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5. Jones, J.J., *The Mahāvastu*, Pāli Text Society, London, 1973, Vol. 1 p. 296 n. 1.
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SAKYAMUNI See EPITHETS, SAKYA

**SĀLISTHAMBĀ SŪTRA:** A Mahāyāna Sūtra written in Sanskrit containing a discourse giving a detailed exposition of the formula of causal genesis (*pratītya-samutpāda*). Here it is presented as a discourse by Bodhisattva Maitreya to Venerable Sāriputra at a great assembly of monks and Bodhisattvas held on the mountain Gr̥dhra-kūṭa in Rājagṛha, presided over by the Buddha.

Venerable Sāriputra opens the dialogue by referring to a terse statement made by the Buddha on that day at this assembly regarding the formula of conditioned genesis. The statement runs as follows:

“He who sees conditioned genesis sees the Dharma  
He who sees the Dharma sees the Buddha”.

This statement is actually an elaboration by one additional line of the statement made by the Buddha to Venerable Vakkali who was in the habit of admiring the physical form of the Buddha as recorded in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (S. III, 120) that “he who sees me sees the Dharma”. (*Yo dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati*). This statement contains the Buddha’s advice to Venerable Vakkali that he should try to understand the *dhamma* and see the Buddha through the *dhamma* without developing an attachment to and concentrating on his physical form. It is the Buddha’s teaching that is really significant and helpful and not his physical form, he was told. Here the *dhamma* referred to by the Buddha is his fundamental teaching of human suffering and its eradication, as synoptically presented by the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths.

Traditionally speaking the doctrine of the *Pratītya Samutpāda* is assigned a place secondary to the Four

Noble Truths because the former is the detailed explanation of the latter in a general sense. However in the *Sālisthambā Sūtra* this main teaching is given a slightly different treatment in that the doctrine of conditioned genesis is equated with the *dharma* which in turn is equated with the Noble Eightfold Path. The text then goes into explain and elucidate these doctrines in detail. This shifting of emphasis, however, does not violate the spirit of the Pali tradition in that the *Pratītya Samutpāda* actually covers the first two Noble Truths of suffering and its origin, while the third and the fourth truths are covered by the Noble Eightfold Path which has been incorporated into it in the present *Sūtra*. Thus this is only a different presentation in greater detail. Accordingly, the text goes on elaborating on these doctrines in great detail after the style of the usual Mahāyāna Sūtras.

The name of the compiler of the *Sūtra* is not recorded. As regards the designation given to the *Sūtra* it seems to be based on the simile of the sheaf of rice-plants (*Sāli-stamba*) which the Buddha here introduces as an illustration when he makes the afore mentioned terse statement leading to the preaching of the discourse. The implication seems to be that in the two-fold application of the *Pratītyasamutpāda* as internal and external as explained in the text, the latter application is symbolised by the causal activity operational in the seed in its process of transformation into a full-fledged plant with flowers, fruits etc. The rice plant is chosen as the illustration.

The text is edited as *Ārya Sālisthambā Sūtra* by N. Ariyaswami Sastri in the Adyar Library Series number 76, Adyar Library, 1950.

A.G.S. Kariyawasam

**SAMĀDHI** is usually translated as ‘concentration’ and represents a mental quality or a state of mind that is quite literally ‘put together’ or ‘collected’ (*saṃ + ā + dhā*).

In the Pali discourses the term *samādhi* occurs in a variety of contexts, covering not only the realm of tranquility (*samatha*) proper, but also the development of insight. Thus *samādhi* can refer to the practice of walking meditation (A. III, 30), for example,

or to contemplating the arising and passing away of the five aggregates (A. II, 45). A passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* treats even the four *satipaññānas* as a form of *samādhi* (A. IV, 300).

The breadth of meaning of the term *samādhi* becomes evident in the fact that the discourses distinguish between various types of concentration. Thus the *Saṅgīti Sutta* (D. III, 222) differentiates between *samādhi* leading to a pleasant abiding by attaining the *jhānas*; *samādhi* leading to knowledge and vision by developing the perception of light or clarity (*ālokasaññā*); *samādhi* leading to mindfulness and clear comprehension by contemplating the arising and passing away of feelings, perceptions, and thoughts; and *samādhi* leading to the destruction of the influxes by contemplating the arising and passing away of the five aggregates.

The same *Saṅgīti Sutta* (D. III, 219) presents another set of three *samādhis* by distinguishing between concentration that is empty (*suññata*), signless (*animitta*) or desireless (*appañihita*). The commentary relates these three to the attainment of path and fruit. The difference between them, so the commentary, is due to different modes of developing insight, depending on whether not-self (*anattā*), or impermanence (*anicca*), or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) has been particularly emphasized.

