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(Dasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta

The (Tens) Discourse on “Needless of Intention” | A 10.2

Theme: Spirituality arises naturally with moral virtue

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2013

1 Introduction

1.1 THE CETANĀ'KARAṆĪYA SUTTAS

1.1.1 The 2 Suttas

There are 2 suttas named **Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta**, the “Needless of Intention” Discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, one in the Book of Tens (*Dasaka Nipāta*) and the other in the Book of Elevens (*Ekādasaka Nipāta*). Hence, they have been named as **the (Dasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta** and **the (Ekādasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta** respectively.¹

1.1.2 “Needless of intention”

The term **cetanā'karaṇīya** (= *cetanā akaraṇīya*) refers to our meditative progress beginning with the cultivation of moral virtue, stressing its importance. If we are well grounded in moral virtue, then our meditation will *naturally* progress. This is because moral virtue is about the cultivation of the body and speech.² It is not about wishing, belief, prayer, vows, rituals, or even religion: it is that moral virtue is the basis for mental cultivation and inner peace.³

The Sutta commentary says that the phrase **cetanā,karaṇīya** means “to be done without having thought, considered, mentated” (*na cetetvā kappetvā pakappetvā kātabbām*, AA 5:1). Proper meditation, in other words, is a thought-free process, in the sense that distractions have to do with thoughts, and our efforts should be to let go of all thoughts in due course.⁴ At least, all our thoughts, in a positive sense, should be directed to our meditation object.⁵

In other words, we need to suspend all deliberating, which is, after all, thinking. Letting go of all thinking, our mind begins to settle ever more fully and deeply so that it can directly *feel* or experience true reality. Initially, we simply give our full attention to a suitable mental object, such the breath. As we watch the breath, it becomes calmer and still, so does our mind.

This means that if we are morally virtuous, our efforts in meditation would work out naturally by way of conditionality (one wholesome state leading to another), without any need for thinking. Indeed, in meditation, any kind of thinking would prevent us from attaining samadhi, although its proper use (ie, by directing the mind) is necessary in the cultivation of wisdom (*paññā*) and spiritual powers (*abhiññā*).

1.2 REVULSION AND DISPASSION

They both contain essentially the same subject matter. In the former, the phrase “the revulsed and dispassionate” (*nibbinda viratta*)—the adjectival forms of “revulsion and dispassion” (*nibbida, virāga*)—is a single compound (a dvandva), totalling 10 links [§1]. However, the compound is split into its compon-

¹ A 11.2/5:312 f (SD 33.4).

² On moral virtue and training, see *Sīla samādhi paññā*, SD 21.6 esp (1+2).

³ See **Iṭṭha S** (A 5.43/3:47-49), SD 47.2.

⁴ Of course, proper use of thoughts, memories and images can be useful, as in cultivation of lovingkindness: see **SD 38.5** Lovingkindness as engagement. Ultimately, however, we need to let go of all such thought-based process in order to attain mental freedom. On “mental freedom” (*ceto, vimutti*), see SD 38.5 (8.3).

⁵ On “directed” meditation, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.4).

ents, so that “the revulsed” (*nibbinda*) and “the dispassionate” (*viratta*) are treated separately, making a total of 11 links. [§1 (1)]

1.3 THE CETANĀ'KARAṆĪYA LINKS

The **Parivāra**, a late Sinhala appendix to the Vinaya, applies the 11 links of the *cetanā'karaṇīya cycle* to moral training.⁶ This Parivāra formula is, in fact, a summary of the 3 trainings in moral virtue, mental cultivation and wisdom.⁷

1.4 BREAKING THE VICIOUS CYCLE

1.4.1 Dependent ending

The 10 links of **the (Dasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta** [§1] are also found as the 11 links of dependent ending in **the Upanisā Sutta** (S 12.23).⁸ The two cycles only differ in their respective starting-points. While the Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta cycle starts with “moral virtue” (that is, moral training), the Upanisā Sutta begins with “faith.”

The Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta cycle begins with moral virtue, which is the basis for non-guilt-feeling, which in turn leads to faith. From here on, the two cycles are identical. By *faith* here is meant “wise faith,” which entails our keeping to a moral life (since we have faith in the teaching).

The two cycles then seem to end differently, but here it should be noted that the Cetanā'karaṇīya cycle deals only with moral training and mental cultivation. Hence, we can assume that the last link of the Upanisā Sutta (“the destruction of the influxes”) is implied in the Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta. [§1 (2)]

Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta (A 10.2)

moral virtue

non-guilt-feeling →	faith	is the necessary condition for	joy
gladness	same	is the necessary condition for	zest
zest	same	is the necessary condition for	tranquillity
tranquillity	same	is the necessary condition for	happiness
happiness	same	is the necessary condition for	concentration
concentration	same	is the necessary condition for	knowledge and vision of true reality
knowledge and vision of true reality	same	is the necessary condition for	revulsion [disenchantment]
revulsion	same	is the necessary condition for	dispassion [letting go]
dispassion	same	is the necessary condition for	freedom,
(freedom)	freedom	is the necessary condition for	the knowledge of the destruction (of the mental influxes)

Diagram 1.4 The *nibbidā* formula applied to the 2 cycles

⁶ Par 12.2 @ V 5:164,26-32.

⁷ On the 3 trainings, see *Sīla samādhi paññā*, SD 21.6.

⁸ S 12.23.26/2:29-32 @ SD 6.12.

1.4.2 Revulsion. Both the Suttas [1.4] have “revulsion” (*nibbidā*) in the same position in the 11-link sequence [Diag 1.4]. The well known ***nibbidā formula***⁹ describes the spiritual turning-point to sainthood as follows:

it conduces [leads] to utter revulsion, to dispassion, to ending (of suffering), to peace [stilling], to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana.¹⁰

etaṃ ekanta,nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhismāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattanti. (D 1:189; S 5:82, 179, 255, 361; A 3:83, 4:143, 5:216)

Here, to be “revulsed” means to be discontented (*ukkaṇṭhati*) with worldly reality, and no more wanting to be defiled or deluded by it in anyway. This revulsion marks the culmination of insight, just before the attainment of the supramundane path.

1.4.3 The 3 trainings. Both these cycles are based on **the 3 trainings**: moral training (found in *moral virtue, non-guilt-feeling and faith*). All the other intervening links (*gladness, zest, tranquillity, happiness and concentration*) constitute concentration training (that is, meditation). Wisdom training is found in *knowledge and vision of true reality, revulsion and dispassion*. Finally, there is *freedom*, stated in the Upanisā Sutta cycle, and implied in the Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta cycle.

1.5 THE 11 LINKS AND THE AWAKENING-FACTORS

1.5.1 These 10 or 11 links [1.4], as we have seen, is mostly about meditation [1.1.2]. We can in fact colate these links with the 7 awakening-factors, which are about meditation progress, thus:

The awakening-factors

(1) mindfulness	<i>sati sambojjhaṅga</i>	} the 11 links (A 10.2) moral virtue (non-guilt-feeling) gladness zest tranquillity & happiness concentration
(2) dharma-investigation	<i>dhamma,vicaya sambojjhaṅga</i>	
(3) effort	<i>virīya sambojjhaṅga</i>	
(4) zest	<i>pīti sambojjhaṅga</i>	
(5) tranquillity	<i>passaddhi sambojjhaṅga</i>	
(6) samadhi (concentration)	<i>samādhi sambojjhaṅga</i>	
(7) equanimity	<i>upekkhā sambojjhaṅga</i>	} revulsion dispassion freedom the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes

1.5.2 The 11 links of the Cetanā’karaṇīya Suttas are a summary of the 3 trainings [1.4.3], of which moral training and wisdom training are implied in the awakening-factor series (which deals with meditation training). Hence, the Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta cycle starts with **moral virtue** (*sīla*) or the training in moral virtue (*sīla,sikkhā*).¹¹

⁹ On the *nibbidā* formula, see ***Nibbidā***, SD 20.1.

¹⁰ These are also the 7 criteria for the true Dharma-Vinaya (**dhamma,vinaya.jānana,lakkhaṇa*). For other connections, see PED: *nibbidā*.

¹¹ On the 3 trainings, see see ***Sīla samādhi paññā***, SD 21.6.

This is not stated in the 7 awakening-factors as they deal exclusively with meditation progress, and as such, moral virtue is implicit, as there will be no progress in meditation training (*samādhi, sikkhā*) without a foundation of moral training.

From here on, we will look at how the two sets are related. The awakening-factors are listed here in **bold**, while the links are underscored. Common terms are given in **SMALL CAPITALS**.

