

alternative translations by I.B. Horner and Walpola Rahula. *PTS*, London, 1984, p. 53.

7. See P.L. Vaidya (ed.), *Astasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* With Haribhadra's Commentary Called *Aloka*, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 185: *yadā bodhisattvo... evam cittam abhinirharati - śarvasattva mamaparitayak-tah, mayaite parimocayitavya iti, sunyatam ca samā dhivimokṣamukham abhinirharati...*, *tadā upāyakausālyasamanvāgato bodhi-sattvo... veditavyah - nāyam antara bhūtakoṭim sākṣatikarīśyaty aparipurnair buddhadharmaih;... asyopayakausalyam raksam karoti.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 184: *bodhisattvo mahasattvah sarvasattvahiṭānukampi maitri-... karuṇā-... muditā-... upeksavihāri upāyakausalyena prajñāpāramitāya ca parigrhitah.*
9. See Hisao Takahashi et al. (eds.), *Vimalakirtinirdeśa. A Sanskrit Edition Based upon the Manuscript Newly Found at the Potala Palace*. Taisho University Press. Tokyo, 2006, p. 15 (chapter II) with reference to Vimalakirti and the six perfections realized by him for the benefit of sentient beings: *prajñāpāramitānirjātaḥ, upāyakausalyagatim gataḥ...* "He is expert in the perfection of wisdom and an adept at skill in means..."; See *ibid.*, p. 79 (chapter VII): *prajñāpāramitā mātā bodhisattvāna marisa / pitā copayakausalyam yato jāyanti nāyakah //* "The Bodhisattvas' mother, friend, is the perfection of wisdom and [their] father is skill in means of whom are born the guides [of all beings]."
10. See Louis Renou, Jean Filliozat, *L'Inde classique, Tome II*, Paris, 1953, reimpr. 2000, p. 564 (Les doctrines du Grand Moyen de Progression (Mahayana).
11. As for the Mahayanist trikaya teaching see BUDDHOLOGY. On upāya and trikāya see also Gadjin M. Nagao, *Madhyamika and Yogācāra. A Study of Mahayana Philosophies*. State University of New York, Albany, 1991, pp. 33, 87, 107ff.
12. See Pye 1978, p. 113f.; see also ŚUNYATĀ. As for the Tantric context in which the opposites of upāya and prajñā merge as yab yum, see TATHAGATAMANDALA.
13. See Mark Tatz (transl.), *The Skill in Means Sutra (Upayakausalyasutra)*, Delhi, 1994, 2001, p. 16f.
14. See Tatz 1994, p. 27.

15. Fully explained in Heinz Bechert, "Zur Frühgeschichte des Mahayana-Buddhismus", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 113 (1964), pp. 530-535.

16. Tatz 1994, p. 28.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Bhikkhu Pasādika.

UPEKKHĀ, (Skt. *upekṣā*), is mostly translated as "equanimity", and can be derived from *upa* and *īkṣ*, to "look upon". In order to explore the various nuances of *upekkhā*, the present article will begin by surveying Buddhaghosa's analysis of the term, and then employ the main distinctions derived from this analysis as a scaffolding for examining relevant passages from the Pāli discourses. Though not all of these passages fit Buddhaghosa's scheme neatly, the main distinctions offered by him provide a useful ground plan for exploring *upekkhā* and its different shades of meaning.

Buddhaghosa's analysis of *upekkhā*

Buddhaghosa's analysis distinguishes between ten types of *upekkhā* (*Vism.* 160, *DhsA.* 172)¹:

- (1) *chaḷaṅgupekkhā*, the "six-fold equanimity" of an arahant towards objects of the six senses.
- (2) *brahmavihārupekkhā*, "equanimity" as the last of the four "divine abodes".
- (3) *bojjhaṅgupekkhā*, "equanimity" as the last of the seven "factors of awakening".
- (4) *viriyupekkhā*, "equanimity of energy" in the sense of a balance between striving and laxity.
- (5) *saṅkhārupekkhā*, "equanimity about formations" as a result of progress in meditation.
- (6) *vedanupekkhā*, "equanimity" as a type of "feeling".
- (7) *vipassanupekkhā*, "equanimity" as a result of the development of "insight".
- (8) *tatramajjhātūpekkhā*, "equanimity" in the sense of "balance" of mental factors.
- (9) *jhānupekkhā*, the "equanimity" experienced during the third *jhāna*.
- (10) *pārisuddhupekkhā*, the "purified equanimity" experienced during the fourth *jhāna*.