Out of these three types of *samādhi*, the signless concentration (*animitta samādhi*) occurs frequently in the discourses on its own. To develop such signless concentration is to direct attention away from any possible 'sign' (M. I, 298). In the present context, 'sign' stands for those aspects or marks of phenomena with the help of which one is able to recognize.

The *Saṅgīti Sutta* (D. III, 219) has still another threefold distinction of *samādhi* to offer, concerned with concentration with initial and sustained application of the mind (*savitakka savicāra*), without initial but still with sustained application of the mind (*avitakka vicāramatta*), and finally without both (*avitakka avicāra*)<sup>1</sup>. The first of these represents levels of *samādhi* up to and including the first *jhāna* and the last the other three *jhānas*, while concentration without initial but still with sustained application of the mind occupies a position between the first and the second *jhāna*.

This intermediate level of absorption has found its way into the *Abhidhammic* scheme for listing the *jhānas*, which treats this level of *samādhi* as second *jhāna* and the three remaining levels as third to fifth *jhāna* (Dhs. 20). In this way, the *Abhidhammic* scheme counts up to altogether five *jhānas*, whereas the discourses cover the same range of concentration with a scheme of only four *jhānas*.

Not only the discourses, but also the commentaries distinguish between several types of concentration. Thus the *Visuddhimagga* differentiates between the type of concentration present during awakening, the 'supramundane' (*lokuttara*) *samādhi*, and its 'mundane' (*lokiya*) counterpart (*Vism.* 85). Another distinction found in the same work is between access (*upacāra*) concentration, an expression referring to levels of *samādhi* bordering on but not yet corresponding to the level of *jhāna*, and absorption proper (*appanā samādhi*). The difference between these two, so the *Visuddhimagga* explains (*Vism.* 126), is that though with access concentration the hindrances are already left behind, the *jhāna* factors are still weak. With absorption proper the *jhāna* factors will be strong and firmly established, resulting in an experience during which the mind process is no longer interrupted by occurrences of the life continuum (*bhavaṅga*), but consists entirely of moments of active cognition (*javana*).

The later part of this explanation is based on the commentarial model of the cognitive process (*cittavīhi*), according to which during everyday sensory experience such moments of active cognition count up to a maximum of seven mind moments, followed sooner or later by a relapse into the stream of the Life continuum. Once this relapse has taken place, several intermediate mind moments are required before another series of active cognitions can take place. Thus the above explanation from the *Visuddhimagga* indicates that the attainment of absorption concentration is markedly different from other types of mental experience, since it consists of outstandingly long periods of pure active cognition.

In addition to access and absorption concentration, the *Visuddhimagga* introduces a third type of *samādhi* (*Vism.* 144). This is the so-called 'momentary concentration' (*khaṇika samādhi*), a type of concentration that lasts only for a short fraction of

time. The Pali *Abhidhamma* (cf. e.g. *Abhs.* II. 2) goes a step further by suggesting that unification (*ekaggatā*) of the mind belongs to those seven mental factors present in any state of consciousness (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa*). When evaluating this suggestion it needs to be taken into account that the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (*M.* I, 301) defines *samādhi* to be 'unification of the mind' (*cittassa ekaggatā*), while the *Atthasālinī* (*DhsA.* 118) defines 'unification of the mind' to be *samādhi*. Taken together this indicates that the two terms are near synonyms, both from the perspective of the discourses and from the perspective of the commentaries. Thus the *Abhidhammic* proposition concerning *ekaggatā* would imply that some form of *samādhi* is present in any state of mind.

The point made with this presentation could be that the seeds out of which real *samādhi* grows can be found even in the most ordinary state of mind. Nevertheless, this presentation is not unproblematic and the *Kathāvatthu* has recorded a critique of this position, which argues that if unification of the mind were indeed present in all states of mind, then it would follow that *jhāna* could be attained for a brief moment during normal sense-cognition or even when lust or hatred are present in the mind (*Kvu.* 458). Though this criticism may seem a little overdrawn, it does draw attention to the fact that the *Abhidhammic* usage of *ekaggatā* differs from the usage of this term in the early discourses, where both *samādhi* and *ekaggatā* represent specific mental qualities that require development, rather than being the given constituents of any state of mind.

