

10b

Gadrabha Samaṇa Sutta

The Discourse on the Ass and the Recluse | A 3.81

Ee (Tika) Samaṇa Sutta The (Threes) Discourse on the Recluse (A 3.81a), SD 47.13(1)

Theme: Spiritual learning and growth are effected through spiritual training

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008

To Dean Wong of Singapore, who loves this Sutta

1 Religious imprinting

1.1 The Gadrabha Samaṇa Sutta (A 3.81) records the Buddha as declaring that an ass may closely follow behind a herd of cows and regard itself as a cow, but it is still an ass, all the same. Even so, a foolish monastic, without spiritual training, may be closely associated with famous teachers or great establishments, but he remains a foolish monk or nun, all the same.¹ The Dhammapada similarly reminds us:²

*Yāva, jīvam ‘pi ce bālo
paṇḍitaṃ payirupāsati
na so dhammaṃ vijānāti
dabbi sūparasam yathā*

Even though all his life a fool
closely associates with the learned,³
he knows not the truth [the Dharma],
any more than a spoon the soup’s taste. (Dh 64)

*Muhuttam api ce viññū
paṇḍitaṃ payirupāsati
khippaṃ dhammaṃ vijānāti
jivhā sūparasam yathā*

Even if for but a moment the wise
closely associates with the learned,
he quickly knows the truth,
as the tongue knows the soup’s taste. (Dh 65)

1.2 The Gadrabha Samaṇa Sutta is a short discourse on *religious imprinting*. “Imprinting” is a term used in psychology and ethology (a branch of zoology that studies animal behaviour) to describe “any kind of phase-sensitive learning, that is, learning occurring at a particular age or a particular life stage, that is rapid and apparently independent of the consequences of behaviour.”⁴ It was first used to describe situations in which a person or an animal learns the characteristics of some stimulus, which is therefore said to be “imprinted” onto the subject.



Imprinted geese and cranes flying with an ultralight aircraft
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Christian_Moullec_4.jpg)

¹ A similar theme is found in (Anubaddha) Bhikkhu S (S 47.3/5:142-144), SD 24.6a.

² These 2 verses are also at SD 24.6a (1.2+1.3) & SD 43.5 (1.1).

³ This refers to the 3rd of the 12 stages of discipleship (ie, being stuck there): see Caṅkī S (M 95,20), SD 21.15 & Kīṭā, giri S (M 70,23-24), SD 11.1.

⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imprinting_\(psychology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imprinting_(psychology)).

2 Unconscious defence mechanisms

2.0 In psychological terms, “imprinting” is very close to, and sometimes identical with, such unconscious defence mechanisms⁵ as *transference, compensation, or identification*. Such psychological defence mechanisms have been described by the Buddha, for example, in **the Khaluṅka Sutta** (A 8.14).⁶ In modern times, they have been described by Anna Freud (1895-1982), based on the theoretical framework of her father, the German psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who acknowledged their importance in psychoanalysis for the better understanding of the client’s emotions.

2.1 TRANSFERENCE

2.1.1 Transference and counter-transference

2.1.1.1 In a therapy context, **transference** refers to a redirection of a client’s feelings from a significant person (usually a parent, spouse, lover, or someone who is admired) to a therapist. (When it is reciprocated by the therapist, it is known as counter-transference.) Transference often arises as an erotic attraction to a therapist, but can also manifest in other forms, such as anger, hate, mistrust, dependence, or hero-worship. In religious situations, transference often drives the devotee to treat the teacher or helper as a guru or god.

2.1.1.2 Transference has been variously defined as “the inappropriate repetition in the present of a relationship that was important in a person’s childhood”;⁷ “the redirection of feelings and desires, and especially of those unconsciously retained from childhood toward a new object”;⁸ “a reproduction of emotions relating to repressed experiences, esp[ecially] of childhood, and the substitution of another person ... for the original object of the repressed impulses.”⁹

2.1.1.3 The main negative impact of unconscious defences is where it puts us into a “psychological time warp” or “emotional retrospection,” where we relive our desirable or painful past, especially in terms of emotional needs. We react to someone in terms of our unfulfilled wants, or our fears, or our delusions, especially when we really know very little of the person. We are unconsciously but effectively attributing charisma to the object of devotion. We do all this neither thinking about it nor really knowing why.

There is the classic case of **Vakkali**, as recounted in the Dhammapada Commentary, who on first seeing the Buddha, is physically attracted to him. Vakkali then becomes a monk so that he is able to continue gazing at the Buddha’s person. Aware of Vakkali’s fixation on himself, the Buddha remains silent until the right time.

When the three-month rains-retreat is about to begin, the Buddha tells Vakkali that he should not follow him (the Buddha) around. Vakkali is simply devastated and contemplates suicide. At a very crucial

⁵ In psychodynamics, a *defence mechanism* (or ego defence) is an unconscious reflex or psychological strategies often expressed externally to cope with reality and to maintain self-image (that is, to avoid anxiety or social sanctions). Even healthy persons use different defences, but such a defence becomes pathological only when its persistent use leads to maladaptive behavior such that the individual’s physical and/or mental health is adversely affected.

⁶ A 8.14/4:190-195 (SD 7.9).

⁷ Leonard H Kapelovitz, *To Love and To Work: A demonstration and discussion of psychotherapy*, 1987: 66.

⁸ Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary (8th ed 1976).

⁹ Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language (2nd College Ed 1970).

moment, the Buddha appears to him, admonishing him on the true nature of the body so that in great ecstasy, he understands the spiritual teaching and is liberated.¹⁰

2.1.1.4 Transference, as such, is a key issue in the psychology of personality and human relationships, one that needs to be properly understood and managed. Secondary transference can cause various other complications in personality and human relationships, to which we shall now turn.

2.1.2 Emotional incest

People sometimes transfer feelings from their parents back to themselves (emotional incest or covert incest), or to their children (cross-generational entanglements), or to an external subject (person or state) (interpersonal entanglements). **Emotional incest** occurs when a child feels overly responsible for a parent's emotional well-being beyond normal expectations, or when a parent bonds in an inappropriate, cloying or stifling manner with a child. This usually happens because the parent or parents do not know how to set healthy boundaries. It can occur with one or both parents, with a child of the same sex or with the opposite sex. This aberration occurs especially where a parent is emotionally dishonest with themselves, and whose emotional needs are not met by their spouse or other adults.

In an emotionally incestuous relationship, the child becomes a "surrogate spouse," even though no sexual intercourse occurs. Such a relationship is very harmful to the child, so that he is, as a rule, unable to healthily relate to others, especially with the opposite sex or in marriage. A dominated parent (with a domineering parent, too) is likely to get caught in a covert incestuous relationship, so long as that elder parent lives.