Buddhaghosa explains that the first three and the last two, i.e. *chaḷaṅgupekkhā* (1), *brahma-vihāru-pekhhā* (2), *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* (3), *jhānupekkhā* (9) and *pārisuddhupekkhā* (10), are but different modes of equanimity in the sense of balance, *tatramajjhattupekkhā* (8). Since the first three and the last two are different modes of the same basic state, they are mutually exclusive in the sense that where one of them is found, the other will not occur.

Of the remaining types of *upekkhā*, equanimity about formations and equanimity in relation to insight, *saiṅkhārupekkhā* (5) and *vipassanupekkhā* (7) have, according to Buddhaghosa, the same meaning. "Equanimity of energy", *viriyupekkhā* (4), however, in according to him a type on its own, as is the case for equanimity as a feeling, *vedanupekkhā* (6).

Equanimity towards sensory experience

The first in Buddhaghosa's listing is *chaḷaṅgupekkhā*, the "six-fold equanimity" of an arahant towards objects of the six senses. As an example for this type of equanimity, Buddhaghosa refers to a discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that describes how a monk is neither elated, *sumana*, nor depressed, *dumana*, in regard to what is experienced through the six senses, but instead dwells with equanimity, mindfulness and clear comprehension, *upekkhako viharati sato sampajāno* (A. III, 279).

Equanimity towards sensory objects is, however, a topic of relevance not only to an arahant. In fact, such equanimity could be of different types. The *Saḷāyatana Sutta* distinguishes between worldly types of equanimity, *gehasitā upekkhā*, experienced by the ignorant worldling towards sense-objects, and equanimity based on renunciation, *nekkhammasitā upekkhā*, which arises as the result of awareness of the impermanent and unsatisfactory nature of sense-objects (M. III, 219). The worldly forms of equanimity result from the object itself, whose features arouse neither a positive nor a negative reaction. In contrast, equanimity based on renunciation transcends its object, *ativattati*, as this equanimity is caused by an inner attitude, not by the outer features of the object.

Such an inner attitude of equanimity towards sense-objects is the outcome of a gradual training. According to the *Indriyabhāvanā Sutta*, some contemporaries of

the Buddha thought that the way to deal with the attraction of sense-objects is to just avoid them. From the perspective of the Buddha, however, the proper procedure is rather to see sense-experience, be it agreeable or disagreeable, as something that is gross and conditioned. In contrast to such gross and conditioned experience, equanimity is peaceful and sublime (M. III, 299).

The same discourse then describes how to arrive at mastery in regard to sense-experience. According to this description, one trains to perceive what is disagreeable (*paṭikkula*) as agreeable (*appaṭikkula*), and what is agreeable as disagreeable, followed by perceiving both as disagreeable, and then both as agreeable. The final stage in such training is reached when the labels "disagreeable" and "agreeable" are left behind and one is able to dwell in equanimity, endowed with mindfulness and clear comprehension in regard to any experience (M. III, 301).

To remain equanimous is not only an important stage in perceptual mastery, but would also be of considerable advantage in relation to other beings. This is in fact the next aspect of *upekkhā* to be examined, namely equanimity as one of the four *brahmavihāras*.

Equanimity as a divine abode

The second type of equanimity in Buddhaghosa's listing is *brahmavihārupekkhā*. In the standard description of the practice of the four *brahmavihāras* as forms of "liberation of the mind", *cetovimutti*, equanimity comes last and thus constitutes the culmination point of the practice (e.g. D. I, 251). Thus equanimity as a *brahmavihāra* constitutes the climax of a process that is based on the development of loving kindness, *mettā*, compassion, *karuṇā*, and sympathetic joy, *muditā*. This indicates that *upekkhā* is not simply a state of listless lack of concern, but rather an equanimity that rounds of a systematic opening of the heart, in the sense of being a "complement to the first three more concerned dispositions".² Far from being merely a state of dull indifference, such equanimity is "the result of ... deliberate training, not the casual outcome of a passing mood".³ That *upekkhā* comes last "does not mean that equanimity is to supplant the first three sublime attitudes in one's future practice".⁴ Much rather, future practice will involve

all four *brahmavihāras*, not being confined to practice of *upekkhā* alone (cf. e.g. *Sn.* 73).

