

I, 135). That is, to speak of a 'chariot' does not refer to a substantial entity apart from the parts of which the chariot is composed. Yet, the term 'chariot' is certainly meaningful and there is nothing wrong or false about it. The parts of the chariot by themselves, if just spread out on the ground, do not make up a chariot. Only the functional assembly of these parts that makes it possible to drive becomes a 'chariot'. Thus the term 'chariot', or else a 'being', can perfectly well be used to express truth, provided one does not fall into the two extremes of either reifying it as a substantial entity or else believing that such concepts need to be entirely dispensed with.

As part of its pragmatic use of *vohāra* as commonly used ways of speech, early Buddhism also recognizes that there are limits to what can be expressed through the medium of spoken words. When questioned after the counterpart to *Nibbāna*, the nun Dhammadinnā made it clear that such a query goes beyond what can be given an answer, since *Nibbāna* is the final goal (*M. I*, 304). In a similar vein, when asked about the future destiny of an awakened one, according to a verse in the *Sutta Nipāta* the Buddha explained:

*Atthaṅgatassa na pamāṇam atthi,
yena naṃ vajju taṃ tassa n' atthi,
sabbesu dhammesu samūhatesu,
samūhatā vādapathā pi sabbe.*

"There is no measure for one who has gone out,
That by which one could speak of him no longer
exists,
When all phenomena have come to an end,
Then all pathways for speech have also come to
an end." (*Sn*. 1076).

Anālayo

References

- 1 For an examination of these two senses in Sanskrit and Chinese texts see Bapat: "Vohāra, Vyāhāra, Vyavahāra", *Sanskrit and Indological Studies*, Delhi 1975: 27-33.
- 2 Jayatilleke: *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, Delhi 1980: 334.
- 3 Kalupahana: *The Buddha's Philosophy of Language*, Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha 1999: 81-82 explains that "the conception of two truths, the conventional and the ultimate ... in spite of the total absence of such a dichotomy in the early discourses, the interpreters ... who relied heavily on the commentaries of Buddhaghosa have continued to attribute two truths to the Buddha himself".
- 4 According to Kalupahana op.cit.: 83, "these two types of discourses have nothing to do with conventional and ultimate truths".
- 5 Thus in the thought-world of early Buddhism there seems to be little basis for the distinction drawn by Nāṇatiloka: *Guide through the Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, Kandy 1983: 2 between "philosophically incorrect 'conventional' every day language (*vohāra-vacana*)" and the *Abhidhamma* which employs "terms true in the absolute sense (*paramattha-dhamma*)". In fact, even the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* recognizes that *sammutikathā* is as true as *paramatthakathā*, *KhvA*. 36. Hence, as pointed out by Jayatilleke op. cit.: 365, the notion that the former is somehow wrong is a late development.
- 6 Nāṇananda: *Concept and Reality*, Kandy 1986: 44.
- 7 Kalupahana op.cit.: IV.

VOSSAGGA, stands for "letting go", in the sense of relinquishing, forsaking, or renouncing. Similar to the closely related *paṇissagga*, "giving up", (which will also be discussed in the present article), *vossagga* has a considerable scope of activity in early Buddhism. Both terms can be seen to throw into relief a central theme that underlies the path to liberation from its outset to its final completion, namely the need to quite literally "let go" of any clinging whatsoever.

Vossagga in a relatively mundane sense is part of a set of recommendations given in the *Siṅgālovāda Sutta*, according to which a householder should hand over authority to his wife, *issariyavossagga* (*D. III*, 190), and grant leave to his workers at the right time, *samaye vossagga* (*D. III*, 191). These practical instructions already involve at a deeper sense of *vossagga*, since in both instances what has to be let go off is control, whether this is in household affairs by handing over authority to the wife, or in labour matters by allowing the workers to take their leave. The desire to control that might render such letting go a difficult task is simply a particular prominent manifestation of clinging to a sense of 'I'. Hence even with such mundane types of *vossagga*, as in the

present instance, a step is already taken in the direction of what according to early Buddhism needs above all to be given up: clinging to a sense of 'I'.