Hence, it's like a small fish being eaten by a bigger fish, which is, in turn, eaten by a bigger one. This sort of deviant condition is more likely to arise in a society or family that is rigidly centred on a strong authority figure, especially a patriarch or a matriarch (such as in a God-religion or strongly Confucianist families or communities).

2.1.3 Interpersonal entanglements

2.1.3.0 Interpersonal entanglements in human relationships manifest themselves by way of compulsive behavior motivated by chronic inappropriate emotions, chronic conflicts, or chronic dissociation, such as:

- Chronic guilt-feeling: conditioned by being entangled with an authority (guru or god) figure;
- Chronic anger: conditioned by identifying with a victim;
- Chronic anxiety: conditioned by identifying with a hero;
- Chronic sadness: conditioned by identifying a living person with one departed;
- Chronic conflict: conditioned by identifying with two different people;
- Chronic dissociation: conditioned by lack of values or identity or both.

2.1.3.1 Chronic guilt-feeling is a dysfunctional feeling, mostly of fear, sadness, and doubt, when we feel that we have violated, disobeyed or displeased an authority, whether a real person (such as a guru figure) or a virtual figure (such as God or holy being). Very often such an emotion stems from lack of parental love or some kind of parental domination over a growing child, so that the child never really grows up. He or she remains a stunted child in search of a parent-figure, such as a God or guru figure. The chronic guilt-feeling may induce the person to be caught up in a rut of ritualistic and religious behaviour spurred by fear and low self-esteem.

¹⁰ On Vakkali, see **Vakkali S** (S 22.87/3:119-124), SD 8.8 (incl DhA 25.11/4:118 f).

2.1.3.2 Chronic anger is a persistent sense of ill will stimulated by a type of person or situation that reminds us of a loss or hurt, such as those resulting from family problems where someone is blamed for suffering or loss in the family. A spoiled or difficult sibling, for example, could be blamed for the demise of a parent. In work-life, chronic anger could arise through seeing oneself as a victim of office politics or victimization by the employer. Chronic anger can also arise in a parent or sibling who has lost a loved family member through evangelical conversion. Such anger easily arises towards a person or situation that reminds us of the past painful experience.

2.1.3.3 Chronic anxiety can arise in us if we hero-worship someone and are all out to please that person. This is in some ways similar to chronic guilt-feeling except that the root emotion here is more likely to be a great admiration or strong attraction towards someone. This is very common in the early stages of falling in love with someone, and is sometimes called “puppy love.” There is a great desire to please, and great fear of displeasing the other person. The gnawing fear is that of losing the person’s attention or love. When that happens or seems to happen, the emotional cost on the victim is disastrous.

2.1.3.4 Chronic sadness can be conditioned by identifying a living person with one departed to whom one was attached or had a close relationship. One then easily projects or detects in that identified person or a situation something that reminds us of that departed loved one. This sadness episode is often a prolonged mourning that is outside of the Kübler-Ross stages of mourning.¹¹

Chronic sadness can often be effectively healed through Worden’s “4 tasks of grief.”¹² The cultivation of lovingkindness, especially under the direction of an experienced and compassionate meditation guide, often easily removes or eases one from such a deleterious condition.

2.1.3.5 Chronic conflict arises from psychological *compartmentalization*, that is, living “separate emotional lives,” a sort of Jekyll-and-Hyde personality. We are leading compartmentalized lives when we identify with two or more different types of isolated lifestyles. For example, we are a member of a religious group but away from it, we live a bohemian life of gambling and drinking. We are often torn between the two, desiring both of them, but fearing that the two worlds would clash, so that we are at a loss as to how to behave appropriately. It is obvious here that we have to abandon our loose life and spiritually upgrade ourselves.

2.1.3.6 Chronic dissociation is often found in victims of religious oppression (as in the racial politics in Malaysia) and evangelism (as in Singapore), on account of which they lose touch with their cultural or social values, and even their sense of identity. There is often the tacit feeling that the dominating group is wealthier, more socially effective, and as such more successful. Sometimes, such a victim of chronic dissociation may be so preoccupied with keeping up with the religious Joneses, that they lose touch with Buddhist values and teachings.

¹¹ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identified “5 stages of grief”: (1) denial (“This can’t be happening!”); (2) Anger (“Why me? I cannot accept this!”); (3) Bargaining (“Please let him/her live to see the children graduate.”); (4) Depression (“I’m so sad, why bother about anything.”); (5) Acceptance (“It’s going to be OK, I’ve accepted it.”). See *On Death and Dying*, Routledge, 1973; *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*, Simon & Schuster, 2005.

¹² William Worden, *Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy*, 3rd ed, Routledge, 2003.

2.1.4 Managing personal entanglements

2.1.4.1 Personal entanglement issues are perpetuated by denial (another defence mechanism).¹³ What we fail or refuse to see the real issue, we cannot deal with it [2.4.2.3]. On the other hand, such an issue can be corrected, or at least lessened, if it is understood and accepted. For example, if we notice that we mistrust or violently react to someone who resembles an ex-spouse in some way, or that we are overly compliant to someone who resembles a childhood friend, it could be due to an underlying issue of personal entanglement.

2.1.4.2 The next stage is to honestly and calmly reflect, addressing oneself *as a second person* (by way of apostrophic admonishing), where the psychological cause or causes lie. This method is briefly mentioned in **the Vitakka,saṅṭhāna Sutta** (M 20) by way of “thought reduction,”¹⁴ but used throughout **the Tāla,puṭa Thera,gāthā** (Tha 1091-1145).¹⁵ The principle and process behind this mind-healing method are given in a number of discourses, such as **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), **the Cūḷa Hatthi,padōpama Sutta** (M 27), **the Sāriputta Sutta** (S 35.120), and **the Apaṇṇaka Paṭipada Sutta** (A 3.16), thus:

When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.**

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the mind-faculty.¹⁶

(D 2,64/1:70; M 27,15/1:180; S 35.120/4:104; A 3.16/113)

2.1.4.3 In simpler terms, we look closely at the thought-process in this way:

- (1) define the thought (“what am I thinking about here?”); and then
- (2) analyze the thought (“why am I thinking this way?”).

Do not make any effort to give an answer (which would mostly be defensive or intellectualizing). An answer will naturally arise in our mind. Examine that answer, and again ask “why,” and so on until in the end, the thought is no more a problem: the issue is resolved. This way of thinking needs a bit of effort at first, but with some meditation practice, coached by an experienced and compassionate teacher, we will be able to cultivate wholesome mental habits.

2.1.5 Parataxic distortion

2.1.5.1 The term *parataxis* (from the Greek, meaning, “to carry along”) suggests a stringing together of ideas that are not necessarily related. “Parataxic distortion” arises when our evaluation of another is affected by our past (personal life, family, work-life, or social life). For example, a particular feature of a woman might remind us of our own mother, or a particular trait of a man might remind us of our father—and this distorts our perception of the individual.