That from an early Buddhist perspective *upekkhā* is not considered as invariably superior to the other *brahmavihāras* can be seen in a passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. This passage reports that Sāriputta was publicly contradicted several times by another monk. The Buddha finally intervened and upbraided the other monks for not intervening earlier (*A.* III, 194). Why, he asked, did they not have compassion when a senior monk was being vexed in public, and instead continued to look on with equanimity? This passage shows that in early Buddhism equanimity was not considered the appropriate response to every situation. Instead, at times an active intervention is required and should be undertaken, out of compassion.

The same can also be seen in another passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, according to which someone had proposed that to completely refrain from criticizing others is the best attitude, being a superior expression of equanimity (*A.* II, 101). The Buddha disagreed with this proposal, explaining that one should criticize on those occasions where it is suitable.

The same issue is taken up from a complementary perspective in another discourse, which recommends admonishing someone even if this leads to vexation for oneself and the other, as long as there is hope that the other will thereby become established in what is wholesome (*M.* II, 241). Only if the situation is such that it can be anticipated that the other will not become established in what is wholesome, then equanimity towards such a person is the appropriate attitude.

These passages show that early Buddhism did not consider equanimity as the only appropriate attitude towards others, but rather saw it as an attitude that, in spite of its many advantages, may at times not be opportune. In fact, equanimity can be of two types, as some forms of equanimity lead to an increase of wholesome states, but others lead to an increase of unwholesome states (*D.* II, 279). For this reason, certain types of *upekkhā* should not be developed.

In order to develop the wholesome types of equanimity, the *Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta* recommends calling to mind the famous simile of the saw. With the help of such recollection, it becomes

possible to generate “equanimity based on the wholesome”, *upekkhā kusalanissitā*, to such a degree that one is able to bear even being attacked with fists, sticks and knives (*M.* I, 186). Another recollection that can help to face even extreme situations is described in the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta*. According to this discourse, the monk Puṇṇa was ready to bear any type of attack with the reflection that his aggressors were kind in that they were not attacking him in ways even worse than what they were already doing (*M.* III, 268).

These passages reveal the potential of equanimity in overcoming the tendency to resistance, *paṭigha* (*M.* I, 424), or to anger, *āghāta* (*A.* III, 185). In addition, if equanimity is developed as a liberation of the mind it also becomes an antidote to lust, *rāga* (*A.* III, 292). The relationship between equanimity and the removal of lust is further elaborated in another discourse, which explains that due to the perception of absence of beauty, *asubhasaññā*, the attraction of sexuality will be replaced by equanimity (*A.* IV, 47).

According to the *Jīvaka Sutta*, the Buddha’s own practice of equanimity and the other divine abodes had its foundation in his complete freedom from lust, anger and delusion (*M.* I, 370). Due to the aloofness of the Buddha’s equanimity from any defilement, his *brahmavihāra* was superior even to that of Brahmā.

For the Buddha, to dwell in the divine abode of equanimity or any of the other *brahmavihāras* was like a divine resting place (*A.* I, 183). His equanimity as a teacher was such that, even though only some disciples might listen to his teachings while others might not listen, he would still remain equanimous (*M.* III, 221).

Equanimity was a quality possessed by the Buddha even previous to his awakening. The *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* describes a former time during which the bodhisattva was molested by cow-herds who would spit at him, urinate on him, throw dirt at him and poke sticks into his ears (*M.* I, 79). In spite of such harassment, he remained completely equanimous. According to the *Cariyapīṭaka*, the bodhisattva’s maintenance of equanimity in such adverse circumstances constituted his development of the perfection of equanimity, *upekkhāpāramī* (*Cp.* 102).⁵ Notably, in the list of altogether ten such perfections

that according to the Theravāda tradition are required for future Buddhahood, *upekkhā* again forms the culmination point.