1.5.3 Parallel to the awakening-factor of **mindfulness** (*sati sambojjhaṅga*) is the link of non-guilt-feeling (*avippaṭṭisāra*), on account of moral virtue. In other words, to be truly mindful, we need to be clear of guilt-feeling, which in turn comes from immoral or unwholesome conduct. This also entails a heart of lovingkindness, of unconditional acceptance of self and others. Lovingkindness empowers us to keep the precepts fully,¹² which in turn frees us from guilt-feeling, that is, a sense of guilt over things done or undone, or belief in some dogma where guilt-feeling is defined in terms of obedience or submission to some kind of eternal and external power.¹³

1.5.4 Non-guilt-feeling helps in the arising of **gladness** (*pāmojja*), a joy that arises from understanding the Dharma and our purpose in life, called *dharmā, veda* and *atthā, veda*, respectively. *Dharmā, veda* is “inspired knowledge in the Dharma,” while *atthā, veda* means “inspired knowledge of the spiritual goal.”¹⁴ Through further mindfulness, we refine and heighten gladness into zest (*pīti*), which significantly energizes our practice and life further.

1.5.5 **ZEST** can be described as “joyful interest,” that is, the love and capacity for dedication and industry in our spiritual work, or any worthwhile work, simply because we enjoy what we are doing. This joy also allows an undistracted attention in our work and meditation. Such a focus allows us to be mindful of the very mental process that moves our actions. The suttas called this **dharmā-investigation** (*dharmā, vicāya*), that is, reflecting on whatever we experience as being impermanent and so on.

1.5.6 As already mentioned, zest energizes us so that we simply enjoy our work [1.5.5]. In other words, we are filled with **effort** or energy (*virīya*). This, in turn, intensifies the zest, so that it is a kind of self-fuelling mental energizer. The mind, as it were, knows clearly what to do, and so directs the whole body in that joyful direction. Of course, if we are new to such a great burst of joyful energy, we need to listen more carefully to the body, giving it enough rest, answering nature’s calls, and so on.

1.5.7 All this gentle invigorating flow of mental energy gives our mind a great sense of **TRANQUILLITY** (*passadhi*). Here, tranquillity refers to the effect of stilling of the “mind-body” (*nāma, kāya*), that is, that part of the mind dealing the 5 sense-door processes. When all these 5 doors are fully “closed,” only the mind-door needs to be closed, before **CONCENTRATION** (*samādhi*) arises.¹⁵ The two terms *tranquillity* and *concentration* are the same in both the awakening-factors and the 11 links.

1.5.8 The concentrated mind is calm and clear. While we are in meditation or dhyana, we experience profound bliss. Having emerged from it, our minds are so blissful and clear that we understand why physical or sensual pleasures neither last nor really gratifies. In fact, if our wisdom is clear enough, we expe-

¹² See **SD 38.5** Lovingkindness limits karma.

¹³ On lovingkindness as a divine abode, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5. On how lovingkindness limits karma, see SD 2.10 (2).

¹⁴ See SD 21.5 (1.2).

¹⁵ This refers to the *vimutt’āyatana* pericope: see SD 10.15 (4.4.2).

rience revulsion (*nibbidā*), that is, keeping away from whatever brings us suffering (those situations rooted in craving and ignorance).

Understandably, such a state of mind is still and balanced, or enjoying **equanimity** (*upekkhā*). In the language of the 11 links, this would embrace dispassion (*virāga*) (we have let go of unwholesome states of body, speech, and mind, at least temporarily). Hence, we are freed: this freedom (*vimutti*), when properly cultivated, in due course, leads to “ending” (*khaya*), more fully, the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*), that is, arhathood.¹⁶

2 Translating the Dharma (a brief note)

2.0 Here, we will briefly examine the nature of Buddhist translation, word analysis and usage. In the first part, we examine **the dynamics of Buddhist translation**, especially the translating of the early suttas [2.1]. In the second part, we will discuss how **the 4 analytical skills** (*paṭisambhidā*) help us “translate” the Dharma into experiential truth [2.2]. And lastly, we will examine the **word analysis** and **word usage** [2.3] of an important term in this Sutta, that is, *vippaṭisāra*.

2.1 DYNAMICS OF BUDDHIST TRANSLATION

2.1.1 Literal meaning of “translation”

2.1.1.1 Buddhism is a spirituality of **translation** in both the literal and the figurative senses of the word. The definitions of “translation” here are from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) (CD version 3.1). Here are some brief notes of the nature of Buddhist translation.

Literally, translation means “to turn from one language into another; ‘to change into another language retaining the sense’ (Johnson’s Dictionary)]; to render; also, to express in other words, to paraphrase.”

2.1.1.2 There are three vital components of sutta translation.

- (1) As translators, we must know well the host or source language, say Pali, in the case of the suttas preserved by the Theravāda;
- (2) We must know the meaning of what he is translating; and
- (3) We must know well the target language, that is, the language of our audience, which would here be English.

2.1.1.3 One difficulty still remains. We also need to understand both the “dictionary” meaning of the word, whether this is literal or figurative, that we are translating. Then, we render what we have understood into idiomatic English (or simply “good” English). In this way, we translate the suttas from Pali or a related language into English while “retaining the sense,” as stated in the Johnson quote in the OED.

2.1.2 Figurative meaning of “translation”

2.1.2.1 Figuratively, the OED defines “translate” as “to interpret, explain; to expound the significance of (conduct, gestures, etc); also, to express (one thing) in terms of another.” This translation refers to everyday English, that is, when we “translate” or explain the significance of what someone has written, said, gestured or conveyed in some way. We can also, for example, explain a point by resorting

¹⁶ For a similar analysis, see Gethin 2001:154 f, 170 f

to an analogy or figure of speech or some other literary device or communication skill, such as presenting our understanding of Buddhism by way of a story, poetry, art, drama, and so on.

2.1.2.2 For our purposes here (in terms of sutta translation and teaching), however, we need to understand the meaning and significance of the sutta, or at least the passage, so that we are able to present or explain to for the benefit of an audience, especially a Buddhist one. Even with such an audience, we should ideally be able to convey the sense of the teaching, sutta or passage so that the audience whether of neophytes, or learned practitioners, or a mixed audience. Then, there is the non-Buddhist audience, or a motley audience of a public talk.

2.2 TRANSLATING AS CLARIFYING

2.2.1 The 4 analytic insights

2.2.1.1 Here, we will work to apply **the 4 analytic insights** (as far as we understand or possess them) to Buddhist translation beyond sutta conversion to the enterprise of “translating” the Dharma into experiential truth, into something we can see directly for ourself, even if in glimpses, for the sake of personal awakening. The 4 analytic insights are as follows:¹⁷

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) the analytic insight in effects, | <i>attha,paṭisambhidā</i> |
| (2) the analytic insight in causes, | <i>dhamma,paṭisambhidā</i> |
| (3) the analytic insight in language, and | <i>nirutti,paṭisambhidā</i> |
| (4) the analytic insight in ready wit [perspicacity]. | <i>paṭibhāna,paṭisambhidā</i> |

When translating a sutta, we must first know what each of the key words or expressions denotes, its “dictionary” meaning. At same time, we must be mindful whether it also connotes anything more or different, that is, we need to read “between the lines.” To tease out either of these meanings, denotative or connotative, we must know the context of the teaching.

Even when preparing for meditation, or reviewing it after meditating, we should use the right language (*nirutti*), by way of a reflection or soliloquy, to remind ourself what we should avoid and what we should do. Back in meditation, we perspicaciously apply what we have learned and steadily let go of our thoughts so that we attain some level of mental focus. This is the analytic insight of ready wit or perspicacity towards our meditation. With the application of the 4 analytic insight, we have translated the Dharma into something comprehensible and practicable.

2.2.1.2 The context of **the (Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta** (A 10.2), for example, is that of meditation. Then, there is the recurring mention of the term “**intention**” (*cetanā*). From the context, it is clear that the intention here is a mental one. Again from the context, we can deduce that, on a simple level, *intention* here can also refer to any kind of thinking (*vitakka*) or pondering (*vicāra*), but it is also driven by the desire to attain a state, to have something.

Now, we have at least two problems here: those of (1) thinking and meditation [2.2.2], and (2) the presence of desire in meditation [2.2.3]. How do these affect the meditation? Once again let us use the 4 analytic insights to translate the Dharma into a comprehensible teaching.¹⁸

¹⁷ For details, see SD 28.4 (4).

¹⁸ For a more detailed study on the dynamics of Buddhist translation discussed here, see the 4 analytic insights, SD 28.4 (4)

2.2.2 The 5 mental hindrances

2.2.2.1 All the **5 mental hindrances** (*nīvaraṇa*)¹⁹ to meditation—sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and spiritual doubt—are manifestations of thoughts. How and why does thinking hinder meditation? In simple terms, sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*) is where our mind is pre-occupied with the pleasures of the senses. Whenever the eye sees, the mind is drawn into what it sees that being desirable. Our thoughts are seeking, grasping and clinging to such objects, so that it is distracted. The same happens with experiences with the other four sense-faculties.

