

continually originating by means of an antecedent dependence, whence can we have annihilation of existence, nihilism, and an inefficacy of *karma*?

By both together:—By the complete phrase “dependent origination,” inasmuch as such and such elements of being come into existence by means of an unbroken series of their full complement of dependence, the truth, or middle course, is shown. This rejects the heresy that he who experiences the fruit of the deed is the same as the one who performed the deed, and also rejects the converse one that he who experiences the fruit of a deed is different from the one who performed the deed, and leaning not to either of these popular hypotheses, holds fast by nominalism.

5. THE THEORY OF NO-SOUL [OR SELF]

(a) *Samyutta-nikāya*¹

The body, monks, is soulless. If the body, monks, were the soul, this body would not be subject to sickness, and it would be possible in the case of the body to say, “Let my body be thus, let my body not be thus.” Now, because the body is soulless, monks, therefore the body is subject to sickness, and it is not possible in the case of the body to say, “Let my body be thus, let my body not be thus.”

Feeling is soulless... perception is soulless... the aggregates are soulless...

Consciousness is soulless. For if consciousness were the soul, this consciousness would not be subject to sickness, and it would be possible in the case of consciousness to say, “Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness not be thus.”

Now, because consciousness is soulless, therefore consciousness is subject to sickness, and it is not possible in the case of consciousness to say, “Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness not be thus.”

What think you, monks, is the body permanent or impermanent? Impermanent, Lord.

But is the impermanent painful or pleasant?

Painful, Lord.

But is it fitting to consider what is impermanent, painful, and subject to change as, “this is mine, this am I, this is my soul”?

No indeed, Lord.

¹ iii:66, in E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 88–9.

[And so of feeling, perception, the aggregates, and consciousness.] Therefore in truth, monks, whatever body, past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, low or eminent, near or far, is to be looked on by him who duly and rightly understands, as, “all this body is not mine, not this am I, not mine is the soul.” [And so of feeling, etc.]

Thus perceiving, monks, the learned noble disciple feels loathing for the body, for feeling, for perception, for the aggregates, for consciousness. Feeling disgust he becomes free from passion, through freedom from passion he is emancipated, and in the emancipated one arises the knowledge of his emancipation. He understands that destroyed is rebirth, the religious life has been led, done is what was to be done, there is nought [for him] beyond this world.

(b) *Milindapañha*¹

Then drew near Milinda the king to where the venerable Nāgasena was; and having drawn near, he greeted the venerable Nāgasena; and having passed the compliments of friendship and civility, he sat down respectfully at one side. And the venerable Nāgasena returned the greeting; by which, verily, he won the heart of king Milinda.

And Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows:—

“How is your reverence called? *Bhante* [Lord], what is your name?”

“Your majesty, I am called Nāgasena; my fellow-priests, your majesty, address me as Nāgasena; but whether parents give one the name Nāgasena, or Sūrasena, or Vīrasena, or Sihasena, it is, nevertheless, your majesty, but a way of counting, a term, an appellation, a convenient designation, a mere name, this Nāgasena; for there is no ego here to be found.”

And Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows:

“*Bhante* Nāgasena, if there is no ego to be found, who is it, then, furnishes you priests with the priestly requisites,—robes, food, bedding, and medicine, the reliance of the sick? Who is it makes use of the same? Who is it keeps the precepts? Who is it applies himself to meditation? Who is it realizes the Paths, the Fruits, and *nirvāṇa*? Who is it destroys life? Who is it takes what is not given him? Who is it commits immorality? Who is it tells lies? Who is it drinks

¹ 251 (or n.i.1), in H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 129–33.

intoxicating liquor? Who is it commits the five crimes that constitute "proximate *karma*"?¹ In that case, there is no merit; there is no demerit; there is no one who does or causes to be done meritorious or demeritorious deeds; neither good nor evil deeds can have any fruit or result. *Bhante* Nāgasena, neither is he a murderer who kills a priest, nor can you priests, *bhante* Nāgasena, have any teacher, preceptor, or ordination. When you say, 'My fellow-priests; your majesty, address me as Nāgasena,' what, then, is this Nāgasena? Pray, *bhante*, is the hair of the head Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is the hair of the body Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Are nails . . . teeth . . . skin . . . flesh . . . sinews . . . bones . . . marrow of the bones . . . kidneys . . . heart . . . liver . . . pleura . . . spleen . . . lungs . . . intestines . . . mesentery . . . stomach . . . faeces . . . bile . . . phlegm . . . pus . . . blood . . . sweat . . . fat . . . tears . . . lymph . . . saliva . . . snot . . . synovial fluid . . . urine . . . brain of the head Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is now, *bhante*, form Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is sensation Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is perception Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Are the predispositions Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is consciousness Nāgasena"?