A discourse in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* clarifies that the development of *upekkhā* and the other divine abodes should not be considered to be only a domain of Buddhists, as the same was also undertaken by contemporaries of the Buddha (*S. V, 116*).⁶ The same discourse throws into relief the decisive difference between their mode of practice and the way this was undertaken in the Buddha's dispensation. This difference lies in combining the practice of equanimity, or of any of the other *brahmavihāras*, with the development of the factors of awakening (*S. V, 120*). This leads us on to the next topic, to the role of *upekkhā* as a factor of awakening.

Equanimity as a factor of awakening

Bojjhaṅgupekkhā, "equanimity" as a "factor of awakening", is the third type of equanimity in Buddhaghosa's listing. Similar to the position of *upekkhā* in relation to the other divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) and the perfections (*pāramī*), in the context of the factors of awakening *upekkhā* again forms the last in the listing. According to the *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, the factors of awakening arise in conditioned dependence on each other (*M. III, 85*). This indicates that *upekkhā* as a *bojjhaṅga* constitutes the climax of a process of meditative development that involves the previous establishment of mindfulness, *sati*, investigation of phenomena, *dhammavicaya*, energy, *virīya*, joy, *pīti*, tranquillity, *passaddhi*, and concentration, *samādhi*.

According to the *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, the awakening factor of equanimity arises due to looking on with equanimity, *ajjupekkhati*, at the concentrated state of mind that has been reached at this point of practice (*M. III, 86*), a point of practice with which the attainment of knowledge and liberation comes within reach. The *Ānāpānasati Sutta* speaks of looking on with equanimity, *ajjupekkhati*, also in its correlation of the fourth tetrad of mindfulness of breathing with the fourth *satipatṭhāna*, contemplation of phenomena, *dhammānupassanā* (*M. III, 85*). According to its explanation, to contemplate impermanence, dispassion, cessation and relinquishment when breathing in and breathing out corresponds to

contemplation of phenomena, *dhammānupassanā*, because at this stage of practice one has seen with wisdom that desire and discontent have been overcome and looks on closely with equanimity. A nuance common to the perspectives given on *upekkhā* in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* is that of mental balance, a balance that covers the realm of tranquillity as well as of insight.

Upekkhā as an awakening factor could be directed towards internal or towards external objects (*S. V, 111*). To foster its development, attention should be given to things that are a basis for the awakening factor of equanimity, *upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṭṭhāniyā dhammā*, (*S. V, 67*). Further explanation of this statement can be gathered from the commentaries, according to which one should in particular be detached towards people and things, avoid prejudiced people and associate with impartial people, and incline the mind towards the arousing and establishing of this particular factor of awakening (*MA. I, 299*). The commentaries also explain that the characteristic of the awakening factor of equanimity is careful consideration and proceeding evenly, *patisaṅkhāna-lakkhaṇa samāvāhita-lakkhaṇā vā*, its specific function is to prevent deficiency and excess and to cut off partiality, *ūnādhikatā-nivāraṇa-rasa pakkha-pātupac-cheda-rasā vā*, and its manifestation is as a state of balance, *majjhata-bhāva-pac-cupaṭṭhāna* (*MA. I, 84*).

The presence of wisdom and clear discernment inherent in the awakening factor of *upekkhā* is also reflected in a simile found in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, which compares the seven factors of awakening to the seven precious and magical possessions of a wheel-turning king. In the context of this simile, the awakening factor of equanimity corresponds to the king's adviser, *parināyaka* (*S. V, 99*).

Further illustrations of *upekkhā* can be found in two similes that employ various parts of a chariot and of an elephant to illustrate mental qualities. Here *upekkhā* is what keeps the burden loaded on the chariot in balance (*S. V, 6*), or else corresponds to the two white teeth of the elephant (*A. III, 346; Thag. 694*). Another simile indicates that just as a goldsmith will at times simply look on with equanimity, *ajjupekkhati*, after having alternately heated up gold and sprinkled it with water, so too during the

meditative development of the mind one should at times just give attention to the sign of equanimity, *upekkhānimitta* (A. I, 257).⁷ The nuance of balance between striving and laxity, alluded to in this imagery, leads us on to the next aspect of equanimity, namely equanimity in the sense of balance of energy.