2.2.2.2 Once the mind starts desiring, it will set apart and dislike what is not desirable. The mind is preoccupied with what the sense-objects connote for us. When we perceive something as pleasurable, we are drawn to it with thoughts like, “I want this!” “I want more of this!” And when thoughts that seem to block or diminish that pleasure, we think, “I don’t want that!” “I hate that!” and so on. Even after the actual sense-stimulus has ended, the mind replays those enticing moments. When the mind gets caught up in such a distraction, then it is unable to focus on anything else, least of all, the breath or lovingkindness.

2.2.2.3 On the other hand, we may already be meditating, but after a while, we are distracted by a thought. Say, we hear a sound. Instead of simply accepting simply for what it denotes—a sound—we go on to wonder what it is, where it comes from, who is making it, and so on. This is a cognitive distraction. Or, we become upset because of the noise, we complain in our inner chatter, and we feel angry. This is affective distraction. We can be similarly by the intrusion of any of physical sense-experience (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch). We think about our experience, which multiply into many other thoughts: a mental proliferation.²⁰

2.2.2.4 So we can see how thinking is great distraction to meditation. In fact, it is the greatest distraction to meditation. The reason is a simple one: thinking links up the internal sense-faculty to its external sense-object. Thinking, as it were, separates the sense-faculty and sense-object, even though in personal experience, both occurs within our mind. We think there are some much more pleasure to that sense-object outside, so our mind keeps running around and exploring the outside: we are literally “out of our mind”!

The best way to bring the mind back is to start by disengaging it from being obsessed with the external sense-stimuli. In other words, we should reflect that such an experience is “mind-made,” and as such, is impermanent. Then, we go on to “disown” them: “This is not mine! This is not good for me! Let it go!”²¹

2.2.3 Desire and meditation

2.2.3.1 Here, we present an apparent contradiction. **The (Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta** essentially states that to progress in meditation, we should not (*akaraṇīya*) have any intentions (*cetanā*) during meditation. In other words, we should let go of our thoughts and be thought-free [2.2.1.3]. And yet, there are discourses such as **the Chanda Samādhi Sutta** (S 51.13) that state that we must have “desire”

¹⁹ See *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1.

²⁰ See **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (2).

²¹ On “not owning the pain,” it, letting go of attractions and distractions, see **Amba, Jaṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 61,17/1:419), SD 3.10. On meditation as renunciation, see **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3/3:9-12), SD 10.12; **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7); **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2).

n (*chanda*), which will drive us wholesomely to attain inner peace. Don't these two teachings contradict one another?

2.2.3.2 Now let us apply the the first two analytic insights—those in causes (*dhamma,paṭisambhidā*) and in effects (*attha,paṭisambhidā*)—here. Insight in causes show us *what* words mean, and here the denoted terms are “intention” (*cetanā*) and “desire” (*chanda*). Intention here connotes (includes) the sense of desire, too. So, the problem seems to be that the first Sutta says “No” to desire, while the second says “Yes.” Apparently, we have a contradiction here.

Now that we know intention connotes “desire,” we should examine **desire** (*chanda*): what does it mean or denote. What can we directly tease out from this term. We have, in fact, **the Chanda Samādhi Sutta** (S 51.13), “the discourse on the concentration due to enthusiasm,” which clearly defines *chanda* (“enthusiasm” or “desire”) as **the 4 right efforts**, that is, we brings forth the desire for (1) the restraint of unarisen unwholesome states, (2) the abandoning of arisen unwholesome states, (3) the cultivating of unarisen wholesome states, and (4) the maintaining of arisen wholesome states.²² [2.2.4.3]. In fact, “desire” (*chanda*), “effort” (*vāyāma*), “energy” (*virīya*) and “striving” (*padhāna*) are all terms for effort (*virīya*).

Now we know that here “desire” in the context of meditation has a good sense. One more problem remains: don't the right efforts entails thinking? If there is thinking during meditation, then, surely we would not be able to progress smoothly and experience its full benefits [2.2.2]. We will examine this problem in the next section.

2.2.4 Thinking and meditation

2.2.4.1 Let us now examine **the “thinking” problem**. We have noted that “desire” in the meditation context here means the 4 right efforts [2.2.3]. To exert any right effort we must have a wholesome intention, but it is still *intention*, which here involves a lot of thinking. The solution to this problem lies in **timing**. When do we review what went wrong in our meditation? When do we work on the strategies to improve our practice? When do we apply the right efforts?

The rule that **there is no thinking during deep meditation (especially dhyana)** is quite clear.²³ Thinking occurs when the mind engages with any of the 6 external sense-objects (*bāhiddh'āyatana*): sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought.²⁴ Notice here that although “external” (*bāhiddha*) denotes literally “outside,” in the case of the 5 physical sense-objects, but in the case of the 6th sense-object, thoughts, it connotes a figurative sense of “inner,” that is, mental.

In fact, this important connotation applies to all the other 5 sense-objects as well. They are all *internal* in the sense that they are experienced in the mind, as thoughts (*dhamma*), or, more technically, as mind-object-base (*dhamm'āyatana*).²⁵ It may be physical or mental, past, presentm or future, real or imaginary, arising from any of the 5 physical sense-experiences, and from the mind itself.

²² S 51.13/5:268 f @ SD 10.3(3.3). On desire or enthusiasm (*chanda*), see SD 32.2 (1.1). On the 4 *iddhi,pāda*, see SD 10.3

²³ See (**Ekā,dasaka**) **Cetanā'karaṇīya S** (A 11.2), SD 33.3b & **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.5.2). Thinking also does not arise in the attainment of cessation: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21), SD 40a.9.

²⁴ See **Salāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137,5), SD 29.5.

²⁵ Also called “mind-object element” (*dhamma,dhātu*) or “mind-object” (*dhamm'ārammaṇa*). However, in the Abhidhamma, the terminology varies, eg, *mano,dhātu* has a technical sense that distinguishes it from *man'āyatana* and *mano,viññāṇa,dhātu*. **Man'āyatana** is a collective term for the whole consciousness (*viññāṇa*). **Mano,dhātu** refers only to that special element of consciousness which first, at the start of sense-peception, performs the function of advertence to the sense-object, etc (see BDict: mano-dhātu). See also S Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, London, 1996:22-41. See also SD 17.2a (9) The 12 senses.

The mind, in other words, also creates its own realities, and does so most of the time. The mind projects its edited version to overlap or obscure the present moment of the sense-experiences, so that we often sense only the familiar, and even then it is a narrow blinkered vision.

2.2.4.2 When do we work on the strategies to improve our practice? Our first vital task in meditation is to let all the physical sensing settle down, so that we can close all the 5 physical sense-doors, as it were (or switch off the 5 handphones of the senses). This where a good and proper sitting posture is helpful from the start. Then, we direct our attention to the meditation-object, whether it is the breath or lovingkindness, or reflecting on impermanence.

As the (Dasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta reminds us, we cannot “make” the senses settle down. Keeping to the 5 precepts, and restraining our body and speech in a wholesome way, are a vital foundation for mental cultivation. Recalling the good deeds we have done and happy moments in our life further inspire us with the zest to meditate joyfully and growing in bliss. These are some of the strategies we can “do,” or rather, just let happen, as we meditate.

2.2.4.3 When do we apply the right efforts? Once again, the 4 right efforts [2.2.3.2] are as follows:

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|--|------------------------------|
| (1) the effort of <u>restraining</u> of unarisen unwholesome states, | <i>saṃvara</i> |
| (2) the effort of <u>abandoning</u> of arisen unwholesome states, | <i>pahāna</i> |
| (3) the effort of <u>cultivating</u> of unarisen wholesome states, and | <i>bhavanā</i> |
| (4) the effort of <u>maintaining</u> of arisen wholesome states. | <i>anurakkhana</i> [2.2.4.3] |

Briefly, the effort of restraint entails understanding the nature of the 5 mental hindrances [2.2.2]; the effort of abandoning is essentially right thought and right mindfulness,²⁶ filtering away thoughts (“letting go”),²⁷ the perception of impermanence²⁸ and of foulness (the 32 body parts);²⁹ the effort of cultivating is the understanding and practising of the 7 awakening-factors [1.5.1]; and the effort of maintaining is the refining of the preceding, practising wise attention [2.3.5.14], and spiritual friendship.³⁰

From the above list of practices, we can conclude that the 4 right efforts should be practised every waking moment, but especially when we are preparing for meditation, and after that, They also need to be applied during meditation whenever we are distracted or not fully focused in meditation. However, with the attaining of meditative states, the 4 right efforts become even easier to exert.

2.2.4.4 When do we review the difficulties in our meditation? The best time for reviewing our meditation is right after the end of it, before we resume any other more mundane activity. Just after our meditation, our mind is likely to be calm and clear, and we would have a good memory of the difficulties and the progress we have made.