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Are, then, *bhante*, form, sensation, perception, the predispositions, and consciousness unitedly Nāgasena?"

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"Is it, then, *bhante*, something besides form, sensation, perception, the predispositions, and consciousness which is Nāgasena?"

"Nay, verily, your majesty."

"*Bhante*, although I question you very closely, I fail to discover any Nāgasena. Verily, now, *bhante*, Nāgasena is a mere empty sound. What Nāgasena is there here? *Bhante*, you speak a falsehood, a lie: there is no Nāgasena."

¹ That is, *karma* that bears fruit in this life.

Then the venerable Nāgasena spoke to Milinda the king as follows:—

"Your majesty, you are a delicate prince, an exceedingly delicate prince; and if, your majesty, you walk in the middle of the day on hot sandy ground, and you tread on rough grit, gravel, and sand, your feet become sore, your body tired, the mind is oppressed, and the body-consciousness suffers. Pray, did you come afoot, or riding?"

"*Bhante*, I do not go afoot: I came in a chariot."

"Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot. Pray, your majesty, is the pole the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is the axle the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Are the wheels the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is the chariot-body the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is the banner-staff the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is the yoke the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Are the reins the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is the goading-stick the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Pray, your majesty, are pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins, and goad unitedly the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Is it, then, your majesty, something else besides pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins, and goad which is the chariot?"

"Nay, verily, *bhante*."

"Your majesty, although I question you very closely, I fail to discover any chariot. Verily now, your majesty, the word chariot is a mere empty sound. What chariot is there here? Your majesty, you speak a falsehood, a lie: there is no chariot. Your majesty, you are the chief king in all the continent of India; of whom are you afraid that you speak a lie? Listen to me, my lords, ye five hundred Yonakas, and ye eighty thousand priests! Milinda the king here says thus: 'I came in a chariot'; and being requested, 'Your majesty,

if you came in a chariot, declare to me the chariot,' he fails to produce any chariot. Is it possible, pray, for me to assent to what he says?"

When he had thus spoken, the five hundred Yonakas applauded the venerable Nāgasena and spoke to Milinda the king as follows:—

"Now, your majesty, answer, if you can."

Then Milinda the king spoke to the venerable Nāgasena as follows:—

"*Bhante* Nāgasena, I speak no lie: the word 'chariot' is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, and name for pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, and banner-staff."

"Thoroughly well, your majesty, do you understand a chariot. In exactly the same way, your majesty, in respect of me, Nāgasena is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, mere name for the hair of my head, hair of my body. . . brain of the head, form, sensation, perception, the predispositions, and consciousness. But in the absolute sense there is no ego here to be found. And the priestess Vajirā, your majesty, said as follows in the presence of the Blessed One:—

"Even as the word of "chariot" means
That members join to frame a whole;
So when the groups appear to view,
We use the phrase, "a living being.""

"It is wonderful, *bhante* Nāgasena! It is marvellous, *bhante* Nāgasena! Brilliant and prompt is the wit of your replies. If the Buddha were alive, he would applaud. Well done, well done, Nāgasena! Brilliant and prompt is the wit of your replies."

(c) *Visuddhi-magga*¹

Just as the word "chariot" is but a mode of expression for axle, wheels, chariot-body, pole, and other constituent members, placed in a certain relation to each other, but when we come to examine the members one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no chariot; and just as the word "house" is but a mode of expression for wood and other constituents of a house, surrounding space in a certain relation, but in the absolute sense there is no house; and just as the word "fist" is but a mode of expression for the fingers, the thumb, etc., in a certain relation; and the word "lute" for the body of the lute, strings, etc.; "army" for elephants, horses, etc.;

¹ xviii, H. E. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 132-5.

"city" for fortifications, houses, gates, etc.; "tree" for trunk, branches, foliage, etc., in a certain relation, but when we come to examine the parts one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no tree; in exactly the same way the words "living entity" and "ego" are but a mode of expression for the presence of the five attachment groups,¹ but when we come to examine the elements of being one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no living entity there to form a basis for such figments as "I am," or "I"; in other words, that in the absolute sense there is only name and form. The insight of him who perceives this is called knowledge of the truth.