Equanimity as balance of energy

Viriyupekkhā, “equanimity of energy” as a balance between striving and laxity, is the fourth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. In addition to the above-mentioned simile of a goldsmith, another imagery describes the same need for equanimous observation without interference with the case of a wood fire, which at times needs to be tended, at times to be quenched, but at times just needs to be looked upon with equanimity (A. IV, 45). For exertion to be fruitful, the *Devadaha Sutta* points out, one has to know not only when it is the time to strive, but also when the time has come to simply remain with *upekkhā* (M. II, 223). As another discourse points out, one who does not look on with equanimity when this is required will not reach liberation (A. III, 435).

The topic of equanimity in relation to the progress towards liberation, in particular in regard to its two aspects of tranquillity and insight, is the next theme to be explored, which is equanimity about formations.

Equanimity about formations

Saṅkhārupekkhā, “equanimity about formations”, is the fifth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. The *Paṭi-sambhidāmagga* treats this topic by distinguishing between eight types of *saṅkhārupekkhā* that arise in relation to the development of tranquillity, *samatha*, and ten types of *saṅkhārupekkhā* in relation to the development of insight, *vipassanā* (Ps. I, 64). The eight types related to tranquillity are the equanimity towards those factors that have been overcome with the attainment of a particular level of concentration, such as the hindrances with the first *jhāna*, initial and sustained mental application (*vitakka-vicāra*) in the case of the second *jhāna* etc. The ten types related to insight are the equanimity towards any formation related to the four noble paths, the four noble fruits, dwelling in emptiness and dwelling in signlessness.

In this way, equanimity about formations points to the role of *upekkhā* in relation to the development of *jhāna* and of insight. Before taking up this role in more detail, however, equanimity as a type of feeling needs to be considered.

Equanimous feeling

Vedanupekkhā, “equanimity” as a type of “feeling”, is the sixth in Buddhaghosa’s listing. The experience of equanimous types of feeling is treated in the discourses predominantly under the heading of the “faculty of equanimity”, *upekkhindriyā*.⁸ This faculty arises in dependence on contact to be felt as equanimous (S. V, 212),⁹ and is de-fined as experience that is bodily and mentally felt as neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, *n’eva sātaṃ nā-sātaṃ vedayitaṃ* (S. V, 211).

The faculty of equanimity is one of altogether five such faculties, of which the others are the faculties of bodily pleasure, *sukha*, bodily pain, *dukkha*, mental joy, *somanassa*, and mental dis-pleasure, *domanassa* (S. V, 209). While the faculties of bodily pleasure and mental joy correspond to pleasant feeling, *sukhā vedanā*, and the faculty of bodily pain and mental displeasure to unpleasant feeling, *dukkhā vedanā*, the faculty of equanimity corresponds to neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant types of feeling, *adukkhamasukhā vedanā* (S. V, 210). The other four faculties cease progressively with the attainment of the four *jhānas*, but the faculty of equanimity ceases only with the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings, *saññāvedayitanirodha* (S. V, 215).

A related type of presentation includes *upekkhā* in a list of altogether six elements, *dhātu*, of which the first four are again *sukha*, *dukkha*, *somanassa*, and *domanassa*, while the remainder are *upekkhā* and *avijjā* (M. III, 62). The reference to *avijjā* in the present passage then leads us on the development of insight as the requirement for overcoming *avijjā*.

Equanimity in relation to insight

Vipassanupekkhā, “equanimity” as a result of the development of “insight”, is the seventh in Buddhaghosa’s listing. As an example of this particular type of equanimity, Buddhaghosa refers to a maxim in

the *Āneñjasappāya Sutta*, which describes the aspiration: "what exists, what has become, that I abandon", *yad atthi, yaṃ bhūtaṃ, tad pajahāmi* (M. II, 265). The same maxim recurs again in another discourse, according to which those who have developed wisdom through putting this injunction into practice will reach full awakening or become non-returners (A. IV, 70). As the *Āneñjasappāya Sutta* points out, full liberation will be attained only if even the refined equanimity acquired with the help of the above maxim is not clung to.