A correlate to clinging to an 'I' notion is the sense of ownership towards people, goods and possessions by grasping these as 'mine'. To gradually undermine this sense of ownership, *vossagga* is repeatedly recommended in the early discourses. Letting go of grasping at one's possessions leads to generosity, which manifests by "delighting in letting go", *vossaggarato*, in the sense of "delighting in giving and sharing", *dānaṣaṇṇivihāgarato* (S. V, 395). To be willing to let go in this way will become a source for a good reputation (A. I, 226) and lead to a heavenly rebirth (A. IV, 266). Having undertaken such letting go in the form of generosity in an earlier life was one out of the factors due to which *Sakka* was reborn as the ruler in the heaven of the Thirty-three (S. I, 228). The same form of letting go through generosity is also a clear token of faith for a Buddhist disciple (A. I, 150), in fact such generosity even features in listings of the four aspects of stream-entry, *sotāpattiyaṅga*, (S. V, 397). Having undertaken such letting go of one's possessiveness can then also be turned into an object of meditation, when one practices recollection of one's own generosity (A. III, 287).

This does not yet exhaust the relevance of *vossagga* to meditation practice. According to the canonical definition of the faculty of concentration, *samādhindriya*, it is by "having made letting go the object" of one's mind that "one gains concentration and one-pointedness of the mind", *vossaggārammaṇaṃ karitvā labhati samāधिṃ, vossaggārammaṇaṃ karitvā labhati samāधिṃ, labhati cittassa ekaggataṃ*. (S. V, 198). The passage that offers this definition continues with the standard description of the four *jhānas*, thereby indicating that the benefits of such letting go cover the whole gamut of concentrative depth of the mind. In relation to the development of concentration, to let go would stand for letting go of concern with the world of the senses, first of all, and at more progressive stages of the practice also for letting go of the subjective sense of 'I', since it is only when this sense of 'I' goes into abeyance, allowing for a subjective experience of a merger between observing subject and observed meditative object, that entry into *jhāna* becomes possible. Preconditions for developing such letting go into deep meditative absorption are faith, energy and mindfulness (S. V, 225).

Vossagga also has a significant contribution to make in regard to the development of insight. This role comes to the fore in those passages that describe how the seven factors of awakening, *bojjhaṅga*, are to be developed in order to lead to knowledge and liberation. Such development of the factors of awakening should be undertaken based on seclusion, dispassion and cessation, culminating in letting go, *vossaggapariṇāmiṃ* (e.g. M. III, 88). The same set - being based on seclusion, dispassion and cessation, and culminating in letting go - is relevant not only for the development of the seven factors of awakening, but also for developing the five faculties, *indriya*, the five powers, *bala*, and for the practice of the noble eightfold path (e.g. S. IV, 365-368).²

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* enumerates five types of *vossagga* developed in regard to each factor of the noble eightfold path with the break-through to liberating insight (Ps. II, 221):

- (1) letting go by suppression, *vikkhambhana-vossagga*,
- (2) letting go by substitution of opposites, *tadaṅgavossagga*,
- (3) letting go by cutting off, *samucchedavossagga*,
- (4) letting go by tranquillization, *paṭippassaddhi-vossagga*,
- (5) letting go as an escape, *nissaraṇavossagga*.

The first of these, letting go by suppression, stands for the suppression of the hindrances; letting go by substitution of opposites stands for replacing the factors of the wrong path with those of the noble eightfold path; letting go by cutting off stands for cutting off defilements with the supramundane path; letting go by tranquillization refers to the supramundane fruit; and letting go as an escape represents *Nibbāna*.

In addition to distinguishing between these different types of *vossagga* related to the culmination point of the path, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* also depicts the compass of *vossagga* in relation to the previous stages of the path of meditative development. According to its description, the theme of 'letting go' is relevant to each of the hindrances, which should be let go of by developing their opposites. Thus renunciation, for example, is the way to let go of sensual desire, *nekkhammena kāmacchandaṃ vossajjatīti vossaggo* (Ps. II, 245). Implementation of the same basic principle of 'letting go' then is of continuous

relevance for the development of the four *jhānas*, of the four immaterial attainments, for the growth of insight into impermanence etc., and for attaining the four supramundane paths, where with the attainment of the path of *arahant*-ship one lets go of all defilements, *arahattamaggena sabbakilese vossajjati*.

