the apprehension group of consciousness". (p. III, p.159 and p.44)

Or: "Personality, personality, venerable one, it is said. What did the Blessed One call personality?" "These five grasping groups, brother Visakha, the Exalted One has called personality, namely the grasping group form etc." (M. 44, M. I, p.299 and S. IV, p.259)

I have referred here to contemplation according to Dhātus (dhātuso) per se as contemplation according to Khandhas, although I am well aware that Dhātus and Khandhas are listed separately elsewhere, e.g. p. I, p. 134.

But on the other hand, the Khandha Samyutta often speaks of the five khandhas as rūpa-dhātu, vedanā-dhātu, etc., which gives rise to the possibility of speaking of the khandhas as constituent

parts (dhātus). In the Bahudhātukasutta, rūpadhātu is listed alongside kāmadhātu and arūpadhātu as the three kinds of dhātus, and eye and forms etc. are listed among the dhātus as well as among the āyatanas. It depends on how you look at it.

Or: "When what, bhikkhus, is there, on the basis of what does personality-belief (sakkāyaditthi) arise? When form (sensation, perception, concepts, consciousness) is there, personality-belief arises." (p. III, p.185)

To say that Viññāna is part of the Nāmarūpa is not correct; that would be to consider the Nāmarūpa dhātuso, when it must be considered paticcasamuppādaso. A comparison will show what I mean.

A certain mass of gold and silver may simply be considered a mass. This would correspond to considering the personality as a mass of the five khandhas. But just as this mass of gold and silver is not mass per se, but potential force, mode of action, so also the mass of the five Khandhas is not mass per se, but potential force. But just as when gold or silver develop their power, I no longer refer to them as mass, as ingots, but as capital, so I no longer refer to life, to reality in its direction of power, as khandhas but as nidānas, as the living play, as it experiences itself in the relationship between Viññāna and Nāmarūpa.

Another comparison arises here.

The five khandhas are, so to speak, the life capital that is or can be absorbed as such in self-observation. They consist of form, sensation, perception, concepts and the knowledge of all of these, the consciousness. But just as a capital is sustained entirely by interest sums, otherwise it is consumed, so the life capital of the five khandhas is sustained by the interest sum that it ejects as ever newly emerging consciousness. This ever-new interest, as it arises in the meeting of eye and forms as seeing consciousness, in the meeting of ear and sounds as hearing consciousness, etc., again and again adds up to the life capital as consciousness nourishment and maintains this life capital, gives it again and again new enrichment, affirmation, on the basis of which it becomes again and again capable of throwing out new interest in the form of new consciousness. One asks: What is the difference between personality (sakkāya) and spiritual form (nāmarūpa)?

I reply: Factually, there is no difference at all between the two. The same thing that I call personality one time, I call spirit form another time. Just as I call the same thing that I once call an entrance another time an exit. Factually, both are only doors; it depends on the context, on the point of view, on the meaning, whether one calls this door an entrance or an exit. In the same way: factually, both spirit form and personality are this stock of life; it depends on the context, the point of view, the meaning, whether one calls this stock spirit form or personality.

If I understand life in terms of its components, in terms of form, then it is precisely the sum of the five khandhas, where consciousness does not need a standpoint outside itself in order to exist as such, conceptually. This is the serious mistake that is always made where the process is not experienced, but only experienced. Consciousness is activity, and activity includes itself. Consciousness is not a fact, not an existence, but a result, a process. Just as my reflection in the mirror is not a fact, but only the ever new result of looking into the mirror, so consciousness is not a fact, but the ever new result of becoming conscious, the process of becoming conscious.

The fact that consciousness, in order to take up the existence of the personality and itself along with it, does not take a standpoint in relation to itself, but carries out a process of consciousness in which the grasping and the grasped coincide in the unified process of grasping, is something that wants to be experienced, whereby the very attempt to master this experience conceptually splits it into grasping and grasped and thus blocks its own path. Consciousness that grasps itself is not a comprehensibility, not an object of comprehension; but it is also not an incomprehensibility, i.e. an object of faith, but it is the living process of comprehension itself, of

consciousness, which wants to be experienced as such, but can only be experienced where the ego conceit (asmimāna) no longer completely dominates the entire mental field of vision. For even the teaching, the Dhamma, is not a fact, not an endurance, but a process, a growth, and accordingly the receptivity for the teaching is also a process of growth. Logic, even if it were as sharp as mathematics, does nothing here; everything has to be experienced.

This is the acid test of whether someone has what it takes to really follow the Buddha, to relieve him, or whether he is content to merely "treat" him from the secure standpoint of concepts, to talk about him and thereby miserably negotiate him to the masses.