This reinforces a point already made above in relation to *upekkhā* as a divine abode, in that in early Buddhism equanimity is not seen as the final goal, but as something that also needs to be transcended.

A simile that illustrates how equanimity arises through insight can be found in the *Devadaha Sutta*. This simile describes a man who sorely suffers on seeing the woman he loves conversing and laughing with another man. Yet, once this man realizes the cause of his distress and eventually overcomes his affection for the woman, her behaviour will no longer affect him (M. II, 223).

A verse in the *Mahāvīyūha Sutta* speaks in particular of equanimity in regard to views and opinions (Sn. 911). Since the preceding verses offer a penetrative analysis of the evils of upholding views and opinions, perhaps the *upekkhā* referred to in the present verse should also be reckoned as a form of equanimity that is the result of insight.

In fact, the presence of equanimity and balance as an outcome of progressing insight is a recurrent theme in the discourses, though not always explicitly treated under the heading of *upekkhā*. Another way of expressing the same state of balance would be, for example, the expression "he dwells independently, without clinging to anything in the world", *anissito ca viharati, na ca kiñci loke upādiyati* (e.g. M. I, 56). A complementary description of this balanced attitude indicates that for one who has arrived at deeper insight, any feeling will not be delighted in. Even feelings that intimate the approach of death will simply be experienced with a balanced mind that knows that after death feelings will just become cool (M. III, 244). Which takes us on to the topic of equanimity as balance.

Equanimity as balance

Tatramajjhatsupekkhā, "equanimity" in the sense of "balance" of mental factors is the eighth in Buddhaghosa's listing. According to his own presentation, *tatramajjhatsupekkhā* is an umbrella term for the first three and the last two in his listing, namely *chaḷaṅgupekkhā* (1), *brahmavihārupekkhā* (2), *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* (3), *jhānupekkhā* (9) and *pārisuddhupekkhā* (10). Of these only the final two out of these manifestations of *tatramajjhatsupekkhā*, which are concerned with the role of equanimity in regard to *jhāna* attainment, still need to be examined.

Equanimity during *jhāna*

According to Buddhaghosa's explanation, equanimity is present in all four *jhānas*, but it comes to the fore only in the third and fourth *jhānas* (*Vism.* 168). To illustrate his point, he compares *upekkhā* during the first and second *jhāna* to the crescent moon during daytime, which in spite of its presence will not be seen clearly. For this reason, in his tenfold listing he explicitly mentions only *jhānupekkhā*, the "equanimity" experienced during the third *jhāna*, and *pārisuddhupekkhā*, the "purified equanimity" experienced during the fourth *jhāna*.

The presence of equanimity in the third *jhāna* is explicitly mentioned in the standard description of this level of concentration, according to which one who attains the third *jhāna* is reckoned one who "being equanimous and mindful, dwells in happiness", *upekhako satimā sukhavahārī* (D. I, 75). During such attainment, a subtle but real perception of equanimity and happiness is present, *upekkhā-sukha-sukhumasacca-saññā* (D. I, 183). It is the very presence of this *upekkhāsukha* that constitutes the last vestige of perturbability, *iñjita*, during this attainment (M. I, 454), or else the last vestige of confinement, *sambādha* (A. IV, 450). The danger here is to become internally stuck, once consciousness becomes intoxicated with the gratification derived from this experience, *upekkhā-sukhassāda-gathita* (M. III, 226).

Overcoming this last vestige of perturbability and confinement leads to the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*, characterized in the standard descriptions as a state that has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity,

upekkhā-sati-parisuddhi (D. I, 75). As a verse in the *Sutta Nipāta* notes, leaving behind *sukha*, *dukkha*, *soṃaṇṇa* and *domaṇṇa* leads to a type of equanimity that is purified and tranquil (*Sn.* 67).