After the meditation, when our thinking mind is back to functioning fully, we will be able to note where we went wrong and what to do about it. Sometimes we may need to consult an experienced teacher; otherwise, we keep on trying various suitable strategies to overcome the difficulties.

²⁶ Right thought [intention] (*sammā saṅkappa*) comprises the thoughts of renunciation, of non-malice and of harmlessness, and right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) is the practice of the 4 focuses of mindfulness: see **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141/24+31). SD 11.11.

²⁷ On letting go of sensual pleasures, see (**Mahānāma**) **Gilāyana S** (S 55.54,6-9). SD 4.10.

²⁸ On the perception of impermanence, see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

²⁹ On the meditation on foulness, see **Kāya,gata,sati S** (M 119), SD 12.21.

³⁰ See **Spiritual friendship**, SD 8.1 + SD 34.1.

The good parts of our meditation—the calm, the bliss, or some deep spiritual experiences—should be mindfully noted so that they inspire us in our future sittings and to be more diligent. However, it is wise never to “want” to attain any good that we have experienced—as taught in the (Dasaka) Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta.

Meditation is an exercise in “letting go,” a spiritual renunciation. If we are diligent in this, we will keep getting one better state after another. Meditation is not merely about attaining great states of calm, bliss, or power, but about self-transformation, so that we awaken in this life itself. Meantime, we better ourselves progressively, while living the moment.

2.2.5 The well-translated Dharma

2.2.5.1 When the 4 analytic insights [2.2.1.1] have been well applied in learning and teaching the Dharma, then that Dharma is said to be “**well-spoken**” (*svākkhata*), because it is presented in all its truth and beauty³¹—“**good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, endowed with meaning and phrasing.**”³² “Well-spoken” refers to the analytic insight in language, while the phrase, “good in the beginning, etc,” to the analytic insight in ready wit or perspicacity. It means that the Dharma now has become an *experience* to us, giving us wisdom and insight into true reality.

When the well-spoken teaching is well-heard and well-practised, it is truly “**visible here and now**” (*sandiṭṭhika*). In other words, we see the Dharma fully expressed, both in “**meaning and phrasing,**” that is, with the analytic insight of the effects (connotation) on account of the analytic insight of causes (denotation).

2.2.5.2 The teaching as “causes” (*dhamma*) here, represented in the “letter” (*vyañjana*), means we have access to the true teaching, the list of conditions which we learn and master for the sake of personal development and spiritual awakening. With our practice, these wholesome causes become teaching as “effects” (*attha*), which also means “benefits” and “the goal,” that is awakening.

When we are fully into our practice of the Dharma, say in meditation, when we have let go of all of our body (the 5 senses) [2.2.4.2], we experience only our mind that reflect itself in a calm and clear way, so that we at once, immediately, taste the truth and beauty, the reality and bliss, of that experience. In this sense, the true Dharma is “**immediate**” (*akālika*), having nothing to do with time (clock time, that is).

2.2.5.3 The Dharma is not merely for the converted, but anyone, especially “an intelligent person, honest, trustworthy, upright,” who studies the Buddha’s true teaching. If he diligently and properly practises that Dharma, he would taste its sweet fruit within even a week. In this sense, the Dharma is “**inviting one to come and see**” (*ehi,passika*). In short, this open invitation benefits us if we have the analytic insights in language and in ready wit. Or, when the teacher to invites us has all the 4 analytic insights (in effects, causes, language and ready wit).

This invitation is valid and efficacious because the Dharma is always “**accessible**” (*opanyika*) to us. We only need to examine its teaching in the letter, as the “causes” or conditions for understanding life and our human state, or the spirit, which opens up and addresses our personal disposition and character, so that we are inspired by a very personal understanding, even though the truth is universal.

³¹ On **beauty and truth**, see SD 40a.1 (8.1.2); as aesthetics, see SD 46.5 (2.4.2); in right livelihood SD 37.8 (2.3); see also Reflection “No views frees,” R255.

³² See SD 40a.1 (8.1.2.3).

2.2.5.4 Since we each are able to see and taste the universal true Dharma for ourself, it is also said “**to be personally known by the wise**” (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*). This means, as already stated above, we should be “an intelligent person, honest, trustworthy, upright,” “Intelligent” here means we are able to think for ourself, especially being courageous in questing to clear our doubts. When we know we have seen the Dharma as right, pointing out our wrong and bad, we are “honest” in accepting it. We would not be devious use sophistry or casuistry, or use any dishonest means of communication and argumentation.

We are “trustworthy” when we keep to our word, so that we may be correct when we are wrong, and when we accept what is right, we do so wholeheartedly so that we can practise and benefit from it. Being “upright” means that we dedicate ourself to what we have discovered for ourself as being true and good, and give up our wrong ways and bad conduct, so that we progressively evolve on the path to awakening.³³

2.3 VIPPAṬISĀRA AND RELATED WORDS

2.3.1 Guilt-feeling

2.3.1.1 Our purpose here is to discuss the best, or at least a good, working, translation of the Pali term *vippaṭisāra*, especially as used in connection with meditation, such as in the teaching of the **(Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta** [§1 (1)]. *Vippaṭisāra* has been translated as “guilt-feeling” here, and we will discuss the reasons for this, the problems involved and some related points. First, let us familiarize ourselves with the word “guilt-feeling” and related words in English [2.3.2-2.3.3].

2.3.1.2 The OED defines “**guilt**” as “(1) the state (meriting condemnation and reproach of conscience) of having willfully committed crime or heinous moral offence; (2) responsibility for an action or event.” Although this gives us some idea of “guilt-feeling,” the first sense is rather restricted, while the second is too broad. A better definition would be “the unhappy feelings caused by knowing or thinking that you have done something wrong.”³⁴ In religion, such a negative feeling often arises from belief in some external power (such as God) or submission to such a power (sin), or viewing Buddhist teachings in such a manner.

2.3.1.3 In meditation, guilt-feeling is always a negative emotion that will impede our meditation, even to the extent of giving it up. This is because in meditation, our mind, free from our usual distractions, is likely to begin to see many of our negative deeds and habits so that we are burdened with guilt-feeling or sadness.

As such, our guilt-feeling, if any, must be resolved first with counselling or with the proper practice of lovingkindness, with the watchful guiding eye of a spiritual friend.³⁵ When we do the proper meditations, especially a proper balance of breath meditation and the cultivation of lovingkindness, we would be able to resolve many, if not all, our negative emotions, including guilt-feeling. [2.3.6.6]

³³ For details on the recollection of the Dharma, see SD 15.9 (2).

³⁴ *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 6th ed, 2000.

³⁵ A spiritual friend (*kalyāṇa,mitta*) is usually an experienced meditation teacher who mentors us: see SD 34.1 (2.4.1.2; 3.2.1.2)..

2.3.2 Remorse

2.3.2.1 A related word (but which has a positive shade) is “**remorse**” as “a feeling of compunction, or of deep regret and repentance, for a sin or wrong committed.” In a legal case, when the accused is truly remorse, he is likely to be given a lighter sentence, or even let off with a warning not to repeat his offence. Here, remorse has a good sense where the person regrets his action, and may apologize or seek the forgiveness of the victim. He would also show contrition [2.3.1.4], and vows not to repeat his offence.

2.3.2.2 This may be well and good, but there is still another element, a very important one, missing. His remorse would not benefit him if he does not forgive himself, and, in due course, to also forget about his offence, having turned a new leaf or determined to do so. This is the element stressed in Buddhist teachings. The offender should not only remorseful, but he must also accept himself just as he is, with lovingkindness, and start over from there.³⁶ [2.3.6]

2.3.3 Compunction

2.3.3.1 The OED give two shades of the definition of “**compunction**,” the old strong sense and the modern usage. In the old strong sense, it means “pricking or stinging of the conscience [2.3.1.5] or heart; regret or uneasiness of mind consequent on sin or wrong-doing; remorse, contrition.”

2.3.3.2 In modern usage, notes OED, it is “often in weakened sense, denoting a slight or passing regret for wrong-doing, or a feeling of regret for some slight offence (sometimes including pity for the person wronged...especially in such phrases as ‘without compunction’.”

More simply, contrition is when we feel the regret or guilt-feeling [2.3.1.5] about doing something wrong. This is what we will examine next.

2.3.4 Contrition has a literal meaning of “grinding, pounding bruising (against something) so as to be reduced to pieces, particles or powder.” Its figurative sense is more common and means “the condition of being bruised in heart; sorrow or affliction of mind for some fault or inquiry done.” In short, this is when we feel sorry or regret, even guilt-feeling, for something bad that we have done.

Contrition is a useful word to know in Buddhist studies. In its negative sense, it is connoted in the Pali word for it is *kukkucca*, “restlessness,” which often reflects a troubled heart from recalling over a past action or inaction, and it also may include a sense of remorse, even guilt-feeling. The question now is whether the emotions of remorse and guilt-feeling (in their modern senses) are found in the suttas, and their significance in Buddhist training and therapy.