2.1.5.2 Parataxic distortion is a psychiatric term first used by Harry S Sullivan, a US psychiatrist whose work in psychoanalysis was based on direct and verifiable observation as against the more ab-

¹³ On the defence mechanism of denial, see SD 7.9 (3.7).

¹⁴ M 20,6/1:120 (SD 1.6).

¹⁵ SD 20.9.

¹⁶ See *Nimitta & anuvyañjana*, SD 19.14 (1.1) for details and other citations.

stract conceptions of the unconscious mind favoured by Sigmund Freud and his followers. The term is used to explain the inclination to skew our perceptions of others based on fantasy. The “distortion” in the perception is based, not on actual experience with a true individual, but on some projected person of fantasy. For example, when we fall in love we often create an image of the beloved as the perfect match or soul-mate, only to find out later the person does not match our original perception.

2.1.5.3 The fantasized person is constructed partly from our experiences and from emotional stress. Stress naturally accompanies the process of seeking a soul-mate or a life partner, or forming a new relationship, although this is perceived as pleasurable. “Falling in love” is a complicated emotional situation where we see more of what we want than what is real in our beloved. We are essentially guided by chemical flows. Inevitably what falls *in* love, also falls *out* of it: we begin to see the reality of the situation which we cannot accept, so that break-up is inevitable.

2.1.5.4 Parataxic distortion is very difficult to avoid completely because of the nature of human interaction and learning. The media, for example, can be a source of parataxic distortion through stereotyping a good-looking, well dressed and friendly person as a “good” guy, especially if he is successful, or titled, or even by skin colour, too. This same parataxic distortion occurs with our perception of religious figures that we look up to. All this distorts our perception and prevents healthy interpersonal communication and personal development.

2.1.5.5 Overcoming parataxic distortion begins with our respecting and appreciating others for what they are and the good they can be. This begins with a listening heart in accepting the person’s failures and weaknesses, and rejoicing in his good qualities. We, then, go on to the level of **giving**—of things, energy, time and above all, wisdom—that is, of spiritual friendship.¹⁷ People are worth knowing and helping because they can be better beings.

2.1.5.6 In this connection, we should cultivate **self-reliance** as inspired by the Buddha soon after his awakening, when he upholds the Dharma above even himself—as stated in **the Gāraṇa Sutta** (S 6.2)¹⁸—by which he makes the Dharma of self-awakening directly available to us who go for refuge in the 3 jewels. Furthermore, in his last days, too, the Buddha reminds us to take only the Dhamma as refuge. **Self-reliance** builds our personality with *moral virtue* and *wisdom*. **Spiritual friendship** cultivates fellowship through compassion. Thus self-reliance and spiritual friendship go hand in hand by cultivating our own good and seeing it in others.

2.1.6 When transference can be good

2.1.6.1 Not all transference is bad, according to Buddhism, anyway; that is, where the transference is *platonic* (non-erotic or non-sexual) or *healthy* (that is, not based on a power-mode). German pioneer psychologist Carl Jung, in his *Psychology of Transference* (1969),¹⁹ for example, says that within the transference dyad, both actors typically experience a variety of opposites, that of being in love and of psychological growth; the key to success is *the ability to endure the tension of the opposites without abandoning the wholesome aspects*; and that this tension allows one to grow and transform oneself.²⁰

¹⁷ On different types of giving, see **Udakūpama S** (A 7.15) @ SD 28.5 (1.2.4.3). See **Spiritual friendship**, SD 8.1.

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¹⁹ From Jung’s *Collected Works*, vol 16, tr R F C Hull, Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 1969.

²⁰ *Psychology of Transference*, from *Collected Works*, vol 16, tr RFC Hull, Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 1969.

2.1.6.2 One of the most famous allusions to wholesome transference is found in **the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta’s** only simile—that of a mother and her only child, thus:

Just as a mother would guard her own child,
even so towards all beings,
her one and only child, with her own life—
let one cultivate a boundless heart!
(Sn 149/8.8/26 = Khp 9.7), SD 38.3

We are here taught to look upon others as if we were a “mother” to all these beings,²¹ and to regard them each as if he or she is our only child, that is, giving them our full and unconditional love and acceptance.

2.1.6.3 We may say that this is idealistic love, for it is difficult to do so in real life. For example, isn’t it delusory if a teacher were to regard her class of hyperactive children as her own offspring. On a worldly level, she *may appear* delusory in imagining those students to be her own children. But on a more magnanimous, even spiritual, level, she will be able to feel a sense of joyful connection with others that strengthens her as a teacher and person, and also wholesomely contribute to a healthy development of the children.

The lovingkindness meditation is a tool for this healthy relationship. In such a situation, the principle is a simple one: as we think, so we are. So, let’s think wholesomely; or, better: let’s feel wholesomely. When we feel love, we can give love; when we give love, we are likely to receive it, too. This wholesome habit also has a healthy effect on both our mind and body as a whole.

2.1.6.4 In **the Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī Therī Apadāna** (Ap 2.1.7), an account of Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī, the Bodhisattva’s foster mother, we find an interesting word-play (*śleṣa*) of the words “father” (*pitā*) and “mother” (*mātā*).²² Here are the relevant excerpts:

- 31 O well-farer, I am your mother; | and you, O wise hero, are my father:
O giver of happiness of the True Teaching, | O refuge, I was given birth by you, O Gotama!
- 32 O well-farer, your physical body was nurtured by me;
My Dharma body, flawless, | was nurtured by you.
- 33 To satisfy a moment’s craving, | you had milk suckled by me.
But I, drinking the milk of Dharma from you, | Had peace without end.
- 34 For my raising you, | you owe me no debt, great sage!
For women desiring children, | may they have a child like you.²³
- 35 Mothers of kings like Mandhātā | drown in this sea of existence,
But you, O son! brought me | Across the ocean of existence.
- 36 Queen mother, royal consort: | these names are easy for women to gain,
But “the mother of the Buddha,” this name | is the most difficult to obtain.

(Ap 2.1.7.31-36/531), SD 10.6

In these verses of Mahā Pajāpatī, we see a play between the Dharma sense of the words *mātā* and *pitā*, reflecting on her relationship with the Bodhisattva (worldly sense of *mātā*) and the Buddha (Dhar-

²¹ On the need for “femininity” in both the male (animus) and the female (anima), see **Individuation**, SD 8.7.

²² Ap 2.1.7.27-36/531 @ SD 10.6 (3.4).

²³ To get a son like you | sates all desire for sons. (J Walters, “Gotami’s Story,” in Donald S Lopez, Jr (ed), *Buddhism in Practice*, 1995:120).

ma sense of *pitā*). In the worldly sense, she brings up the Bodhisattva in the world, but the Buddha gives her a spiritual birth, that is, liberation from suffering through arhathood.