Returning to the discourse, the *Dasuttara Sutta* (*D.* III, 277) presents another set of four types of concentration by distinguishing between concentration that is conducive to decline (*hānabhāgiyo*), to stability (*ṭhitabhāgiyo*), to distinction (*visesabhāgiyo*) and to penetration (*nibbedhabhāgiyo*). According to the explanation found in the commentary and the subcommentary to this passage, the first three are related to the development of *jhāna*: If someone has gained the first *jhāna*, for example, but slight traces of sensuality should arise, then such *samādhi* is 'conducive to decline', in the sense that the first *jhāna* will be lost. If no sensuality arose and the *jhāna* can be maintained, such *samādhi* is 'conducive to stability', and if concentration deepens and the second *jhāna* can be developed, such *samādhi* is 'conducive to

distinction'. The fourth type of *samādhi*, then, pertains to the development of insight, when on emerging from a *jhāna* one develops detachment in regard to it.

Another set of four *samādhis* forms part of the standard presentations of the four roads to power (*iddhipāda*) in the discourses (*S.* V, 268). These four roads to power share in common the need for effort and will power (*padhānasaṅkhārā*), while the difference between them is due to the type of concentration employed. Such concentration can be based upon (wholesome) desire (*chandasaṁādhi*), upon energy (*viriyasaṁādhi*), upon (inclining) the mind (*cittasaṁādhi*), or upon investigation (*vimaṃsā samādhi*).

The notion of *iddhi* underlying these four roads to power points to one of the manifold benefits of deeper levels of *samādhi*, namely the possibility to develop supernormal powers. Before however turning to such possible fruits of *samādhi*, first those factors required for its development need to be treated. These factors can conveniently be covered by examining central aspects of the gradual path of training, whose dynamics are closely related to the development of *samādhi*.

The foundation for any mental culture is morality (*sīla*), and its relevance for *samādhi* finds expression in a standard qualification of moral conduct as *samādhisaṁvattanika*, 'conducive to concentration' (e.g. *M.* I, 322). The development of morality covers also the area of speech, in relation to which friendly forms of communication are expressly related to concentration, since harsh speech is *asamādhisaṁvattanika*, 'not conducive to concentration' (*M.* I, 286). Not only harsh speech, but also quarrelsome speech will obstruct *samādhi* (*A.* IV, 87).

An important aspect of the gradual path of training is restraint of the sense-doors (*indriya saṁvara*), a practice especially aimed at overcoming sensory distraction and thereby constituting an important condition of developing *samādhi*. Another step in the gradual path of training is contentment (*santuṭṭhi*), significant in the present context since one who is not content with external circumstances will not be able to gain concentration (*Dhp.* 249). A related feature is moderation in regard to food (*bhojane mattaññu*), given

that overeating will cause drowsiness (*bhattasammada*) and thereby obstruct concentration (S. V, 64).

With these basics put into practice, the gradual path of training moves into those areas of the noble eightfold path which fall into the category of the *samādhikkhandha* or 'aggregate of concentration' proper. This *samādhikkhandha* comprises, besides right concentration itself, right effort and right mindfulness.

As the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M. 1, 301) clarifies, *samādhi* requires the development of the four right efforts, which are its 'requisites' (*parikkhāra*), and of right mindfulness in form of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, which are the 'signs' (*nimitta*) of *samādhi*<sup>2</sup>. The close relationship between mindfulness and concentration can be inferred from a statement by *Anuruddha* (S. V, 298), in which he attributed his outstanding concentrative abilities to his development of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

In the context of the gradual path of training, right effort finds its expression in the practice of wakefulness (*jāgariyaṃ anuyutta*), which according to the standard descriptions is to clean the mind from obstructive states (*āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti*), a necessary condition for being able to gain *samādhi*. Concomitant with such overcoming of obstructive states is the cultivation of mindfulness, exemplified in the gradual path scheme through the development of clear comprehension in regard to any bodily activity (*satisampajañña*). Out of the various bodily activities to be conducted with mindfulness, the walking posture is particularly capable of leading to a stable form of *samādhi* (A. III, 30)

With a mind endowed with wakefulness and mindfulness the five hindrances can be overcome. To develop the mental collectedness and composure of *samādhi* is equivalent to overcoming these hindrances, which scatter and agitate the mind. Once they are overcome, delight (*pānojja*) and joy (*pīti*) arise, followed by tranquility (*passaddhi*) and happiness (*sukha*), four factors whose arising naturally leads to *samādhi* (cf. e.g. D. I, 73).

For the purpose of overcoming the five hindrances and developing deeper levels of *samādhi*, the discourses often recommend that one withdraw into

seclusion. The standard descriptions of the type of environment conducive to the development of *samādhi* recommend places such as the root of a tree or an empty place. The relationship between seclusion and *samādhi* is reciprocal, since not only does seclusion facilitate *samādhi*, but one who is bereft of *samādhi* will also not be able to derive benefit from living in seclusion (A. V, 202).