He, however, who abandons this knowledge of the truth and believes in a living entity must assume either that this living entity will perish or that it will not perish. If he assume that it will not perish, he falls into the heresy of the persistence of existences; or if he assume that it will perish, he falls into that of the annihilation of existences. And why do I say so? Because, just as sour cream has milk as its antecedent, so nothing here exists but what has its own antecedents. To say, "The living entity persists," is to fall short of the truth; to say, "It is annihilated," is to outrun the truth. Therefore has the Blessed One said:—

"There are two heresies, O priests, which possess both gods and men, by which some fall short of the truth, and some outrun the truth; but the intelligent know the truth.

"And how, O priests, do some fall short of the truth?"

"O priests, gods and men delight in existence, take pleasure in existence, rejoice in existence, so that when the doctrine for the cessation of existence is preached to them their minds do not leap toward it, are not favorably disposed toward it, do not rest in it, do not adopt it.

"Thus, O priests, do some fall short of the truth.

"And how, O priests, do some outrun the truth?"

"Some are distressed at, ashamed of, and loathe existence, and welcome the thought of non-existence, saying, 'See here! When they say that on the dissolution of the body this ego is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death, that is good, that is excellent, that is as it should be.'

"Thus, O priests, do some outrun the truth.

¹ The "attachment groups" are the *khandhas*. See introduction to this chapter and the First Sermon, above.

“And how, O priests, do the intelligent know the truth?”

“We may have, O priests, a priest who knows things as they really are, and knowing things as they really are, he is on the road to aversion for things, to absence of passion for them, and to cessation from them.

“Thus, O priests, do the intelligent know the truth.”

(d) *Samyutta-nikāya*¹

Thus have I heard.

On a certain occasion the venerable Sāriputta was dwelling at Sāvattthi in Jetavana monastery in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

Now at that time the following wicked heresy had sprung up in the mind of a priest named Yamaka: “Thus do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed One, that on the dissolution of the body the priest who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death.”

And a number of priests heard the report: . . .

Then drew near these priests to where the venerable Yamaka was; and having drawn near, they greeted the venerable Yamaka; and having passed the compliments of friendship and civility, they sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, these priests spoke to the venerable Yamaka as follows: “Is the report true, brother Yamaka, that the following wicked heresy has sprung up in your mind: [The above statement is repeated.] . . .

“Say not so, brother Yamaka. Do not traduce the Blessed One; for it is not well to traduce the Blessed One. The Blessed One would never say that on the dissolution of the body the saint who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death.”

Nevertheless, in spite of all these priests could say, the venerable Yamaka persisted obstinately to adhere to his pestiferous delusion: . . .

And when these priests found themselves unable to detach the venerable Yamaka from this wicked heresy, then these priests arose from their seats and drew near to where the venerable Sāriputta was. And having drawn near they spoke to the venerable Sāriputta as follows: . . . Brother Sāriputta, the following wicked heresy has sprung up in the mind of a priest named Yamaka. . . .

¹. xxii.85, H. G. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 138-45.

Then the venerable Sāriputta spoke to the venerable Yamaka as follows: . . .

“What think you, brother Yamaka? Is form permanent, or transitory?”

“It is transitory, brother.”

“And that which is transitory—is it evil, or is it good?”

“It is evil, brother.”

“And that which is transitory, evil, and liable to change—is it possible to say of it: ‘This is mine; this am I; this is my ego’?”

“Nay, verily, brother.”

“Is sensation . . . perception . . . the predispositions . . . consciousness, permanent or transitory?”

“It is transitory, brother.”

“And that which is transitory—is it evil, or is it good?”

“It is evil, brother.”

“And that which is transitory, evil, and liable to change—is it possible to say of it: ‘This is mine; this am I; this is my ego’?”

“Nay, verily, brother.”

“Accordingly, brother Yamaka, as respects all form whatsoever, past, future, or present, be it subjective or existing outside, gross or subtle, mean or exalted, far or near, the correct view in the light of the highest knowledge is as follows: ‘This is not mine; this am I not; this is not my ego.’

“Perceiving this, brother Yamaka, the learned and noble disciple conceives an aversion for form, . . . for sensation, . . . for perception, . . . for the predispositions, . . . for consciousness. And in conceiving this aversion he becomes divested of passion, and by the absence of passion he becomes free, and when he is free he becomes aware that he is free; and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that he has lived the holy life, that he has done what it behooved him to do, and that he is no more for this world.

“What think you, brother Yamaka? Do you consider form as the saint?”

“Nay, verily, brother.”

“Do you consider sensation . . . perception . . . the predispositions . . . consciousness as the saint?”

“Nay, verily, brother.”

“What think you, brother Yamaka? Do you consider the saint as comprised in form?”

“Nay, verily, brother.”