2.1.6.5 The Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja Sutta (S 35.127) extends the simile of the mother to other dimensions of social or interpersonal relationship. When the monk Piṇḍola is asked by the rajah Udena on how the young monks overcome sexual lust, the former replies that they relate to others in an age-appropriate manner.

Master Bhāradvāja, what is the cause, what is the condition, that these young monks, youths with black hair, endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, who have not dallied with sensual pleasures, lead the complete and pure holy life all their lives and maintain it continuously?

Maharajah, this is spoken by the Blessed One:

*“Come, bhikshus,
towards women who are old enough, bear them in mind as your own mother;
towards those old enough to be your sisters, bear them in mind as your sisters;
towards those young enough to be your daughters, bear them in mind as your daughters.”*

This is the reason, maharajah ... (S 35.127/4:110 f), SD 27.6²⁴

When the rajah Udena questions further, almost wryly, that lust could arise even in age-appropriate relationships,²⁵ Piṇḍola answers that the Buddha also teaches the perception of the foul (*asubha,saññā*), that is, reflection on the body-parts as a stronger means of overcoming sexual lust.²⁶ When the rajah retorts that this may be easy for those undergoing the threefold training (in moral virtue, mental concentration and insight wisdom),²⁷ but not for others, Piṇḍola replies that the Buddha also teaches sense-restraint or “guarding the sense-doors” (*indriya,gutta.dvāra*), whereby we train ourselves not to grasp at “the signs and details” of the sense-objects.²⁸ The rajah is finally satisfied with the answers.

2.1.6.6 All these cases mentioned here are examples of wholesome transference. We are taught how to safely project positive feelings we have or had for our loved ones (as appropriate in terms of gender, age and kinship) onto others in a similar manner. There is a good reason for this, especially for those who are comfortable with the notion of rebirth, that is, the “rebirth connection.” In a number of discourses, the Buddha states that we have been reborn so many times that it is impossible to say that we have not been somehow related to one another.

The classic statement is made in a set of 6 discourses on human relations (all at S 2:189), namely,

Mātā Sutta	S 15.14	We have been <i>mothers</i> to others before.	(SD 57.2)
Pitā Sutta	S 15.15	We have been <i>fathers</i> to others before.	(SD 57.3)
Bhata Sutta	S 15.16	We have been <i>brothers</i> to others before.	(SD 57.4)
Bhaginī Sutta	S 15.17	We have been <i>sisters</i> to others before.	(SD 57.5)
Putta Sutta	S 15.18	We have been <i>sons</i> to others before.	(SD 57.6)
Dhītā Sutta	S 15.19	We have been <i>daughters</i> to others before.	(SD 57.7)

²⁴ See also D 2:293 f; M 3:90; A 5:109; Vism 239-266.

²⁵ For cases of age-inappropriate attractions, see **Māra Dhītā S** (S 4.25/1:125-127), SD 36.6; see also **Māra**, SD 36.3.

²⁶ This refers to the contemplation of the 31 (or 32 according to Comys) body-parts as being impermanent, etc; also called “mindfulness of the body” (*kāya,gatā,sati*): see eg **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119/3:88-99), SD 12.21.

²⁷ On the threefold training (*ti,sikkhā*), see **Sīla Samādhi Paññā**, SD 22.6 & **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235), SD 24.10c.

²⁸ See **Nimitta & Anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

The (Saddha) Jāṇussoṇī Sutta (A 10.177) further alludes to relatives who are reborn amongst “the departed” (*peta*): “That [no relative would arise amongst the departed], brahmin, is impossible, there is no way that that realm would, after such a long time, be empty of departed relations or blood relatives.”²⁹

2.2 COMPENSATION

2.2.1 Let us now examine another form of transference. When the object of transference is *inanimate*, such as a status, religion, a hobby, or even an academic subject, the transference is known as **compensation**. For example, monastics who place more importance on being a “Ven Dr” (Venerable Doctor) could unconsciously feel that being merely “Venerable” alone is unsatisfactory. As a rule, such a “Ven Dr” would be a non-meditating “scholar” monk, very busily engaged with worldly affairs rather than with spiritual learning or training.

In other words, he is a career professional rather than a vocational renunciant, one with a spiritual calling. Psychologically, it is possible that such a person who depends on status is likely to devalue his monastic training, or even be ashamed of the renounced life. He is the ass in **the Gadrabha Samaṇa Sutta** [§6] that follows a herd of cows and thinks that he is a cow, too.

2.2.2 As has often been observed, those who try to straddle two worlds (the worldly and the spiritual), usually end up being skilled in neither, caught in the rut of seeking the attention and patronage of others. In psychological terms, the great importance placed on the academic title in this way is to *compensate* for the lack of spiritual virtue, even faith in the Dharma.³⁰ It reflects a troubling sense of insecurity, or worse a subtle level of Tartuffism.³¹

2.2.3 Similarly, an emotionally undeveloped or socially awkward but intelligent person (usually a late adolescent or young adult) might be drawn to the mystique of the Abhidharma.³² Having mastered the Abhidharma lists, numbers and dogmas, he deems that he has known everything about Buddhism, or at least, the highest doctrines. He thus unconsciously feels compensated for his lack of emotional or social development. However, these awkward symptoms may still linger on in his unwholesome aloofness, dogmatism, intolerance, even fanaticism.

2.2.4 In relation to compensation, there is the inspiring case of the elder **Lakuṇṭhaka Bhaddiya** (“the dwarf”). Although he is a dwarf and lacks good looks, he has an enchantingly beautiful voice. However, he does not in any way use his voice to compensate for his shortcomings. On the contrary, he is instructive on this point, as evident from his Thera,gāthā:

²⁹ A 10.177.7a/5:270 f. Cf **Paṭhavi S** (S 15.2/2:179). Evidently here, *peta* retains its early meaning of simply referring to “the departed,” not as the “hungry ghosts” of later times. It is also likely here that *peta* may refer to some sort of intermediate being that the dying prevails in, according to the level of mental attachment to his erstwhile state. See **Tiro,kudḍa S** (Kh 7/6 = Pv 1.5/4 f), SD 2.7 Intro (3).

³⁰ See **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b.7 (7.5.2.3).

³¹ See **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a (2.3.2).

³² A likely pattern is that such a person is usually a socially inadequate person with a strong self-image. He is likely to go on to become an “expert” in Abhidhamma (in a highly intellectual and intolerant manner). If his self-confidence or self-image is not boosted, then he might go on into more “power” oriented areas such as psychic phenomena, the occult, New Age cults. On the nature of the Abhidharma, see **Dhamma and Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1.