2.3.5 Conscience³⁷

2.3.5.1 Conscience as we vaguely know it today is notably absent from early Buddhism. Apparently, it is peculiar to Christianity. Gentler versions of it, however, is found universally, and nobler forms of it characterize early Buddhism, as we shall see.

A gentle form of **conscience** is defined by the OED as “consciousness of right and wrong; moral sense.” This almost universal definition of conscience was apparently earliest recorded in 1225.

³⁶ On lovingkindness and self-acceptance, see SD 38.5 (3.1; 9.1; 1.2.2.5-1.2.2.6).

³⁷ This is a long but necessary diversion from the main flow of the Introduction of the Sutta. If we wish to focus on the Sutta itself, we need only read perhaps only the first few sections, and after completing the Sutta study here, return to read the whole of (2.3.5).

The OED adds that this is the internal acknowledgement or recognition of the moral quality of our motives and actions. It is the sense of right and wrong regarding an action for which we are responsible. It is the faculty or principle which pronounces upon the moral quality of our actions or motives, approving the right and condemning the wrong. This is, of course, not uniquely a Christian view of conscience, not even a religious one, but all this is found in early Buddhism.

2.3.5.2 Even around 1325, according to the OED, we find conscience used in a non-religious sense, meaning, “inward knowledge, consciousness; internal conviction.” But this sense is now obsolete. Interestingly, this is a sense that is close to how early Buddhism would have defined conscience, that is, in terms of our mental states. It is in this “obsolete” and psychological sense that *conscience* exists in early Buddhism.

The obsolescence of such a modern and wholesome definition clearly was due to the Church and scholastics imposing their religious ideas onto others. The expression “good conscience” (and conversely, “bad conscience”) was first recorded in 1340, and Wyclif used it in his translation of 1 Timothy 1.18, in 1382. This means that the two senses probably competed with one another for a good while, but it was clear which prevailed.

2.3.5.3 The Old Testament notion of conscience often compares harmoniously with early Buddhist sentiments, if we allow the natural adaptation of the notion of “God” be replaced by, say, “the heart,” just as how early Buddhism adapts the “godly abiding” (*brahma, vihāra*) as the lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity that we can and should cultivate, whether we are religious or not.

The pious Biblical psalmist is confident that God, through divine scrutiny, will vindicate him: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps 139.23-24). The Buddha would have agreed with the psalmist’s sentiment.

A famous example of the early Buddhist teaching on conscience is found in **the Ādhipateyya Sutta**, where the Buddha declares:

There is in the world no secret	of one who does a bad deed.
You yourself, O man,	know what is true and what is false!
Alas! My friend, you, the witness,	look down upon your own goodness!
How can you hide the bad that there is	in the self from the self?
<u>The gods and the tathāgatas [thus come]</u>	<u>see the fool living falsely in the world.</u>

(Ādhipateyya Sutta, A 3.40/1:147-150), SD 27.3³⁸

This moral self-counselling is remarkably close to the way young Rāhula is taught by the Buddha in **the Amba, laṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 61).³⁹ Instead of an imaginative almighty agent as overseer, Rāhula is taught to internalize and build his wholesome “conscience.”

2.3.5.4 Even more remarkable is the fact that the Buddha himself, in **the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta** (M 47), in similar words, invites us to examine *him*, whether he is really fully awakened, or whether his thoughts and actions betray falsity in *him* in any way!⁴⁰ We only have the “word” of God that he is good, but we know only too well, according to the good book, how he wreaked vengeance and destroyed nations, just

³⁸ For the Buddha’s power of doing this, see **Jhān’abhiññā S** (S 16.9/2:213), SD 50.7; **Puris’indriya, lāṇa S** (A 6.62/3:402-409), SD 61.5.

³⁹ M 61/1:414-410 (SD 3.10).

⁴⁰ M 47/1:317-320 (SD 35.6).

as the Spanish conquistadors did in South America and elsewhere. They were only acting in “good conscience” to rid the world of heathens, in God’s name.⁴¹

In similar tone as the Psalm quoted above, we have an allusion to **karma** from God’s mouth itself, “I the Lord search the mind and try the heart, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17.10).

2.3.5.5 The firmness of the Christians’ conscience enables them to obey God (or whoever defines or speaks for God) rather than other men, or even man in general. They live as people who do not belong to this world, and accept martyrdom with joy.⁴² Understandably, they do not really think of individuation, especially in terms of emotional independence.⁴³ After all, they are God’s creatures and must return to them, if they were, or they should at least “empty” themselves to receive Christ into their lives.

Again, if we omit God and the powerful who use God, we have a description of **the early Buddhist monastics**. The monastics, including the Buddha himself, obey the Dharma-Vinaya,⁴⁴ but respect the world. They are reminded to let go of this world,⁴⁵ because they are heading for something better. They are recorded as not fearing death itself,⁴⁶ and yet the very idea of martyrdom is alien to Buddhism. We take refuge in the 3 jewels (the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha): we “empty” ourselves of the world or renounce the world in the spiritual sense by letting go of what holds us back in the world, and hinders us from moving on to awakening.

2.3.5.6 Western Christianity, at the height of its worldly power, that is, the Middle Ages until the 16th century, found it advantageous to inculcate “conscience” in their flock, and to “educate” that conscience. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council made it an obligation for all Christians to confess their sins and receive sacraments once a year. This came to be known as the “tribunal of conscience,”

Annual confession and penance, too, became a universal legal requirement. Such a special burden of responsibility, a unique western phenomenon, acted as a reliable tracker on every sheep in the Church’s flock. After all, a shepherd must keep careful watch over his flock.

2.3.5.7 With the rise of urbanization and divine kingship (where the king’s power was absolute: a famous example of whom is king Henry VIII of England, 1591-1547), the notion of the Church’s flock had grown into the idea of a national tribe, with the king as its apex.

The “voice of conscience” was, to God-believers, the voice of God within them [2.3.5.3]. This helped promote public prudence and courtesy, for the sake of a civil society, especially for the benefit of the Church, those who protect and sustain it, that is, the king, royalty, and their armies. But there are many kings and many countries they wield power over. Rome, headed by the Pope used the Christian conscience as leashes on the kings and rulers of Europe.

2.3.5.8 By the 15th century, the fear of invasions by the powerful Ottoman Muslims, forged the nations of Europe into **Christendom**, the Christian world. When the Muslim distraction was contained,

⁴¹ See eg SD 38.1 (3.2).

⁴² See Michel Despland, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed, 1988:1940.

⁴³ This refers to the breaking of the 3 fetters of self-identity-view, spiritual doubt, and attachment to rituals and vows: see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

⁴⁴ See **Gārava S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3.

⁴⁵ The Buddha tells Moggallāna “nothing is worth clinging to” in **Pacalā S** (A 7.58,11), SD 4.11.

⁴⁶ **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145), the monk Puṇṇa declares that he would happily die for the Dharma (M 145,5), SD 20.15.

the Spanish and the Portuguese, with the enthusiastic blessings of the notorious Borgia Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503), initiated the conquest and conversion of the “less-than-human” heathen world. Christian conscience needed to be planted in these members of inferior races.

The Protestant nations of Europe, learning of the vast lands and immense wealth that Catholics were colonizing outside of Europe, eagerly joined in the quest of “gospel, glory and gold” (but they were less zealous in the gospel aspect). In this global plundering game, a new national awareness arose amongst the participating nations. Their conscience now was greatly externalized and centred around these nations and their kings. Whatever is for “God, king and country” was always morally right, no matter what the costs. Conscience was nationalized, especially after Napoleon’s defeat in 1812.

The general idea then was that everyone had a conscience, but those of the heathens were inferior to the Christian conscience. Colonial Christianity liberated what it “deemed to be inferior races from the fears to which their idolatrous and superstitious consciences were prone.” The Protestant colonizers were generally more generous in allowing some freedom of religion, but tacitly their Christianity was always superior. “Being most developed, the Western consciences helped others develop, too. Western expansion was optimistically expected to moralize the world.”⁴⁷

2.3.5.9 The authority of conscience received its fullest religious legitimacy in the theory of “inner light” common to many 17th-century English sects. Instead of being an act of interpretation of a law, this conscience was an absolute and final insight.⁴⁸ British philosophy personalized moral conscience by identifying the consciousness of right and wrong with the voice of an inner moral law, as in the unwritten, in-born law of which Cicero (107-4 BCE) spoke in *Pro Milone* 10.⁴⁹

2.3.5.10 The Renaissance (14th-17th centuries) opened up new learning to Europe. This new learning, especially the sciences, continued growing (despite the Church’s cruel attempts to stop or control it). The European colonizing of Asia also brought back greater awareness of the spiritual wealth of oriental religions. The Church’s inner dissensions⁵⁰ split and weakened it, further loosening its grip on society.