In this way, the discourses and the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* highlight in complementary ways the continuous relevance of *vossagga* in regard to any stage of the path. The same appears to be the case for *paṭinissagga*, "giving up". Before exploring the range of implications of *paṭinissagga*, however, it needs to be noted that a discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* makes a point of specifying that not all forms of 'giving up' are recommendable. The type of giving up that leads to an increase in unwholesomeness should be avoided, and only the giving up that leads to an increase in wholesomeness should be undertaken (*A. V*, 192). The same is certainly also the case for 'letting go', *vossagga*. This much can be gathered from the *Vibhaṅga*'s definition of heedlessness, *paṃāda*, which speaks of 'letting go' of the mind in regard to the five strands of sensual pleasures, *pañcasu kāmāgūnesu cittassa vossaggo* (*Vibh.* 350). Evidently, such 'letting go' is not recommendable. Thus neither 'letting go' nor 'giving up' are to be practiced indiscriminately. Instead, both should be combined with a clear understanding of their purpose: increase in wholesome qualities and removal of unwholesome qualities.

While the term *vossagga* occurs more frequently in recommendations to let go of material possessions through practising generosity, *paṭinissagga* makes its appearance often in relation to the need to give up views. Thus various views about the past and the future are better given up (*M. II*, 235); and the whole of the *Sallekha Sutta* sets out on the theme of giving up certain views, *etāsaṃ diṭṭhinaṃ paṭinissaggo* (*M. I*, 40); a theme also prominent in the treatment given to views in the *Dīghanakha Sutta* (*M. I*, 499). The profundity of this injunction becomes apparent in the concluding section of the *Dīghanakha Sutta*, according to which Sāriputta reached full liberation on realizing that the Buddha's recommendation implied giving up all those things through penetrative insight, *tesaṃ tesam kira no Sugato dhammānaṃ abhiññā paṭinissagam āha* (*M. I*, 501).

A company where righteous speech prevails, *dhammavādīnīparisā*, is one whose members are able

to 'give up' their views instead of insisting on them dogmatically (*A. I*, 76). Those who dogmatically hold on to their views, *sandiṭṭhiparāṃāsī ādhānaggāhī*, will find it difficult to implement such giving up, *duppaṭinissaggī* (e.g. *M. I*, 96). The importance of being able to 'give up' one's view is also reflected in several *saṅghādisesa* and *pācittiya* regulations in the *Vinaya*, which deal with monks or nuns who hold on to views that are mistaken or even have the potential of leading to a schism.³

In the context of actual meditation, *paṭinissagga* makes its appearance as the last in the altogether sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing, preceded by contemplation of impermanence, fading away and cessation, *anicca, virāga* and *nirodha* (*M. III*, 83). A similar series of progressive steps in the development of insight can, on being applied to feelings in general, lead to freedom from clinging to anything in the world and hence to liberation (*M. I*, 251). In relation to pleasant feelings such *paṭinissagga* will lead to overcoming the underlying tendency to lust, *rāgānusaya*, in relation to painful feelings to overcoming the underlying tendency to irritation, *paṭighānusaya*, and in relation to neutral feelings to overcoming the underlying tendency to ignorance, *avijjānusayo* (*S. IV*, 211). Hence whatever feelings are experienced, the task is to contemplate their impermanence and eventually 'give up' all involvement with and attachment to them.

Not only in relation to feelings, but anything in the world of experience is best faced with *paṭinissagga*. This can be seen in the *Rāgapeyyālas* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, which list an impressive range of practices that are related to the basic principle of giving up, *paṭinissagga*. After enumerating a fairly comprehensive set of defilements, the *Rāgapeyyālas* indicate that to 'give up' these defilements can be undertaken through developing:

- *samatha* and *vipassanā* (*A. I*, 100);
- emptiness, signless and undirected concentration (*A. I*, 299);
- the four establishings of mindfulness (*A. II*, 256);
- the four right efforts (*A. II*, 256);
- the four roads to [spiritual] power (*A. II*, 256);
- the five faculties (*A. III*, 277);
- the five powers (*A. III*, 277);
- the six recollections (*A. III*, 452);
- the seven factors of awakening (*A. IV*, 148);

- the noble eightfold path (A. IV, 348);
- the four *jhānas* (A. IV, 465);
- the four *brahmavihāras* (A. V, 360);
- the four immaterial attainments (A. V, 360);
- the eight spheres of transcendence (A. IV, 348);
- the eight liberations (A. IV, 349);
- the attainment of cessation (A. IV, 465);
- and through various types of insight related perceptions (A. III, 277; A. III, 452; A. IV, 148; A. IV, 465; A. V, 310).