- 469** Those people who have judged [measured]³³ me by appearance and who follow me by voice, Overcome by desire and passion, they know me not.
- 470** The foolish one, surrounded by mental hindrances, neither knows the inside Nor sees the outside—he is indeed misled by voice.
- 471** Who knows not the inside, but sees the outside: Seeing only external fruits, he, too, is misled by voice.
- 472** Who knows the inside, and sees the outside: Seeing without obstructions, he is not misled by voice. (Tha 469-472 ≈ A 4.65)³⁴

If Lakuṅṭhaka Bhaddiya, the sweet-voiced dwarf, had unconsciously or consciously used his voice to attract others, he would have been compensating for his lack with his gift, and relying on *charisma*³⁵ (but he did not). The problem with charisma is that it consists of admirable or desirable qualities that we attribute to another. They are *external* measures that do not reveal the inner realities of the person.³⁶

2.3 IDENTIFICATION

2.3.1 Charisma

When we attribute charisma to another person, there is often enough a desire to imitate that person, even to *become* that person, that is, to *identify* with him—which is another form of transference. Here, certain significant characteristics are transferred onto the admired person or any trigger person, usually a therapist or guru figure. When the person sees such desirable characteristics in the trigger person and tries to acquire them, it is known as **identification**. It is a process by which an individual unconsciously tries to pattern himself after another.

2.3.2 Wholesome identification

Under normal circumstances, identification is an important phase of personality development, especially where the superego or conscience is modeled after an exemplary other. Identification, however, is necessarily unwholesome when the trigger is a negative one, such as an aggressor. In psychoanalysis, identification as a defence mechanism was first named and described in 1936-67 by **Anna Freud** (1895-1982) in her book *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, as where a person facing an external threat, such as disapproval or criticism from an authority figure, identifies with the source of the threat, either by appropriating the aggression or else by adopting other attributes of the threatening figure.

Anna Freud and the Austrian psychoanalyst René A Spitz (1887-1974) argued that this mechanism plays an important part in the early development of the superego, before criticism is turned inward at a later stage of development. The Austrian-born US psychologist Bruno Bettelheim (1903–90) described in an article in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* in 1943 and in his book *The Informed Heart* (1960: ch 4), how even in Nazi concentration camps, some inmates came to identify with their SS guards (the notorious Schutzstaffel who served as Hitler’s paramilitary “praetorian guards”).

³³ “Have judged,” *pāminisu*, lit “(they) measured.”

³⁴ Here in Tha, Bhaddiya speaks in the 1st person, in **Rūpa S** (A 4.65/2:71), for the most part, the same verses are given in the 3rd person.

³⁵ See **Lakuṅṭaka Bhaddiya S** (S 21.6/2:279); also **The teacher or the teaching**, SD 3.14 (6).

³⁶ See Piyasilo, *Charisma in Buddhism*, 1992h:81 ff. = §6.722.

2.3.3 The Stockholm syndrome

2.3.3.1 An extreme form of identification is known as “**Stockholm syndrome**,” a psychological response sometimes seen in an abducted hostage, in which the hostage shows signs of admiration for or loyalty to the hostage-taker, regardless of the risk or danger he is in. The syndrome is named after the robbery at the Kreditbanken at Norrmalmstorg, Stockholm, Sweden, in which the bank robbers held bank employees hostage from 23-28 August, 1973. It was reported that the victims became emotionally attached to their victimizers, and even defended their captors after they were freed from their six-day ordeal.

The term “Stockholm syndrome” was coined by the criminologist and psychiatrist Nils Bejerot, who assisted the police during the robbery, and referred to the syndrome in a news broadcast.³⁷ A possible explanation for the syndrome is the unconscious motivation for survival through cooperating with the aggressor.

2.3.3.2 The term “Stockholm syndrome” is useful in describing the unhealthy impact of aggressive evangelism upon 3rd World societies, but more evidently so especially amongst the better educated in their non-white urban population. In Singapore and Malaysia, where there are on-going aggressive evangelizing (including campus and house evangelism) and mega-churches, and where Christians try to have a stranglehold on the upper echelons of business and politics, the grass-root population often feels threatened or disadvantaged, even marginalized, under such oppression.

Despite the growing conversion threats, even disrespect, shown to non-Christians, it is very common to find Buddhists and Buddhist leaders who actually “tolerate,” even *side* with, such oppressive evangelizing, and who would often try to emulate these evangelists in their organization, activities, and even music (eg Dorothy Hunt’s “Onward Buddhist Soldiers”), vocabulary (such as “sin, glory, righteousness,” and celebrate Christmas.³⁸

In the late 21st century, this form of defence manifested itself in “**Christmas Buddhists**” in Buddhists (usually the affluent) who celebrate Christmas or induct their children into the joys of the season so that they are familiar with the ways of the dominant culture. The rationalization (another defence mechanism) for this that Buddhism is a very “tolerant” religion. One wonders, then, whether such a supersweet sentiment would be reciprocated by Christians wishing one another “Blessed Vesak” during that holy day!

2.3.4 Religious plagiarism

Conversely, we have a situation where *other religions* emulate or plagiarize Buddhism, such as **Manichaeism**, the religion of the Babylonian Gnostic, Mani (c210-276). The Manichees, for example, called their founder, “Buddha” Mani. They accepted the notion of rebirth but with a soul. The fourfold structure of the Manichaean community, divided between male and female monks (the “elect”) and lay followers (the “hearers”) who supported them, is clearly based on that of the Buddhist sangha.³⁹ Mani’s death was referred to as his “nirvana.”

³⁷ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_syndrome. However, according to M Namyam, N Tufton, R Szekely, M Toal, S Worboys, EL Sampson, the syndrome “is not a recognized Medical Subject Heading (MeSH), that most sources of information for widely publicized cases were of varying reliability in terms of the events that led to the diagnosis of Stockholm syndrome; the authors had no access to primary sources and identification of a pattern of features exhibited in Stockholm syndrome may be due to reporting bias” (“‘Stockholm syndrome’: psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth?” 2008).

³⁸ On a number of occasions, Buddhist youth workers and leaders have told me that it would be good to have “charismatic” monastics. When I asked them to define “charismatic,” they were often at a loss.

³⁹ See Richard Foltz, “Religions of the Silk Road,” London & NY, 1999.

Such comprehensive borrowings, however, did not cause any identity crisis in Manichaeism mainly because the Manichees gave allegorical interpretations of their own to the borrowed ideas, terms and stories. These ideas were used in their teachings and given their own interpretations.⁴⁰

2.3.5 Communicating skills

The Buddha, too, as a successful teacher, is a good communicator. To communicate his teachings, the Buddha (and the early teachers) not only introduced new terms (such as *paṭisambhidā*) but even more so adopted numerous old terms (Buddha, arhat, dharma, karma, nirvana) giving them new senses. In adopting such terms, the Buddha is in no way identifying with them as used in the old systems, especially where they are negative. For example, while the pre-Buddhist brahmins take *karma* to refer to religious rituals, the Buddha takes it to mean intentional acts.⁴¹ In his article, “Theravāda Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism: Brahmanical Terms in a Buddhist Guise” (1991), **K R Norman** investigates the terminology used by the Buddha to show how he copes with this problem.⁴²

2.4 PROJECTION. Transference, as such, can appear in various forms, but in most cases, they are rather negative. Let us look at one last, important, type of transference.