2.3.5.11 The 18th century saw a sense of separation between conscious and **consciousness**, and the widening gap between the two. While many still naively believed in their stable, good and unerring conscience, **literature** (especially the novel) in the 18th and 19th centuries “explored the chasm between conscience and the vagaries of consciousness.”⁵¹

Thinkers of the times became more aware of the distinction between the abiding (the conscience or the “heart”) and the transitory (consciousness or the “head”) in our sense of self. They began to notice that although both conscience and consciousness—heart and head—were our inner voices, consciousness’s persistent whispers were tantalizing and tenacious. Often, the public voice of conscience was simply a disguised echo of that consciousness (the mind).

2.3.5.12 Conscience, then, became “the moral dimension of human consciousness, the means by which humans modify instinctual drives to conform to laws and moral codes.”⁵² We see here the begin-

⁴⁷ Michel Despland, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed, 1988:1943.

⁴⁸ Michel Despland, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Michel Despland, *op cit*, 1988:1940.

⁵⁰ The 16th-century Protestant Reformation freed northern Europe (esp Germany and Switzerland) from Roman Catholicism.

⁵¹ Michel Despland, *op cit*, 1988:1943.

⁵² *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2nd ed 2001: conscience.

nings of psychology. **Sigmund Freud** (1858-1939) simply rejected religious conscience as being irrelevant and useless. In its place, he synthesized conscience and consciousness, and postulated a metapsychological tripartite psyche comprising the id, the ego and the superego.

The id is basically our “me-first-and-always” pleasure principle that seems to be a world of its own, but surreptitiously asserting itself whenever it can or likes. The ego is that conscious aspect of the mind in touch with reality, and negotiating between the primitive instinctive drives of the id, the internalized social, parental inhibitions, conditionings and prohibitions of the superego, and a knowledge of reality.⁵³

The superego (like conscience) restrains the pleasure-principled id from the immoral, while the ego works to do what are considered morally right under the close supervision of the superego.⁵⁴ The superego, like conscience, suggests that they are conditioned by parents and authority figures, who imprint their beliefs and values to the children. They, in turn, internalize these psychological conditionings by a way of identification with a parent or authority figure.

2.3.5.13 Remarkably, almost all the better key ideas, and even therapies, of western psychology were mostly quite directly pre-empted in early Buddhism. Freud’s notion of the **id** shows remarkably close parallels to the early Buddhist notion of latent tendencies (*anusaya*), the raw roots of lust (*rāga*), repulsion (*paṭigha*) and ignorance (*avijjā*), lurking deep in the unconscious.

The latent tendencies manifest themselves on many levels. As craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*mana*), and wrong views (*diṭṭhi*), they are known as “grasping” (*gaha*) on account of the self-views of “I,” “me and “mine.” They form the threefold graspings (*ti,vidha gāha*), as follows:

“Mine”	=	“This is mine”	(<i>etam mama</i>)	grasping that is craving	(<i>taṇhā,gāha</i>)
“Me”	=	“This I am”	(<i>eso’ham asmi</i>)	grasping that is conceit	(<i>māna,gāha</i>)
“I”	=	“This is my self “	(<i>eso me attā</i>)	grasping that is wrong views	(<i>diṭṭhi,gāha</i>)

(Anattā,lakkhaṇa Sutta, S 22.59/3:68), SD 1.2

These tendencies, according to Freudian lingo, would describe the activities of the primitively self-centred **id**. In Buddhist mental training, we are exhorted to constantly remind ourselves regarding any of the sense-objects as follows: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.”⁵⁵

The **ego**, in early Buddhism, is our public face, or rather, mask, we present before others, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously, but always dictated by the preconscious, rooted in the unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*) of greed, hate and delusion. However, with training, we are able to act, motivated by their wholesome counterparts of non-greed (charity), non-hate (lovingkindness) and non-delusion (wisdom). This may be said to be our everyday, even moment-to-moment, consciousness.

Freud’s **superego** concept is similar to the early Buddhist notion of the preconscious⁵⁶ mind, that can be rooted either in the unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*) of greed, hate and delusion, or in the wholesome roots of charity, love and wisdom. With proper self-restraint, wholesome self-regard and some joy, we are in better control of ourself, and when we are motivated to act, we do so with charity, love and wisdom.

Conscience, then, apparently competes with “consciousness.” It could well even mean “the mind” in a vague sense of how we think. It is probably with such notions in mind that Buddhadatta, in his English-Pali Dictionary rendered “conscience” as *mano,viññāṇa* (“mind-consciousness”) and *viveka,buddhi*,

⁵³ See A S Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, 1985: ego.

⁵⁴ Other psychologists have proposed different theories about the development of the conscience. *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2nd ed 2001: conscience; also sv Moral development.

⁵⁵ See eg **Alaggadūpama S** (M 22,26 f/1:138), SD 3.12.

⁵⁶ On Buddhist usages of the terms the conscious, the preconscious, the subconscious and the unconscious, see SD 17.8a (6.1) & SD 17,8b (Fig 2.2.3).

which could be mean “solitary intelligence” or “the wisdom of solitude.” Anyway, these are modernisms that should not detain us.

2.3.5.14 On this mental level, if we direct wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), that is, reflecting before acting,⁵⁷ we would be able to prevent our bodily actions or speech to be tainted by any of the unwholesome roots, but be motivated by the wholesome roots, and to cultivate wholesome habits (*nati*).⁵⁸

As such, we are to keep the moral precepts, but we still need mindfulness and meditation to deal with negative mental karma. This is the essence of Buddhist therapy, the theme of numerous suttas on how we can heal ourself of the emotional extremes that our latent tendencies (the id) and the unwholesome roots (the ego) put us through, even when we are conscious.

2.3.5.15 Early Buddhism has a set of three terms—*citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa*—which are, as a rule, synonymous: they all mean “mind.” In the right contexts, however, they each respectively apply to the mind that is *preconscious*, *unconscious* and *conscious* (as mentioned above).

On the preconscious level, there is *citta*, “thought,” that decides, as it were, how we should react to our sense-experiences. Colloquially, this is the “knower,” the subject of thinking and feeling, and which needs to be understood, trained and liberated. As such, it is also called “cognitive consciousness.”⁵⁹ It is, in fact, the heart of human experience and our learning process. All this are very similar to what Freud called the *ego*.

On the unconscious level, there are the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), fed by karma, especially our habitual conduct. Colloquially, this is the “doer,” the back-seat driver that incessantly tries to dictate the knower. This is the roots of our being human (or not), our emotions. It is the third karmic door and the 6th internal sense-base, the “mind,” through which the latent tendencies, our unconscious, is fed. This is very similar to Freud’s idea of the *id*.

On the conscious level, there is *viññāṇa*, better known as “consciousness,” particularizing awareness through the sense-faculties, and which, through our sense-faculties, constructs human experience. It also functions, in part, as the “existential consciousness,”⁶⁰ since it is what keeps us going in this life, and is reborn, that is, the rebirth consciousness. While we live, it is the conscious manifestation of our latent tendencies (the unconscious). This is very much like the Freudian notion of the *ego*.

This is, of course, not a perfect collation of Buddhist teachings and Freudian psychology, nor is it intended to be one. It should sufficiently show some remarkably close connections and resemblances for a deeper study in its own right. Suffice it to say, Buddhist meditation therapy is a workable system in itself, that only exhorts us to go with the flow of the inner mind so that we are at least truly at peace with ourself, even awoken to true wisdom.⁶¹

2.3.6 *Vippaṭisāra* as remorse [2.3.2]

2.3.6.1 *Vippaṭisāra* (“guilt-feeling, remorse, regret, bad conscience, repentance”)⁶² comes from *vi-* (a prefix meaning separation) + *paṭisāra* (*paṭi-*, meaning “against, back” + *sara* (from √SMṚ, to remember).

⁵⁷ On wise attention, see *Nimitta and anuvyañjana*, SD 19.14.

⁵⁸ This term usu refers to a negative state, but its sense is not restricted to that. It simply denotes “an inclination, a habit or bias”: **Dvedhā Vitakka S** (M 19/1:115,22), SD 61.1; **Chann’ovāda S** (M 144,11/3:266,7), SD 11.12; **Cetanā S 3** (S 12.40/2:67,4), SD 7.6c; U:Be+Ce 81,7 (UA 398,18).

⁵⁹ On “cognitive consciousness” and “existential consciousness” below, see SD 17.8a (6).

⁶⁰ On “existential consciousness” and “cognitive consciousness” above, see SD 17.8a (6).

⁶¹ On *mano*, *citta*, *viññāṇa*, further see SD 17.8a (6.1+12). For summary diagram, see SD 17.8a (Table 12.5).