For those intent on the development of absorption concentration, the *Upakkilesa Sutta* (M. 111, 158) offers a detailed list of those mental obstructions that may prevent the deepening of one's *samādhi*. The obstructions (*Upakkilesa*) mentioned in this discourse are a set not encountered elsewhere in the discourses and specifically related to the development of *samādhi*. The mental obstructions listed are doubt, inattention, sloth-and-torpor, consternation, elation, unease, excessive energy, deficient energy, longing, diversified perceptions and excessive meditation on forms. A closer examination of this list reveals that this set of mental obstructions are various manifestations of the last three hindrances. This indicates that even before attempting to develop *samādhi*, the first two hindrances of sensual desire and ill-will have to be removed, while the overcoming of the remaining three hindrances is what leads to a gradual deepening of concentration until the first *Jhāna* can be gained.

In regard to the first *jhāna*, the meditator has to develop skill in attaining (*samāpattikusalo*), in maintaining (*ṭhitikusalo*) and in emerging (*vuṭṭhānakusalo*) from *samādhi* (A. IV, 34). This much accomplished, the second *jhāna* comes into view, a mental experience qualified in the standard descriptions as being 'born' of *samādhi* (*samādhija*). This qualification points to the fact that with the attainment of the second *jhāna* the meditator has moved beyond the subtle mental ripple caused by the presence of initial (*vitakka*) and sustained application of the mind (*vicāra*), two factors of the first *jhāna* that need to be left behind in order to gain the second *jhāna*.

Further deepening of *samādhi* leads via overcoming of joy (*pīti*) to the third *jhāna* and by gaining perfect equanimity to the fourth *jhāna*, with the attainment of which the acme of the development of *samādhi* has been reached. With the imperturbable (*āneñja*) level of *samādhi* gained in this way the possibility of gaining

the immaterial attainments comes into view, refined mental experiences that employ the concentrative strength gained with the fourth *jhāna* to develop increasingly subtle types of perceptions.

With the experience of the deep levels of *samādhi* gained through the *jhānas* not only the common world of experience is left behind, but also potential powers and abilities of the mind can be accessed that go beyond the confines of common experience. Once *samādhi* has reached the depth of the fourth absorption, the possibility to develop supernormal abilities and knowledges opens up. The discourses mention a standard set of six such supernormal knowledges (*abhiññā*), which include various magical powers of transformation, supernormal audition and vision, telepathy and powers of recollection beyond one's present life. The last and supreme of these supernormal knowledges is the destruction of the influxes, and it is in order to develop this insight which leads up to the gain of this particular knowledge that *samādhi* has such a central place in the Buddhist path scheme.

The role of *samādhi* as a crucial factor for the gaining of insight is a frequent theme in the discourses, which reiterate again and again that no insight can be gained without concentration. *Samādhi* precedes knowledge (A. I, 219) and it is only with a concentrated mind that things can be seen as they really are<sup>3</sup>. The role of *samādhi* in this respect also underlies its inclusion among the seven factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*).

As a factor of awakening, levels of *samādhi* with and without initial and sustained application of the mind can be employed (S. V, 111). The awakening factor of *samādhi* is the result of tranquility and happiness and in turn leads to equanimity, a balanced state of mind resulting from concentration (S. V, 69). The two factors especially related to *samādhi* as a factor of awakening (S. V, 105) are the 'sign of tranquility' (*samathanimitta*) and the 'sign of non-distraction' (*avyagganimitta*). Following an explanation found in the *Visuddhimagga* (*Vism.* 134), both can be understood to represent the same, namely the need to develop mental tranquility and avoid distraction.

The *Visuddhimagga* offers a survey of those factors that help to develop the awakening factor of *samādhi*.

These range from cleanliness and avoiding distracted people, to knowing the right time for inciting, restraining, gladdening and not interfering with the mind. In addition to these, the *Visuddhimagga* recommends to cultivate a keen interest in and to repeatedly reflect on the development of concentration, to acquire skill in developing the 'sign' of concentration and to balance the five faculties (*Vism.* 134).

Balance among the five faculties as an aid in developing the awakening factor of *samādhi* reminds of another important set of mental factors where *samādhi* also plays its part: the five faculties (*indriya*) or powers (*bala*). A definition found frequently for *samādhi* as a faculty (e.g. S. V, 197) speaks of gaining concentration by "making relinquishment the object" (*vossaggārammaṇa*). In the context of the five faculties, the role of *samādhi* is to counterbalance the faculty of energy (*virīya*), thereby avoiding the arising of agitation and excitement.