2.4.1 Negative transference

2.4.1.1 A kind of “negative transference,” where the person transfers undesirable thoughts, desires and qualities onto someone else, is known as **projection**. To some degree, it is a common process that almost everyone undergoes, especially where we attribute our “shadow,” that is, unwanted or undesirable thoughts or emotions, to others.

For example, a woman, troubled by her weight, sees another fat woman, and scorns her, saying, “Look at that pig!” Another common example of projection is where a person is unfaithful to his (or her) partner. Instead of deliberately dealing with his undesirable thoughts, he unconsciously projects them onto his spouse or partner, and accuses *him* of having an affair.

During the first half of the 21st century in Singapore and Malaysia, it is not uncommon to find a local Buddhist with low self-esteem holding the notion (tacitly or openly) that only white monastics are the best Buddhist teachers and speakers around, and *all* local Buddhists, including teachers, should look up inferior to them for this reason. This is a symptom of **the Pinkerton syndrome**.⁴³

2.4.1.2 The projection described here is transference, that is, the projecting or attributing of certain qualities (desirable or undesirable) we see in the significant people in our lives to others. Projection can also occur as **counter-transference**, that is, when the other party enjoys the attention or actually perceives them to be true. This kind of projection is also called *co-dependence*.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Vajrayana and the Zen communities in the US were dogged by sexual scandals, financial improprieties and other problems. The common thread in both these communities was that the lama and the Zen master projected themselves as enlightened or divinized figures, and the

⁴⁰ See **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b.7 (7.3.1). See also MN Walter, “Sogdians and Buddhism.” *Papers* 174 Nov 2006: 54 f: http://www.sino-platonic.org/complete/spp174_sogdian_buddhism.pdf.

⁴¹ On the Buddha’s usage of antecedental terminology, see **Why the Buddha hesitated?** SD 12.1 (6).

⁴² K R Norman, “Theravāda Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism: Brahmanical terms in a Buddhist guise,” *The Buddhist Forum* 2, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991.

⁴³ On the Pinkerton syndrome, see SD 19.2a (2.3.2); SD 7.9 (3.5.3.4).

followers reacted by attributing them charisma. Many of them willingly served these guru-figures as personal servants, and had sexual relations with them although both parties were already married.⁴⁴

2.4.1.3 Projection reduces anxiety by allowing the expression of the unwanted desires or impulses without letting the conscious mind recognize them. As such, projection entails some level of **denial**, a defence that is even more ancient than projection itself. In denial, we remain blind to a significant truth about ourselves⁴⁵ [2.4.2.3]. Such a truth can further be shielded by the ego through **compartmentalization**, where we lead separate emotional lives. [2.1.3]

Compartmentalization, projection and such defences are ways by which the ego pretends that we are completely in control of ourselves, when in reality our experience is always changing and shifting. The ego's complicity in such defences arises from its being autopiloted by our unconscious latent tendencies (*anusaya*), which are, freely put, like a "store" of our past karma.⁴⁶

2.4.2 Religion as defence mechanism

2.4.2.1 VAGUE BUDDHISM. The greatest unconscious defence mechanism is *religion*: for the simple reason that many people, often everyone in an exclusive group, do not even really know why they believe in a certain idea, except because others do so, or because they *feel* safe or saved. In the **Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1), the Buddha makes the momentous declaration that "all wrong views" (including religion) arise from *feelings*,⁴⁷ that is, from likes and dislikes arising from how we see joy and pain. We take religion as giving us a false sense of comfort and security without any real understanding why. For that reason, there is so much "mystery" in such religions, and "faith" is needed so that we can believe. As such, we do not know, cannot know, what true reality is.

Elsewhere, I have stated that religion is often simply the unconscious defence mechanism of denial [2.4.2.3]. It is about *denying* what we do *not* wish to believe.⁴⁸ This is especially true of the God-faiths and the various Buddhisms. No one has seen God, but they want to believe in "him," so they deny his or her non-existence. Those who are unable to meditate or do not give the Dharma the highest priority, tend to *deny* its spirituality, and often resort to a "vague Buddhism" or convenient religiosity. Understandably, such counterfeit Dharma would not be helpful in real crises, nor bring us to spiritual liberation.

2.4.2.2 GOD AS A PROJECTION. The German philosopher and anthropologist **Ludwig Feuerbach** (1804-1872) based his theory of religion very much upon the idea of *projection*, that is to say, that an anthropomorphic deity is the outward projection of man's anxieties and desires.⁴⁹ Feuerbach, in his most important work, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841),⁵⁰ makes an effort to humanize theology. He states that man, insofar as he is rational, is to himself his own object of thought.

Religion, according to Feuerbach, is *our consciousness of the infinite*. Religion therefore is "nothing else than the consciousness of the infinity of the consciousness; or, in the consciousness of the infinite, the conscious subject has for his object infinite his own nature."

⁴⁴ For a fuller study, see **Bad friendship**, SD 64.17.

⁴⁵ Related to this is the problem of willful blindness, ie when we close our eyes to what otherwise would be obvious to us: see **Cult Buddhism**, SD 34.5 (1.1.3).

⁴⁶ On *anusaya*, see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (5). Further on the defence of **projection**, see SD 7.9 (3.4).

⁴⁷ D 1,144/1:45 f (SD 25.2): see also Intro & Comy ad loc.

⁴⁸ See **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b.3 (3.1).

⁴⁹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/478472/projection>.

⁵⁰ Tr George Eliot into English as *The Essence of Christianity*, 1853, 2nd ed 1881.

Feuerbach's thesis was derived from Hegel's speculative theology where the godly Creation remains a part of the Creator, while the Creator remains greater than the Creation. However, when Feuerbach, as a student, presented his own theory to Hegel, who was then his teacher, the latter was unimpressed.

In part I of his book, Feuerbach develops what he calls the "true or anthropological essence of religion," treating God in his various aspects "as a being of the understanding," "as a moral being or law," "as love" and so on. Feuerbach talks of how man is equally a conscious being, more so than God because man has placed upon God the ability of understanding. Man contemplates many things and in doing so he becomes acquainted with himself. Feuerbach shows that in every aspect, God corresponds to some feature or need of human nature. "If man is to find contentment in God," he claims, "he must find himself in God."

Thus, according to Feuerbach, *God is nothing else than man himself*: he is, so to speak, the outward projection of man's inward nature. Man is capable of understanding and applying meanings of divinity to religion, and it is not that religion that makes a man divine. Simply put, it is man who creates God who creates man. Such a God can only be benevolent to man; otherwise, he is not God.