⁶² V 2:250; D 1:138; S 3:120, 125, 4:46; A 3:46 (*avippaṭisāra*), 166, 197, 355, 4:69; Pug 62.

Paṭisāra does not seem to exist by itself in the Pali canon, but we have a rate but related form, ***paṭisarati* (1)**, “to think back.” A bit more common is the form ***paṭisarati* (2)**, “to run back, stay back, lag behind” (from the root *VSR*, to run).

However, used figuratively, it can convey the same sense as *paṭisarati* (1), as “he runs back to the past.” This word, used literally as *paṭisarati* (1) or figuratively as *paṭisarati* (2), has the same sense as the line (underscored), “Let them not run after the past” or “Let them not pursue the past,” the first line of the Bhaddekaratta Gāthā.⁶³

2.3.6.2 The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) defines *vippaṭisāra* as “bad conscience, remorse, regret, repentance” (but omits “guilt-feeling”). The definitions given above are “**guilt-feeling, remorse, regret, bad conscience, repentance**” [2.3.6.1], and we shall see how suitable is each of these words best applies to the translation of *vippaṭissāra*, and look at the reasons for it. The list of senses here are given in my order of preference, but we shall discuss them in the reverse order, beginning with (what I think) is the least suitable translation, that is, “repentance.”

2.3.6.3 Let’s first look at “**repentance**” as the translation of *vippaṭisāra* (as in Buddhadatta’s English-Pali Dictionary or EPD), and gives the Pali for “repent” as *anutap(p)ati* and *anusocati*. The verb *anutappat* is found fitting in the Dhammapada, “That deed is not well done whe, having done it, one repents” (*na taṃ kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu | ya katvā anutappati*, Dh 67; cf 314). The verb *anusocati* beautifully rendered in the Sutta Nipāta, too, thus: “Having no attachment to the future, he does not grieve for the past” (*nirāsatti anāgate atītaṃ nānusocati*, Sn 851).⁶⁴ “Repent” certainly does not fit here, but grieve for the past” does convey a sense of *vippaṭisāra*.

Repent is not really a good translation of *vippaṭisāra* as it is either too archais (“to affect (oneself) with contrition or regret for something done, etc”)⁶⁵ or too narrow (“to feel cntrition, compunction, sorrow, or regret for something one has done or left undone, to change one’s mind with regard to past action or conduct through dissatisfaction with it or its results”). Some of the senses here may overlap with *vippaṭisāra*, but not sufficient to define it. Moreover, “repent” is often associated with “sin” in western speech and works, that is, “to feel regret, sorrow, or contrition for (something inherently wrong, some fault, misconduct, sin, or other offences.”

2.3.6.4 The phrase “**bad conscience**” is an interesting phrase but does not fully translate *vippaṭisāra* for various reasons as discussed above [2.3.5]. Firstly, “conscience” is historically “peculiar to Christianity” [2.3.5.1], its meaning has evolved over time, and even today, it tends to mean differently to different people. It is the most “troubled” of all the senses we have here mainly because of its complex history.

However, like “repentance” [2.3.6.4], “bad conscience” may be one of the senses applicable to *vippaṭissāra*, but this is insufficient to qualify its translation. In fact, if we search carefully enough, we would surely find a context in a sutta where *vippaṭisāra* has the sense of “repentance” or the sense of “bad conscience.” However. neither these two senses, or even both of them together, would reflect the full sense of *vippaṭisāra*.

2.3.6.5 The word “**regret**” means “to remember, think of (something lost), with distress or longing; to feel (or express) sorrow for the loss of (a person or thing).” Defined as “sorrow or pain due to reflection on something one has done or left undone,” regret does reflect something of what *vippaṭisāra*

⁶³ *Bhadd’eka,ratta S* (M 131,3), SD 8,9.

⁶⁴ K R Norman’s tr.

⁶⁵ Such defs from hereon in this section are from Oxford English Dictionary OED (digital ed, 2004) unless otherwise stated.

means, but this is too general. In fact, here, regret is a near-synonym of repent [2.3.6.3]; hence, EPD renders “regret” (verb) as *anutappati*, *anusocati*, as it does not “repent” (2.3.6.3). Hence, “regret” would not properly bring out the full sense of *vippaṭisāra*.

2.3.6.6 We have already considered **guilt-feeling** in its moral sense [2.3.1]. Here, we shall consider it in a more general psychological sense, as “responsibility for an action or event; the ‘fault’ of (some person)” is closer to how we should regard *vippaṭisāra*. An operative aspect of this is represented by the phrase “guilt-ridden” or even “of guilty conscience,” taking conscience is a Buddhist sense of mental state. EPD renders **guilt-feeling** as *aparādhā*, defined as “sin, fault, offence, guilt-feeling,” but this is a post-canonical word, not found in the suttas, or even the Vinaya. However, we can imagine people today burdened with a sense of “sin, fault, offence, guilt-feeling,” which trouble them as hindrances to their meditation [2.2.2]. Then, we would meaningfully apply *vippaṭisāra* here. Such a rendering would fit the context of §1 of **the (Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta** below. However, these senses are also shared with “remorse” [2.3.6.7].

2.3.6.7 OED defines **remorse** as “a feeling of compunction, or of deep regret and repentance, for a sin or wrong committed.” **Regret**, as we have noted [2.3.6.5], has a sense of “sorrow or pain due to reflection on something one has done or left undone,” Hence, remorse also includes a despondency over what we see as something we have wrongly committed or wrongly omitted. Any of these negative emotions may be caused by a “bad conscience” or causing it [2.3.6.4]. In short, “remorse” is pregnant with the other senses we have discussed here [2.3.6].

2.3.6.8 The texts of early Buddhism may be historically and culturally contained—it *was* the experiences and teachings of the Buddha in India during the 6th to 5th centuries—but these are limitations for the academic scholars, who often feel it their professional task to construct Buddhisms. For Buddhist scholars (and scholars sympathetic to Buddhism) and Buddhist practitioners, the Buddha Dharma is a “timeless” (*akālika*) teaching of moral wholesomeness, mental health and liberating wisdom.

The Dharma is always present, with or without the Buddha,⁶⁶ but it is the Buddha who best emulates and embodies the Dharma,⁶⁷ and teaches it for our benefit as long as we can remember these teachings and truths, and practise and realize them for ourselves. The true teaching continues to exist efficaciously within us as long as we practice without self-centredness, superstition or doubt.⁶⁸

2.3.6.9 The true teaching is preserved in the Pali canon, especially the suttas, but needs to be understood and experienced through study, practice and realization.⁶⁹ To master the suttas in-depth, we need to know Pali, or at least read sine good translations. Even then, we still need to practice some mindfulness or meditation to internalize these theories, so that we understand them as personal experiences and universal realities. When we have attained a certain deep insight into the Dharma, we will taste its truth and beauty, and feel compelled to share it with others, especially those who are suffering or emotionally disadvantaged when the Dharma can easily help them.

⁶⁶ On the 3 characteristics, see **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.1.34), SD 26.8. On dependent arising, see **Paccaya S** (S 12.20), SD 39.5 +SD 5.16 (4.3).

⁶⁷ As “the Body of the Dharma” (*dhamma,kāya*), see **Aggañña S** (D27,9.2), SD 2.19.

⁶⁸ “Self-centredness, superstition and doubt,” an allusion to the 3 fetters (self-identity view, attachment to rituals and vows, and spiritual doubt): see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

⁶⁹ Study (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), realization (*paṭivedha*), a set called “the 3 good truths” (*saddhamma*): see SD 40a.4 (6.2)..

The Dharma is for us to “come and see,” so that we can directly benefit from it. The Buddha Dharma has always attracted seekers of solace and wisdom. These seekers tend to come from varied and global backgrounds, even from different religions.⁷⁰ To effectively help and uplift them, the Dharma needs to be presented as a “living truth,” meaning that its teachings need to be presented in the contemporary and seeker’s idiom, even language, as feasible.

2.3.6.9 The presentation of the Dharma should be packaged or presented in a manner accessible to the seekers. Often followers of other faiths come to learn Buddhism for various sincere reasons, especially its teaching on Buddhist psychology and meditation. Hence, the Dharma needs to be skillfully “translated” to touch the seekers, such as using familiar vocabulary and narratives that act as bridges. This approach is called **natural adaptation**.⁷¹

Ultimately, the seeker has to taste the Dharma for himself. This is best done through the practice of mindfulness and meditation. Although we can adapt such patently early Buddhist healing methods, nothing works with its full effects as the original teachings and methods themselves. Our task, as such, is not to change the Dharma, but to change ourself, and help others change for the better.

3 The truth in the teaching

3.1 In modern usage, when teaching meditation or counselling, we need to be able to include or relate to our experiences today. Take, for example, we are counselling someone (or ourself) regarding how our feeling of restlessness (*kukkucca*) [2.3.1.4] is hindering our meditation. The restlessness, let’s say, arise from our having given up our old God-belief (which we have held since a child).