Once again: consciousness is working, and a working that did not include itself would stand outside itself, i.e. would no longer be a working. But where consciousness is working, the knowledge of working is likewise a form of working, its innermost special case, and as working in the form of this knowledge of working it is that consciousness includes itself, and that was said above: Consciousness is aware of everything, including itself. Hence it is said: "There are these four kinds of nutriment, monks, for the existing beings to maintain, for the arising beings to raise. Which four? Coarse and fine material food, secondly sense contact (phassa), thirdly mental awareness (mano-sañcetaṇa), fourthly consciousness.

When, bhikkhus, the craving for material food is there, the delight in it, the thirst for it is there, then the consciousness, the proliferating one, has taken root (patitthitam viññānam virulham). When the consciousness, the proliferating one, has taken root, that is a new arising of the mind-form (nāmarūpassa avakkanti), etc.

When, bhikkhus, there is craving for food of contact, for mental awareness-food, there is delight in it, there is thirst for it, then consciousness, the proliferating one, has taken root. When consciousness, the proliferating one, has gained a foothold, it is a new emergence of the spirit form."

And then further. "When, monks, there is the craving for consciousness-food, the delight in it, the thirst for it, then consciousness, the proliferating one, has taken root. When consciousness, the proliferating one, has taken root, that is a new arising of mind-form, etc."

Consciousness realizes everything, itself with itself, not in a confrontation with itself, in which a self and a selfhood would prove itself directly through itself, but it realizes everything, itself with itself as an activity that includes itself and thus excludes an ego-self and a self.

This must be emphasized again and again, because the whole fruit of the teaching hangs on it. Further: If I understand life according to its origin, in terms of performance, then it is Nāmarūpa, which of course includes consciousness, but not in terms of components, but potentially, just as capital includes interest, just as the young tree includes the seed that is only to grow out of it later, not a stock of life, but a state of life.

To understand the component sum of life, i.e. the five Khandhas as Nāmarūpa, is wrong from the point of view. If one is in the house, one does not ask for the entrance, but for the exit; if one is outside, vice versa. The Irishman who, when he wanted to go out of the house, expressed his wish in the words: "Please show me the entrance out", used a form of expression that is not factually wrong, but is wrong in terms of point of view. And so the designation of the sum of the five khandhas as Nāmarūpa is wrong not in fact but in point of view.

There is a reciprocal transaction between Viññāna and Nāmarūpa: the potential, latent power of Nāmarūpa is repeatedly transformed into the living power of Viññāna in the rubbing of the senses against their correspondences, and the latter is repeatedly reflected as the latent power of Nāmarūpa; the latter is nothing but consciousness that has been beaten into the fetters of form.

However, just as capital does not necessarily have to yield interest, but only if the corresponding preconditions are present, i.e. if it is allowed to work, capital Nāmarūpa also does not



necessarily yield interest, but only if it works, i.e. if there is a desire to grasp.

"I will show you the five groups (khandha) and the five groups of grasping (upādānakkhandha) . . .

And what are the five groups?

What there is of form, past, future, present, etc. - that is the form group. What there is of sensation - perception - concepts - consciousness, of past, future, present, and so on. - that is the consciousness group. This, bhikkhus, is called the five groups.

And what, bhikkhus, are the five groups of grasping?

That which is impulsive (sāsavam), adhesive (upādāniyam) in the form - the sensation - the perception - the concepts - the consciousness, that is called the seizing group form, etc." (Khandha-Samyutta 48; p. III, p. 47)

Just as the seed, as long as it is on the tree, is germinal power only as a possibility, potential, even though it itself, like the whole tree, is the result of a germinating seed, so Viññāna in the association of the five groups is germinal power only as a possibility, even though it itself, like the other four khandhas, is the result of germinating consciousness (patisandhi-viññāna). And just as the seed on the tree, as soon as it finds its right soil, realizes its germinal power, so Viññāna, as soon as it finds the right soil in the meeting of the six inner and the six outer regions, i.e. in the contact (phassa), realizes its germinal power and thus repeatedly affirms its holds, the four Khandhas, just as the interest repeatedly affirms the capital and thus keeps it interest-bearing.

In Ceylon today, people often speak of a Patisandhi-Viññāna. This word does not come from the mouth of the Buddha; as far as I know, it is only found in the commentators; in the suttas it is expressed as samvattanikam-viññānam (the consciousness that leads to, M. 106). Patisandhi-viññāna means the reconnecting consciousness. But to relate it only to the moment of physical death is to define the term too narrowly.

Viññāna binds everywhere where it passes from the purely potential germinal force into the living germinal force, i.e. everywhere where it emits interest and reinforces its capital, the Nāmarūpa, with this interest. It is Patisandhi-Viññāna, reconnecting consciousness, wherever it realizes the germinal power resting within it.