In part 2, he discusses the "false or theological essence of religion," that is, the view which regards God as having a separate existence over and against man. Such a false view, according to him, leads to the belief in revelation which he believes not only injures the moral sense, but also "poisons, nay destroys, the divinest feeling in man, the sense of truth," and the belief in sacraments, such as the Lord's Supper, is to him a piece of religious materialism of which "the necessary consequences are superstition and immorality."⁵¹

2.4.2.3 ZEN AS DENIAL. In a religious situation where dogmas and faith are strong, that is, followers blindly accept the teacher's word or group beliefs without question, should some scandal occur, such as the teacher behaving inappropriately, or sexually molesting his students, or embezzling public funds, the followers who find such realities difficult to accept could simply *deny* them. If this is unconsciously done (this is easy amongst the blindly faithful), then it is a defence mechanism of denial. After all, who are we, mere unenlightened followers, to question an enlightened master or highly attained guru? Often enough, the faulty guru, too, might think that he is actually "pure" and as such is "immune" from breaking any precept, as he is above right and wrong!

Richard Baker, the disgraced American Zen roshi of the San Francisco Zen Center, in his introduction to *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (1970), a collection of edited essays by his teacher, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, wrote, "During the Second World War he [Suzuki] was the leader of a pacifist group in Japan" (p17), a sentiment echoed by David Chadwick in his Suzuki biography, *Crooked Cucumber* (1999).

Brian Victoria, a fully ordained Sōtō Zen priest and academic, in his book, *Zen at War* (1997; 2nd ed 2006), reports that Suzuki's son, Hoitsu, denied this, saying that "my father and the rest of the family supported Japan's war effort just like everyone else." It should be noted that Victoria was fluent in Japanese while neither Baker nor Chadwick was. Even more interesting is the fact that Chadwick once asked Baker himself about the basis for the claim (Suzuki being "anti-war"), but Baker replied he could not remember! **Stuart Lachs** (2002), from whom the above episode is quoted, notes:⁵²

Perhaps tellingly, Baker made this claim at the height of the Vietnam war, when virtually 100% of Zen followers were opposed to the war and hence having an anti-war/anti-government roshi in his lineage was good currency. This story appears to be an example of modern-day creation of

⁵¹ Feuerbach's atheism has been criticized for being inconsistent by people like Max Stirner (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, "The Ego and His Own," 1844), and their interlocution forms an instructive polemic: see <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ludwig-feuerbach/> & http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Andreas_Feuerbach.

⁵² On the Richard Baker scandal, see **Bad friendship** (SD 64.17, esp 6.1).

hagiography that will be repeated in the future. Furthermore, this creation has to be ongoing. It will not do if there are gaps in the line of saintly figures.

You have to ask whether Suzuki was aware of the claims made by Baker and, if so, why he permitted them to stand without correction. (It should be noted that Suzuki could read English.)

Stuart Lachs, 2002 (online ed)

2.4.3 Counter-projection

2.4.3.1 Counter-projection can be an effective method of dealing with an existing projective idea in another to initiate or promote a development pattern in a person. By directing the person to his projection, he could begin to question his own thought-processes and behaviour so as to arouse insight into them. As counsellors or as therapists, we could first assume the perspective of the aggressor (say, an evangelist) and reflect this to the client regarding how the aggressor may be perceiving his own conduct against the actual reality facing the aggressor. Such a dialogue may ensue:⁵³

Counsellor: Many Buddhists hold the view that evangelists are very powerful. Do you have fears about them?

Buddhist: (Very uncomfortable) I don't want to discuss it!

Counsellor: It will be better to say what you think. You may think that by saying your fears, you are confirming it. But it's just the opposite. Usually, when you state your fear, it's almost as good as letting it go.

In this case, the client had been psychologically traumatized by a perceived problem, and reacts with a defence mechanism of counter-projection, which includes an obsession to remain in a traumatic situation, and this compulsive obsession with the perceived aggressor of the trauma and its projection. In simple terms, the more we worry about the aggressor, the more negative impact he will have on us.

When we are unconscious of the effects of a projection upon ourselves, we react with a counter-projection that perpetuates and aggravates it. **Counter-projection**, in other words, is a condition of being persistently victimized by the views that we have projected onto others. Fearing a "monster," we create a bigger one in our own minds that makes us fear the phantom even more.

2.4.3.2 The concept of counter-projection was anticipated by the German philosopher and classical philologist, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), when he says, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you."⁵⁴ The worst monsters are those we have created in our own minds. Since they arise there, we have to destroy them right there.

2.5 OVERCOMING PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENCE MECHANISMS.⁵⁵

2.5.1 Defence mechanisms are rooted in latent tendencies. Defence mechanisms are our *unconscious* efforts to defend ourselves from anxiety or mental pain. Although often helpful in the short term, such habitual tendencies are symptoms of underlying psychological issues that invariably hinder our personal

⁵³ See Paul V Trad, *Interventions with Infants and Parents: The theory and practice of previewing*, John Wiley, 1992: 243 f.

⁵⁴ *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr R J Hollindale, London: Penguin, 1973: 102.

⁵⁵ For an overview of various defence mechanisms, see SD 7.0 (3); also http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Defense_mechanism.

development and realizing of our spiritual potential. It is like sweeping the dirt under the carpet or under the furniture. It is still there, and as it builds up, will become really messy and unhealthy in due course.

According to Buddhist psychology, the roots of defence mechanisms lie deep inside our unconscious as latent tendencies (*anusaya*).⁵⁶ They are motivated by the three latent roots of lust (*rāga*), aversion (*paṭigha*), and ignorance (*avijjā*). **Lust** is what draws us to those people, events and things that we perceive as pleasurable; **aversion** is basically those qualities that are the opposite of such pleasurable conditions, or what we perceive as preventing or lessening them; and **ignorance** here refers to an existential blindness to the cause and effect process in this love-hate cycle that we are caught up in, hindering us from tapping our wholesome potentials.

2.5.2 Mindfulness exposes the unconscious defences

2.5.2.1 Defence mechanisms are not problems in themselves, but are symptomatic of underlying conditions that invite and sustain psychological problems. We are not normally aware of them as they are *unconscious* tendencies. As such, we are autopiloted by them so that we are caught in a helpless and painful rut of inability and unwillingness to see true reality about ourselves.

The main reason for our being autopiloted into defences is our unconscious habit of emotional self-reference and categorization, so that a **concept** (*kappa*) is created and in due course *reified*. Concepts are useful in daily life, that is, insofar as we use them and then let them go when we are finished with them. But our concepts also tend to mold us into **predefined habits** (*nati*) of thinking, feeling and behaving. When we perceive any situation as threatening these habits—thus bringing us stress, shame or some negative emotion—we unconsciously and immediately set up our ego-defences.