In practical terms, then *kukkucca*, although an early Buddhist term, would here, in our meditation practice, include such a sense of guilt. Psychologically, this is useful, even vital, in recognizing a negative state for what it is, and then investigating its causal conditions. Having understood how it has arisen, we can now work to remove it, so that we progress in our meditation, experiencing joyful peace and wisdom. This is, of course, applying the “4-truth” problem solving model of truth—arising—solution—ending.⁷²

3.2 In doing so, we are neither re-defining an ancient Buddhist concept, nor abusing it. Using the concept of *kukkucca*, form example, we are able to relate to the contemporary or non-Buddhist negative emotion of theistic “guilt-feeling” and heal it. Such a therapeutic versatility is based on the Buddhist teaching of the “4 great criteria” (*mahā’padesa*), found in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16). They form a set of ways for authenticating the Buddha’s teaching.

3.3 To authenticate a teaching, we ask ourselves, whether this idea or teaching comes (1) the Buddha himself, or (2) from a monastic community with elders led by an experienced teacher, or (3) from some learned elders, or (4) from a learned elder. Then, without accepting or rejecting the statement or idea, it should be carefully studied, and checked against the suttas, and examined for its compliance with the Vinaya. If that statement or idea goes against the Dharma or the Vinaya, it should be rejected. However, if it neither goes against the Dharma nor the Vinaya, it should be accepted as the “Buddha word,” that is, it reflects the spirit of the Dharma-Vinaya.⁷³ — — —

⁷⁰ The skillful use of the recollection of the gods (*devatā’nussati*), eg, has been explained at **Devarā’nussati**, SD 15.13 esp (1)..

⁷¹ On natural adaptation, see SD 39.3 (3.3.4).

⁷² This is prob an earlier formulation of the 4 truths (with the 4th truth as “nirvana”). The better known model hsd truth—arising—ending—path: see **Mahā Saḷ-āyatanika S** (M 149,11) + SD 41.9 (2.4).

⁷³ D 16,4.7-11/2:123 f + SD 9 (11). See also **Mahā’padesa S** (A 4.180), SD 9 (2.2).

(Dasaka) Cetanā'karaṇīya Sutta

The (Tens) Discourse on “Needless of Intention”

A 10.2

(Originating at Sāvattḥī.)

The full *nibbidā* process (forward)

- 1 (1) Bhikshus, for **the morally virtuous**, there is no need of the intention [an act of will],
 May freedom from guilt-feeling arise in me!” (*avippaṭisāro me uppajjatu*)
 It is natural [the nature of things],⁷⁴ bhikshus,
 that *freedom from guilt-feeling* will arise for the morally virtuous, possessed of *moral virtue*.
- (2) Bhikshus, for **the one free of guilt-feeling**, there is no need of the intention,⁷⁵
 May gladness arise in me!” (*pāmojjaṃ me uppajjatu*)
 It is natural, bhikshus, that *gladness* will arise for the *one free from guilt-feeling*.
- (3) Bhikshus, for **the one with gladness**, there is no need of the intention,
 “May zest arise in me!” (*pīti me uppajjatu*)
 It is natural, bhikshus, that *zest* will arise for *one with gladness*.
- (4) Bhikshus, for **the zestful**, there is no need of the intention,
 “May my body be tranquil!” (*kāyo me passambhatu*)
 It is natural, bhikshus, that *bodily tranquillity* will arise for *the zestful*.
- (5) Bhikshus, for **the one tranquil in body**, there is no need of the intention,
⁷⁶“May I feel happiness!” (*sukhaṃ vediyāmi*)
 It is natural, bhikshus, that *happiness* will arise for *one whose body is tranquil*.
- (6) Bhikshus, for **the happy**, there is no need of the intention,
 “May my mind be stilled [be concentrated]!” (*cittaṃ me samādhīyatu*)
 It is natural, bhikshus,
 that *mental stillness [mental concentration]* will arise for *the happy*.
- (7) Bhikshus, for **the mentally stilled**, there is no need of the intention,
 May I know and see according to true reality!” (*yathā,bhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmi*)
 It is natural, bhikshus,
 that the mentally stilled will know and see according to true reality.
- (8) Bhikshus, for **the one who knows and sees according to true reality**,
 there is no need of the intention,
 “May I be dispassionate [let go (of defilements)]!” (*virajjāmi*)
 It is natural, bhikshus,
 that one who knows and sees according to true reality will be revulsed⁷⁷ and dispassionate [who has let go (of defilements)].⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Dhammatā*. Comy: “This is the nature of thing, the order of causality” (*dhamma,sabhāvo eso kāraṇa,niyamo ayam*, AA 5:1).

⁷⁵ On the meaning of this, see Intro (1.1.2).

⁷⁶ From hereon, almost all the quotation verbs seem to be indicative (with *-(ā)mi*), but they are actually optative throughout.

⁷⁷ (**Ekādasaka**) **Cetanā'karaṇīya S** (A 11.2) breaks up the dvandva *nibbidā,virāga* into its two components so that “revulsed” is treated as separately, making a total of 11 links.

⁷⁸ On revulsion, see *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

(9) Bhikshus, for **the revulsed and dispassionate**, there is no need of the intention,⁷⁹

“May I realize the knowledge and vision of freedom!” (*vimutti,ñāṇa,dassanam sacchikaromi*)

It is natural, bhikshus,
that the revulsed and dispassionate [who has let go (of defilements)] will realize the knowledge and vision of freedom.

The brief *nibbidā* process (reverse)

2 Thus, bhikshus,

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| (9) for the revulsed and dispassionate [who has let go (of defilements)], | there is the goal and benefit of | the knowledge and vision of freedom. ⁸⁰ |
| (8) For <u>the one who knows and sees according to true reality</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | revulsion, |
| (7) For <u>the mentally still [the mentally concentrated]</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | the knowledge and vision of true reality. |
| (6) For <u>the happy</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | mental stillness [mental concentration]. |
| (5) For <u>the tranquil</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | happiness. |
| (4) For <u>the zestful</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | tranquillity. |
| (3) For <u>the glad</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | zest. |
| (2) For <u>the guilt-free</u> , | there is the goal and benefit of | gladness. |
| (1) <u>Wholesome virtuous conduct</u> | has the goal and benefit of | freedom from guilt-feeling. |

3 Thus, bhikshus, one state permeates one another, one state fulfills another,⁸¹ for going from this shore to the beyond.⁸²

— evaṃ —

100511 130112 130113 130329 141018 150922 170219 180909 210306

⁷⁹ (Ekādasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya S (A 11.2) here has “Bhikshus, for the revulsed, there is no need of the intention, ‘May I let go (of defilements) [be free from passions]!’ (*virajjāmi*). It is natural, bhikshus, that the revulsed will let go (of defilements).” (A 11.2,10/5:313), SD 33.3b.

⁸⁰ *Nibbidā,virāgo vimutti,ñāṇa,dassan’attho vimutti,ñāṇa,dassan’ānisamso*. The phrase *nibbidā,virāga* is taken separately as *nibbidā* and *virāga* in (Ekādasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya S (A 11.2,11/5:313), SD 33.3b.

⁸¹ “Permeate...fulfill,” *abhisandenti...paripūrenti*: these 2 words appear only here, in (Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya S (A 10.2,10/5:4,1), SD 41.6 and in (Ekādasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya S (A 11.2,12/5:313,19), SD 33.3b. A similar but fuller phrase is *imam eva kāyaṃ...abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati*, “permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body,” which is found in the def of the first 3 dhyanas (only the 1st occurrence is listed here): **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,77/1:73-175), SD 8.10; (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,2.15.1/1:207 f), SD 40a.13; **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,15.1/1:276 f), SD 10.13; **Mahā Sākul’udāyi S** (M 77,28/2:15 f), SD 49.5; **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119,18/3:92), SD 12.-21; (**Samādhi**) **Pañc’aṅgika S** (A 5.28,3/3:25 f), SD 33.13.

⁸² *Iti kho, bhikkhave, dhammā dhamme abhisandenti, dhammā dhamme paripūrenti apārā pārāṃ gamanāyāti.* “For going ... to the beyond” means “for going from the near shore (*orima,tira*), that is, the cycle of existence, with its three planes, to the far shore (*para*), that is, nirvana” (*orima,tira,bhūtā te,bhūmaka,vaṭṭā nibbāna,pāraṃ gaman’atthāya*, AA 5:1). Here again is implied the teaching of “nature of things” (*dhammatā*) or conditionality (*paccaya-tā*), that one wholesome state naturally brings about the next, and so on, working as the reverse of dependent arising, ie as “dependent ending,” as shown in **Upanisā S** (S 12.23/2:29-32), SD 6.12.