*Samādhi* is not only of relevance to the roads to power, the awakening factors and the faculties, but it also has a crucial role to perform in the context of the noble eightfold path, of which it forms the last and culminating factor. The discourses define 'right concentration' (*sammā samādhi*) in two complementary ways. The definition found most frequently enumerates the four absorptions (*jhānas*). Since the development of the noble eightfold path, and with it of the path factor 'right concentration', is a prerequisite for awakening, this definition clearly accords a central role to the development of absorption concentration in the early Buddhist scheme of deliverance.

Since some discourses describe the gaining of full awakening based on the first absorption<sup>4</sup>, it would seem that probably not all four *jhānas* have to be developed to win full awakening. All four *jhānas* would however be needed to gain the threefold higher knowledge (*tevijjā*).

Another definition of right concentration, found in a few discourses, does not mention the absorptions<sup>5</sup>. One of these discourses is the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, a discourse which defines right concentration as unification of the mind (*cittassekaggatā*) developed in interdependence with the other seven path-factors<sup>6</sup>. This definition highlights the fact that in order for

concentration to become 'right' concentration, it needs to be developed as part of the noble eightfold path.

Judging from other discourses, the expression 'unification of the mind' is not confined to absorption concentration since the same expression occurs in relation to walking and standing (A. II, 14) or to listening to the *Dhamma* (A. III, 175), activities which would not be compatible with *jhāna* attainment. This suggests that this second definition of 'right concentration' would also include levels of *samādhi* that have not yet reached the depth of absorption concentration. In fact, this second definition makes it clear that the decisive factor qualifying *samādhi* as 'right' is not merely the depth of concentration achieved, but the purpose for which concentration is employed.

A similar nuance underlies the qualification *sammā*, 'right', which literally means 'togetherness', or to be 'connected in one'. This thus indicates that the decisive criterion for describing *samādhi* as *sammā*, as 'right', is whether it is developed 'together' with the other factors of the noble eightfold path.

According to numerous discourses (e.g. A. III, 423), the development of the path factor of 'right concentration' is indispensable for eradicating the fetters and gaining awakening. This brings up the question whether it is necessary to develop *samādhi* to the level of absorption in order to win stream-entry, once-return, non-return or to become an *arahant*.

Concerning stream-entry, the qualities mentioned in the discourses as essential for the realisation of stream-entry do not stipulate the ability to attain absorption (cf. S. V, 410). Nor is such an ability included among the qualities that are characteristic of a stream-enterer subsequent to realisation (cf. e.g. S. V, 357). A necessary condition for winning stream-entry is a state of mind completely free from the five hindrances (A. III, 63). Such a removal, however, can take place during walking meditation (*It.* 118) or while listening to the *Dhamma* (S. V, 95), activities which are not compatible with *jhāna* attainment. This indicates that the ability to gain absorption concentration may not be required for stream-entry.

The same seems to apply to the realisation of once-return. Once-returners are so called because they will be reborn only once again in 'this world' (i.e. the *kāmaloka*). On the other hand those who have developed the ability to attain absorption are not going to return to 'this world' in their next life (A. II, 126), but will be reborn in a higher heavenly sphere (i.e. the *rūpaloka* or the *arūpaloka*). This certainly does not imply that a once-returner cannot have absorption attainments. But if all once-returners were absorption attainers, the very concept of a 'once-returner' would be superfluous, since not a single once-returner would ever return 'to this world'.

When considering the realisation of non-return however, the situation seems to be different. Some discourses point out that the non-returner, in contrast to the once-returner, has fulfilled the development of concentration, thereby indicating that the difference between the two is related to differing levels of concentrative ability (A. I, 232 and A. IV, 380). Other discourses relate progress towards the higher two stages of the path, non-returning and *arahant*-ship, to having had the experience of the first or higher absorptions<sup>7</sup>. Judging from this, the development of concentration up to the level of absorption appears to be required for the realisation of non-return and thereby also of *arahant*-ship.

The development of deeper states of *samādhi* is thus indeed an important aspect of the meditative training of the mind in early Buddhism. This importance is expressed vividly in some discourses, which explain that one who has respect for the Buddha and his teaching will automatically hold *samādhi* in high regard (A. IV, 123). On the other hand, one who looks down on the development of *samādhi* thereby only approves of those who have an unsteady mind (A. II, 31). Lack of regard for the development of concentration, so another discourse explains, constitutes one of the causes for the disappearance of the true *Dhamma* (S. II, 225). In short, as the Buddha once said: *samādhi* is the path and its absence is the wrong path<sup>8</sup>.

See also APPANĀ, CONCENTRATION, EKAGGATĀ, EKOTIBHĀVA, JHĀNA, SAMATHA.

Anālayo.

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