Buddhaghosa explains that the purity of mindfulness during this deep level of absorption is precisely due to equanimity (*Vism.* 167). Equanimity then continues to be prominent during the four immaterial attainments, though a discourse in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* relates *upekkhā cetovimutti* in particular to the attainment of the sphere of nothingness, *akīṇaṇṇāyatana* (*S.* V, 121).

The unified equanimity of deeper *jhāna* experience is considerably more refined than worldly types of equanimity that are based on diversity, *upekkhā nānattā nānattasitā* (*M.* I, 364). Yet, even the sublime and purified equanimity of deeper stages of concentration is merely a conditioned state and thus needs to be left behind (*M.* III, 243).

With the unworldly equanimity of the fourth *jhāna*, *nirāmisā upekkhā*, the worldly types of equanimity in relation to the world of sensuality are left behind, *sāmisā upekkhā* (*S.* IV, 237). A form of equanimity that is of an even more unworldly type, *nirāmisā nirāmisatārā upekkhā*, will arise when one reviews the successful attainment of final liberation.

The role of *upekkhā* during the progress through the *jhānas* indicates that it is the very presence of equanimity that “allows the mind to become fully sensitive and effective”.¹⁰ This reinforces a point made above in regard to occurrences of *upekkhā* in other contexts, which similarly go beyond mere indifference or insensitivity and present equanimity as an expression of a maturity of emotional attitudes and of the development of insight and tranquillity.¹¹ It is in fact noticeable how again and again *upekkhā* makes its appearance in the company of mindfulness, *sati*, and clear comprehension, *sampajañña*, which highlights the degree to which equanimity is related to full awareness and wisdom. In sum, then, *upekkhā* is an equanimity that “looks at” or “looks upon”, *upa + iḥṣ* not an indifference that looks away.

References

1. M. Maithrimurthi: *Wohllullen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999: 140, notes that a similar ten-fold analysis of *upekṣā* can be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi-Vyākhyā*, *mdo 'grel yi* 133b8 and 135a3.
2. H.B. Aronson: *Love and Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism*, Delhi: Motilal, 1986: 89. Cf. also B. Stoler Miller: “On cultivating the immeasurable change of heart: The Buddhist brahmavihāra formula”, in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* vol. 7, 1979: 210, who points out that “joy and impartiality further intensify and extend the scope and power of love and compassion”.
3. Nyanaponika: *The Four Sublime States*, Kandy: BPS, 1993: 16.
4. H.B. Aronson: “Equanimity (Upekkhā) in Theravāda Buddhism”, *Studies in Pali and Buddhism*, Delhi: B.R. Publ., 1979: 8.
5. Further stories related to his development of equanimity in former lives are noted in *Vism.* 302.
6. For more detailed examination of this discourse cf. Harvey B. Aronson, 1984: “Buddhist and Non-buddhist Approaches to the Sublime Attitudes (brahma-vihāra)”, in *Buddhist Studies in Honor of Hammalava Saddhatissa*, Sri Lanka, 1984: 19ff.
7. G.M. Nagao: “Tranquil Flow of Mind: An Interpretation of Upekā”, in *Indianisme et Bouddhisme*, Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1980: 249, draws attention to a passage in the *Saṃdhinirmocana*, according to which in the context of a similar exposition the *upekṣā-nimitta* stands for effortlessness.
8. Cf. also *S.* IV, 232, which explicitly refers to worldly types of equanimity, *gehasitāupekkhā*, and equanimity based on renunciation, *nekkhammasitāupekkhā*, as types of feeling, *vedanā*.
9. Cf. also *S.* IV, 114, which speaks of sense-objects that are a basis for equanimity, *upekkhāṭṭhāniya*, which then lead to the arising of neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant feeling, *adukkhamasukhāvedanā*.
10. R. Gethin: *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, Leiden: Brill, 1992: 159.

11. N. Katz: "Does the 'Cessation of the World' Entail the Cessation of Emotions? The Psychology of the Arahant", in *Pāli Buddhist Review*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1979: 56, clarifies that "Buddhist detachment means the non-reference of feeling to self, not merely the cultivation of a hedonic or emotively banal neutrality".