Thus I summarize:

To say that Viññāna is a part of Nāmarūpa is not correct. To say: Viññāna is not a part of Nāmarūpa is not correct. To say: Viññāna is and is not a part of Nāmarūpa, that is not the case. To say: Viññāna is neither nor is not a constituent of Nāmarūpa, that is not the case.

So: Then what is the matter?

I answer: A concept does not meet the matter at all, but only the living experience, in which it will then experience itself, how Viññāna again and again springs up from Nāmarūpa as its precondition, and how it again and again manifests itself as Nāmarūpa, intertwines, thus, so to speak, springs up from itself in a detour, but, mind you, in a way that excludes an ego-self and self (atta and attaniya).

In this sense, Nāmarūpa is called "old work" (purāna-kamma). In this sense, it is called the "seed field" (khetta) into which Viññāna enters as a seed (bija) ("kammam khettam, viññānam bījam" A. III).

"I will show you old and new work, bhikkhus. And what, bhikkhus, is old activity? The eye, bhikkhus, is old activity, the ear - the nose - the tongue - the body - the mind is old activity, as a

result of grasping (abhisankhatam), as a result of single-minded thinking (abhisañcetaṅgam). And what, bhikkhus, is new activity (navakamma)? "Monks, that which is presently active with the body, with speech, with the mind, that is called new activity." (p. V, p. 132)

How can all this be experienced? I say: On the path that the Buddha himself calls the sikkhā saññā, the restrained perceptions (D. 9, potthapāda), in other words: on the royal path of meditation, which captures the eternally flickering urges of life and brings them to rest, to clarity, so that, like the spokes of a stationary wheel, one sees the discovered secret of life before one and recognizes: Yes, that's how it is!

"And in this respect, ānanda, one is born, one grows old, one dies, one vanishes, one reappears, in this respect the path of speech, the path of the word, the path of cognition, the path of knowledge exists, in this respect the driving (vattam vattati) drives as this state here, namely: spirit form together with consciousness!" (D. 15)

Those who have understood what I have tried to show above will also understand what this "velvet" (saha) means here.

But if in the end there is nothing but this restless activity between Nāmarūpa and Viññāna, Viññāna and Nāmarūpa, which leaves no room for an ego-identity, a being in any form, what does the Buddha mean when he says to his disciples in Udāna V?

"There is, monks, an unborn (ajāta), unmade (abhūta), uncreated (akata), uncomposed (asankhata). "If, bhikkhus, there were no unborn, unmade, uncreated, uncomposed, there would be no escape from the born, the created, the compounded. But because, bhikkhus, there is the unborn, the unmade, the uncreated, the uncomposed, therefore, bhikkhus, escape from the born, the created, the compounded is knowable." (Udāna V, 3)

This passage is repeatedly cited as a key witness for the hidden metaphysical nature of Buddhism, for the fact that Buddhism is a doctrine with a double bottom, so to speak, which conceals the hidden bottom of a metaphysical attā beneath the superficial bottom of the Anattā doctrine.

But this sentence can only become a stumbling block for those who have not understood the Buddha. The Buddha does not say: "There is a permanent (nicca), enduring (dhuva), eternal (sassata), unchanging (aviparināma-dhamma), which will remain the same forever (sassatisa-mam tath' eva thassati)". Of all this he explicitly says that there is no such thing!

"But since a self and a selfhood are not attainable in truth and reality (attani ca attaniye ca saccato thetato anupalabbha-māne), is not this standpoint of faith: 'This is the world, this is the self, this is what I will be, imperishable, permanent, eternal, unchanging, eternally the same, I will endure like this' - is this not, monks, entirely a matter of folly?" (M. I, p.138)

And further: "When what is there, on the basis of what, in dependence on what does this belief arise: 'This is the self, this is the world; this is what I shall be hereafter, imperishable, permanent, eternal, unchanging'? When the form is there, on the basis of the form, in dependence on the form, this belief arises. When the sensation, the perception, the concepts, the consciousness is there, this belief arises, etc." (p. III, p.182)

The Buddha only says: "There is an unborn, unmade, uncreated, uncomposed." What this uncomposed is, we need not make empty speculations about it, the Buddha says it himself, just as he himself says what Nibbāna is:

"The uncomposed (asankhata), monks, I will show you and the path leading to the uncomposed.

And what, bhikkhus, is the un compounded?

What is the cessation of lust (rāgakkhaya), the cessation of hatred (dosakkhaya), the cessation of delusion (mohakkhaya), bhikkhus, is called the un compounded.

And what, bhikkhus, is the path that leads to the un compounded?

Insight into the body (kāyagata-sati), this, bhikkhus, is called the path leading to the un compounded." (p. IV, p.359)

Accordingly, it says: "Nibbāna, Nibbāna it is called!