2.5.2.2 The defences are best managed with “attentional control training” or mindfulness practice. **Mindfulness** (*sati*) is a *non-judgemental, non-elaborative present-moment awareness*.⁵⁷ We are simply witnesses, acknowledging whatever that comes into our awareness without bias or automatic reaction. We simply note whatever that arises in our minds for what they are: thoughts, memories, ideas, or desires, aversions, worries, or any sensory input. They are just a series of impermanent “selves” or states that come and go. They never last.

The more mindful we are, the more easily we can tune in to our strengths and weaknesses, and the more accurately and wholesomely we can assess our habits and actions. As such, we are less likely to fall into self-deception because, being mindful, we are less prone to filtering of experiences. In its ideal state, the mind then is able to directly see both mind and body as an uninterrupted experience of reality.⁵⁸

2.5.3 Turning defences into coping mechanisms

2.5.3.1 A sustained practice of breath meditation gives us the inner stillness to stay focused on the healing effort. A proper cultivation of lovingkindness should begin with an unconditional acceptance of oneself, *just as we are*. A balanced practice of the 2 meditations, especially with the guidance of a spirit-

⁵⁶ On *anusaya*, see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (5).

⁵⁷ See S Levine, *A Gradual Awakening*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979; Ajahn Brahm, *Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond*, Boston: Wisdom, 2006: 1-11.

⁵⁸ J D Teasdale, ZV Seagal, J M G Williams, & G Mark, “How does cognitive therapy prevent depressive relapse and why should attentional control (mindfulness) training help.” *Behavior Research and Therapy* 33, 1995: 25-39; JD Teasdale, “Emotional processing, three modes of mind and the prevention of relapse in depression,” *Behavior Research and Therapy* 39, 1999: S53-S77.

ual friend, is effective in bringing the unconscious defences up and out into the conscious mind where they are more easily resolved.⁵⁹

For example, when we realize that we have been using *anger* as a defence (that is, the defence mechanism of *aggression*) against discussing certain difficult issues with a significant other, then we would be able to turn the defence into a *coping mechanism*, so that instead of repressing the negative emotion, we consciously *suppress* it, and instead of being aggressive, we could be firm in our decision, saying “no” rationally.

2.5.3.2 Or, when we realize our sexual addiction is due to our habitually strong sexual lust and past experiences, we could first *rationally* understand the nature of the five aggregates,⁶⁰ and how our mind works,⁶¹ and then *sublimate* our energies in a more healthy and acceptable direction through spiritual friends, sports, social work, and so on. Building up a meaningful and happy relationship leads to a committed friendship and partnership that is satisfying, creative and liberating.⁶²

2.5.3.3 As our understanding of Buddhism deepens, we should make an effort to understand the universal characteristic of *non-self* (*anattā*), which basically points to the fact that there is no fixed entity behind any person, situation or thing. If this approach is difficult, the easiest practice is the perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*). For, when we see all persons, situations and things as being impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise, we begin to see that they are all unsatisfactory, and ultimately without any abiding essence.

As we realize such a level of impermanence more deeply, we begin to appreciate the present moment with people, our present situation, just as it is, simply letting it come, letting it go. Then we have truly seized the moment. We are truly alive.

— — —

Gadrabha Samaṇa Sutta

The Discourse on the Ass and the Recluse

A 3.81

Originating in Sāvattthī.

(Tika) Samaṇa Sutta (A 3.81a), The (Threes) Discourse on the Recluse = SD 47.13(1)

THE 3 TRAININGS

- 1 Bhikshus, there are these **3 recluses’ duties for a recluse**.⁶³
What are the three?⁶⁴
- 2 There are, bhikshus, these 3 recluses’ duties to be undertaken by a recluse.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ On meditation and the mind, see **Meditation and consciousness**, SD 17.8c.

⁶⁰ On the 5 aggregates, see **(Dve) Khandhā S** (S 22.48/3:47 f), SD 17.1a & other suttas in SD 17.

⁶¹ On how the mind works, see **The unconscious**, SD 17.8b.

⁶² See **Spiritual friendship**, SD 8.1.

⁶³ “Duties of a recluse,” *samaṇassa samaṇa, karaṇīyāni*, lit “that which should be done by a recluse of a recluse,” that is to say, these are tasks that he must himself complete for his own wellbeing and liberation.

⁶⁴ See **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235), SD 24.10c, for a def of these threefold training (*ti, sikkhā*).⁶⁵

What are the three?

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (1) The undertaking of the higher moral training. | <i>adhisīla,sikkhā,samādāna</i> |
| (2) The undertaking of the higher mental training. | <i>adhicitta,sikkhā,samādāna</i> |
| (3) The undertaking of the higher wisdom training. | <i>adhīpaññā,sikkhā,samādāna</i> |

3 These, bhikshus, are the 3 duties of a recluse to be undertaken by a recluse.

4 THE ASPIRATION. Therefore, bhikkhus, you should train yourselves, thus:

“Keen will be our desire to undertake	the higher moral training! ⁶⁶
Keen will be our desire to undertake	the higher mental training!
Keen will be our desire to undertake	the higher wisdom training!”

5 Thus, bhikshus, should you train yourselves.

***Gadhabha Sutta (A 3.81b), The Discourse on the Ass**

THE PARABLE OF THE ASS

6 Suppose, bhikshus, an ass follows closely behind a herd of cows, thinking, “I’m one, too! I’m one, too!”

But neither his colour is like	that of the cows,
nor is his <u>sound</u> like	that of the cows,
nor are his <u>hoofs</u> like	those of the cows.

He merely follows closely behind a herd of cows, thinking, “I’m one, too! I’m one, too!”

7 Even so, bhikshus, here, a certain monk follows closely behind a community of monks, thinking, “I’m a monk, too! I’m a monk, too!”

But he has no such desire to undertake the training in <u>higher moral virtue</u> ,	like some other monks.
But he has no such desire to undertake the training in <u>higher mind</u> ,	like some other monks.
But he has no such desire to undertake the training in <u>higher wisdom</u> ,	like some other monks.

He merely follows closely behind a community of monks, thinking, “I’m a monk, too! I’m a monk, too!”

The Buddha’s admonition

8 Therefore, bhikshus, train yourselves thus:

“Keen will be our desire to undertake	<u>the higher moral training!</u>
Keen will be our desire to undertake	<u>the higher mental training!</u>
Keen will be our desire to undertake	<u>the higher wisdom training!”</u>

Thus, bhikshus, you should train yourselves.

— evaṃ —

⁶⁵ *Tiṇ’imāni, bhikkhave, samaṇassa samaṇiyāni samaṇa,karaṇīyāni*. See **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235), SD 24.10c, for a def of these threefold training (*ti,sikkhā*). For **(Tika) Samaṇa S** (A 3.81a), see SD 47.13(1).

⁶⁶ *Tibbo no chando bhavissati adhisīla,sikkhā,samādāne*.

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