Hence *paṭinissagga*, similar to *vossagga*, spans the whole scale of meditative development. Perfecting giving up, then, requires giving up all craving, whereby the mind will be thoroughly liberated, *taṇhā ... paṭinissaggā cittaṃ suvimuttan'ti vuccati* (S. III, 13). Such giving up is the theme of the third noble truth, according to which the eradication of *dukkha* requires 'giving up' craving, *taṇhāya ... paṭinissaggo* (e.g. S. V, 421). It was through such 'giving up' of craving and of any sense of 'I' and 'mine' that the Buddha reached supreme awakening, *tathāgato sabbaso taṇhānaṃ ... paṭinissaggā anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho* (M. I, 6); *tathāgato ... sabbahaṃkāramamaṃkāram ānānusayānaṃ ... paṭinissaggā anupādā vimutto* (M. I, 486).

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* distinguishes between two types of *paṭinissagga* in relation to the breakthrough to liberating insight: giving up through relinquishment, *pariccāgapaṭinissagga*, and giving up through leaping forward, *pakkhandanapaṭinissagga* (Ps. I, 194). A similar distinction in relation to *vossagga* is found in the commentaries, which speak of letting go through relinquishment, *pariccāgavossagga*, and letting go through leaping forward, *pakkhandanavossagga* (MA. I, 85). Whether it be 'letting go' or 'giving up', *pariccāga* refers to relinquishing all aspects of existence, while *pakkhandana* stands for the mind that leaps forward to the experience of *Nibbāna*.

In sum, then, *vossagga* and *paṭinissagga* can be seen to highlight the same theme from complementary perspectives, in that 'letting go' and 'giving up' are of continuous relevance to progress towards liberation. The final goal of such progressive 'letting go' and 'giving up' is but a culmination of the same, as can be seen from one of the epithets used to describe the goal as *sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo*, the "giving up of all substrata" (e.g. M. I, 436). Hence 'letting go' or 'giving

up', if practised wisely in such a way that it results in a growth of wholesome qualities, could be considered a succinct way of representing the central thrust of the teachings of early Buddhism.

... *ādānapaṭinissagge,
anupādāya ye ratā,
khīnāsavājutimanto,
te loke parinibbutā.*

Giving up acquisitiveness,

And delighting in not clinging,

[With] influxes destroyed and brilliant [with wisdom],

These have attained *Nibbāna* in this world (*Dhp.* 89).

Anālāyo

References

- 1 Keeping in mind that the immaterial attainments do not differ from the fourth *jhāna* in terms of concentrative depth of the mind, but only in respect of having more refined objects.
- 2 Cf. in more detail Gethin: *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, Leiden 1992: 162-168.
- 3 *Vin.* III, 173; *Vin.* III, 175; *Vin.* III, 178; *Vin.* III, 184; *Vin.* IV, 135; *Vin.* IV, 218; *Vin.* IV, 236; *Vin.* IV, 238; *Vin.* IV, 239; *Vin.* IV, 241; *Vin.* IV, 294. Another regulation concerned with *paṭinissagga* is when monks are enjoined to give up taking meals at improper times (M. I, 448).

VYĀPĀDA, sometimes spelled *byāpāda*, stands for "ill-will". The negative repercussions of *vyāpāda* are treated from a set of related angles in early Buddhism, wherefore *vyāpāda* makes its appearance in a fair number of categories that describe unwholesome states or tendencies. The present article will begin by surveying occurrences of *vyāpāda* in these categories, followed by turning to its arising, its consequences and the way to overcome it.

Vyāpāda as a Manifestation of Wrong Intention

Vyāpāda is one of the three types of wrong intention, which are the intention of sensuality, *kāmasaṅkappa*, the intention of ill-will, *vyāpādasāṅkappa*, and the intention of harming, *vihimsāsaṅkappa* (e.g. M. III, 73; see also VIHIMSĀ). These three types of intention stand in direct

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BUDDHISM

Founder Editor-in Chief

G. P. MALALASEKERA, M. A., Ph. D., D. Litt., Professor Emeritus

Editor-in Chief

W. G. WEERARATNE, M. A., Ph. D.

VOLUME VIII

FASCICLE 3 : Vācā – Z hong a-han



2009