UPOSATHA. Derived from the Sanskrit word *upavasatha*, the Pāli term *uposatha* denotes a ceremony to be performed by the Buddhist clergy on the 14th or 15th day of the half-month and by the laity on the 8th and 14th or 15th days of the half-month and on certain special days (*pātihāriya-pakkha*). In Buddhist Sanskrit the term takes the form *upośadha* (sometimes also given as *pośadha* or *pośatha*). In Jaina Sanskrit it occurs as *pausadha* or *pośadha* while in Ardha Māgadhī it occurs as *posaha*.

The Sanskrit term *upavasatha* literally means 'living close to'. On the day of the ritual the gods are said to descend to the sacrificial room where the sacrificer is observing the religious fast tending the sacred fire¹. It was an ancient Indo-Aryan ritual from Vedic times. This was done by the sacrificer on the eve of the *Darsha* and *Paurṇamāsa* sacrifices, performed respectively on the new-moon and the full-moon days in preparation for it. The performance is said to purify the sacrificer. The *Śatapatha Brāhmana* says that the sacrificer spends the time on this day in the sacrificial chamber in full or semi fast. According to the *Āruneya Upanishad* the sacrificer should complete these penances on this day but the Brahmin *Sanyāsins* should chant the *Upanishads* or the *Āraṇyakas*².

According to Monier Williams³ *upavasatha* is a fast day, especially the day preceding the *Soma* sacrifice. It is the period of preparation for the *Soma* sacrifice. With the observance of religious fasting (*upavāsa*) in Brahmanism is also included abstinence from all sensual gratification, from perfumes, flowers, unguents, ornaments, betel, music, dancing etc. Rhys Davids and William Stede (*PED.* s.v. *uposatha*) confirm that *upavasatha*, from which is derived the Pāli form *uposatha*, denotes the eve of the *Soma* sacrifice, the day of preparation. They go on to say that at the time of the rise of Buddhism the word had come to mean the day preceding four stages, of the moon's waxing

and waning, viz. 1st, 8th, 15th and 23rd nights of the lunar month.

Upavasatha in Non-Vedic Religions Although it originated in the Vedic tradition other non-Vedic religions could not completely ignore its socio-religious significance. They gradually adapted it as a weekly day of religious observance to suit their own religious views. According to Buddhist sources (*Vin.1.101f*) wandering ascetics of heretical sects (*aññatitthiyā paribbājakā*) used to assemble on the 14th, 15th and 8th days of the half month and preach the *dhamma* (*dhammaṃ bhāsati*). Buddhaghosa explains this as speaking on what should be done and what should not be done (*VinA.* 1034). However, it also could mean the reciting or chanting the *dhamma* or discussing the *dhamma*. Consequently many people used to come to their monasteries to listen to the *dhamma*, resulting in gaining in popularity by the heretics. On seeing this situation the Magadhan king, Seniya Bimbisāra, wished that Buddhist monks also should gather on these days and intimated his wish to the Buddha. Having considered the king's wish the Buddha enjoined that his disciple monks also should assemble on the 8th, 14th or the 15th days of the half-month. (see below for subsequent developments).

The story of the origin of the *uposatha* (*pośadha*) ceremony given in the Mūla Sarvāstivāda Vinaya texts differs from the Pāli tradition. Accordingly it was not the Magadhan king Bimbisāra but a group of lay devotees of Rājagruha who were instrumental in the initiation of the ceremony. These lay devotees who were on their way to the Buddha, as the time was not opportune to visit the Buddha, decided to visit first the monastery of a group of heretical recluses. In their discussions with them the Buddhist lay devotees found that there were three practices, viz. *niśadyā*, *kriyā* and *pośadha* observed by the heretical sects but not found in the Buddhist practice. Thus when they met the Buddha at the proper time they reported all the conversation they had with the heretics and requested him to enjoin his disciples too to observe these three practices. The Buddha agreed. The Buddha explained *niśadyā* as meditation (*yoga*), especially the meditation on the constituent elements of the body. For this he also recommended a meditation hall (*prahāṇa-sālā* or *pradhāṇasālā*) with all facilities. By *kriyā* is meant the selection of a suitable monk to look after the meditators (*prahāṇa pratijāgrako bhikṣu*).

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