What do you think Nibbāna is?

That which is the cessation of lust, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion, that is called Nibbāna." (p. IV, p.251 and 261) And further: "I will show you the Deathless (amata) and the path leading to the Deathless. And what, monks, is the Deathless? The cessation of lust, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion, that is called the Deathless." (p. IV, p.370)

And why is the cessation of lust, of hatred, of delusion the un compounded?

Because all cessation, all cessation is unified in itself, no matter what the objects are towards which it realizes itself. Just as all languages, of whatever kind they may be, become a unity in silence, so all activities, all Sankhāras become a unity in cessation, in cessation, which is no longer composite, because it has not arisen through contact (phassa-paccayā), has been born, become, created in the coincidence of inside and outside, inner and outer āyatanas, but because it consists precisely in the cessation of this phassa-paccayā.

There is an un compounded: the cessation of this ever-new composing from the preconditions (visankhāragatam cittam, Dh. 154). There is an un created: the cessation of the ever-new creation from the preconditions! There is an un created: the cessation of ever-new becoming from the preconditions! There is an un born: the cessation of ever new birth from the preconditions!

Everything there is, without exception, is the result of a collapse, as it takes place in nourishment, and nourishment itself is - sankhāra, composition. There is only one non-sankhāra: the cessation of this composition, the great no-more.

"I will show you the final end (parāyana), bhikkhus, and the path leading to the final end. And what is the final end? What, bhikkhus, is the cessation of lust, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion, that is called the final end.

And what, bhikkhus, is the path leading to the final end?

Insight into the body, bhikkhus, is called the path leading to the final end." (p. IV, p.373)

This is the great no-longer, which proves itself as such by the fact that nothing more can be said about it. A no more about which something can be said is not a final, real no more; it is a no more with which the concepts play and which can be passed from hand to hand like a concealed basket - be it as eternal being, be it as eternal annihilation.

The no more that the Buddha teaches is not eternal being (as a fiction of faith), it is not eternal annihilation (as a hypothesis of science). It is the no-longer-comprehension, the cessation of all comprehension and thus cessation itself, the experience of cessation.

For you have to know that man is by nature neither spirit nor matter, neither soul nor body, neither force nor substance, but that he is by nature grasping, grasping in the spiritual-bodily

sense. Grasping can cease.

There are three kinds of beginninglessness: the absolute beginninglessness of faith, a fiction, the relative beginninglessness of science, a hypothesis, and the reflexive beginninglessness of not-knowing - an experience! And experiencing itself in what? In this experience of cessation! Cessation of what? The cessation of lust, the cessation of hatred, the cessation of delusion; in the cessation of urges (āsavā), in the cessation of suffering!

So what remains is an existence free of suffering? Of course, an existence free of suffering remains. Nibbāna is the experience of freedom from suffering, and "For what purpose does the Exalted One proclaim the teaching? - For the purpose of seeing through suffering he proclaims the teaching." (p. IV, p.51)

And:

Yam Buddho bhāsati vācam  
khemam nibbānapattiyā  
dukkhass' antakiriyāya  
sā ve vācānam uttamā.

(The word spoken by the Awakened One,  
the safe one that brings extinction,  
that brings an end to all suffering,  
that, verily, is the best word).  
(Sutta-Nipāta 454)

But this existence free from suffering is the existence of the flame that takes no more oil and burns towards cessation, towards extinction.

The coming to rest of all Sankhāras, the renunciation of all attachments, the quenching of thirst, cessation, extinction.

Where a flame of life had burned from the beginning, sustaining itself in dependence on ignorance and thirst, it no longer burns, and this no-longer is already experienced in life as the cessation of the drives.

To call this no-longer 'eternal being' does not fit; this no-longer of an extinguished flame is not eternity. To call this no more 'eternal annihilation' does not fit; for the flame has not been extinguished (blown out), but is extinguished in not taking in more nourishment. It is the no-longer that the concept fails in the face of, not because it is incomprehensible and harbors incomprehensibility, but because it is the cessation of all comprehension itself.

But whoever thinks that he can deal with this no-more with the concepts as such, be it with the concept of incomprehensibility, should know that all this is something that has arisen in the coincidence of concept and object, arisen through contact (phassapaccayā), a sankhatam, a composite, regardless of whether one understands it as eternal being or as eternal annihilation. It is a composite (abhisankhata), it is a composite (abhisañcetaṅga).

"There is a cessation of fabrications, and realizing, 'Yes, there is,' the Blessed One sees the escape from it and lets go of it. But the Blessed One, bhikkhus, has realized from the ground up this incomparable, best path of peace, namely, the six sense-touchings of arising and passing away, pleasure and suffering, and escape and release without clinging in real cognition." (M. 102)

Veneration to him, the teacher!