

ETHICAL PERFECTION IN BUDDHIST SOTERIOLOGY

by

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CORRIGENDA & ADDENDA

References are cited first by page and then by line: thus 5.15 refers to page 5 line 15.

13ff. I have assumed that Dr.Razzino is female and apologise if this is incorrect.

27.12-14 for 'Jaques May (...) Gomez [1983]' read 'Only Gomez [1973] has attempted to fill the void in Madhyamika ethics, and the continuing absence of material in this field has been lamented by Jaques May [1978:234].'

45.13 for 'ecclesiastical office' read 'professional religious role.'

71.23 for 'Others (...) (sīṭala)' read: 'Others, however, here comment on the meaning in such ways as "Abiding in sīla is abiding at the head (siras); abiding in sīla is staying cool (sīṭala)".'

73.7-8 replace by: "Thus should the wise man develop the manifold advantage to be found in virtue, the root of every perfection."

75.25 for '(sīlaṃ (...) ca)' read '(ādi sīlaṃ patitṭhā ca kalyāṇānaṃ ca mātukam)'

77.10 After kañcuka insert 'The image of cloth occurs at Vism 143 as an illustration of sīla as a complex web of observances which can be easily damaged or torn.'

80.19 delete 'The image of cloth (...) torn'.

92.5. Before 'Table IV' insert 'Since we are concerned specifically with ethical qualities the content of the category of general mental faculties (citta-mahābhūmika-dharmas) is not itemised.'

119.15-16 delete and read:
'Manasā ce pasannena, yad aññaṃ anusāsati
Na tena hoti saṃyutto, sānukampā anuddayā ti' [PTS trans.]

129.28 insert fn.18 into main text as new and separate paragraph.

134.9 after vipassanā insert: 'The disagreement is thus between the view of the Theravadin tradition of Sri Lanka, as correctly reported by Dr.Carrithers, and my own interpretation of textual sources as set out herein.'

ABSTRACT

ETHICAL PERFECTION IN BUDDHIST SOTERIOLOGY

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The extent of the ethical component in the Buddha's teachings is often commented upon but has received disproportionately little attention from scholars. This thesis is intended to make a contribution in this area by (i): examining the substantive content of Buddhist ethical categories; (ii) locating ethics and the goal of ethical perfection in the context of the overall soteriological framework elaborated by the Buddha; (iii) offering a characterisation of the formal structure of Buddhist ethics according to the typology of philosophical ethical theory.

The scope of the enquiry will include ethical data from both the Small and Large Vehicles. Previous research has concentrated almost exclusively on the Theravāda system and this has resulted in a truncated presentation of Buddhist ethics which has failed to reveal the underlying structure and its development through time. The present discussion therefore proceeds in a roughly chronological sequence in the selection of its data, considering first of all material from Theravādin sources (both Canonical and commentarial) and passing on to an investigation of the systematisation of ethical categories in the Abhidharma of the Small Vehicle as found in the scheme of the Sarvāstivāda preserved in the Abhidharmakośa. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, an account of Mahāyāna ethics is offered drawing mainly on the Śīla-pāṭala of the Bodhisattvabhūmi.

The final two chapters (5 & 6) discuss two influential theories of ethics elaborated in the Western tradition which bear a prima facie resemblance to the theoretical structure of Buddhist ethics. Chapter 5 will deal with Utilitarianism and its resemblance to Buddhism, and Chapter 6 will be devoted to the Aristotelian ethical system. My conclusion will be that the Aristotelian model provides the closest analogue to Buddhism and a preliminary attempt will be made to pursue certain points of contact as an indication of the direction for future research. The overall argument, which is cumulative throughout the thesis, will be that ethical perfection in Buddhism is an integral and inalienable component in the perfection of human nature envisaged and attained by the Buddha. This, together with the intellectual perfection epitomised by the attainment of insightful knowledge (paññā), constitutes the Summum Bonum or complete good for man.

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CONVENTIONS

- (i) Translations are my own unless indicated to the contrary in the text or bibliography
- (ii) The Pali or Sanskrit forms of words (e.g. sīla/śīla) are used interchangeably as the context demands.
- (iii) Foreign words are underlined: Anglicised variants are not (e.g. Kamma/Kammic)
- (iv) Diacriticals are not inserted in quotations or citations where they are absent in the original.
- (v) Notes will be found at the end of each Chapter
- (vi) Figures 1-3 will be found at the end of Chapter Six

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations follow those of the PTS Dictionary with the addition or exception of the following:

Adhs	<u>Abhidharmasamuccaya</u>
Abhs	<u>Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha</u>
Aṣṭa	<u>Aṣṭasahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā</u>
Asl	<u>Atthasālinī</u>
BCA	<u>Bodhicaryāvatāra</u>
Bhāṣya	<u>Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya</u>
BJS	<u>Brahmajālasutta/Brahmajālasūtra</u>
Bo.bhū	<u>Bodhisattva-bhūmi</u>
BPMS	<u>Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣa-Sūtra</u>
DhSam	<u>Dharma-Samuccaya</u>
Dhs	<u>Dhammasaṅgāṇī</u>
Dialogues	<u>Dīgha-Nikāya</u> tr.
Dīpa	<u>Abhidharmadīpa</u>
EB	<u>Encyclopedia of Buddhism</u>
EE	<u>Eudemian Ethics</u>
ERE	<u>Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics</u>
HOS	<u>Harvard Oriental Series</u>
IHQ	<u>Indian Historical Quarterly</u>
JAAR	<u>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</u>
Jewel	<u>The Jewel Ornament of Liberation</u>
JRAS	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</u>
JRE	<u>Journal of Religious Ethics</u>
Kośa	<u>Abhidharmakośa</u>
Laṅk	<u>Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra</u>

M.Av	<u>Madhyamakāvatāra</u>
Madhu	<u>Madhuratthavilāsinī</u>
MCB	<u>Mélange Chinoise Bouddhique</u>
MM	<u>Magna Moralia</u>
MPPS	<u>Mahā-Prajñā-Pāramitā-Śāstra</u>
M.Saṃgr	<u>Mahāyāna-Saṃgraha</u>
MSA	<u>Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra</u>
MSB	<u>Mahāyāna-Saṃgraha-Bhāṣya</u>
MSU	<u>Mahāyāna-Saṃgraha-Upanibandhanam</u>
NE	<u>Nicomachean Ethics</u>
Pañjikā	<u>Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā</u>
PEW	<u>Philosophy East and West</u>
Poussin	Louis de la Vallée-Poussin
PTC	<u>Pali Tipitaka Concordance</u>
PTS	Pali Text Society
Record	<u>A Record of the Buddhist Religion</u>
RGSG	<u>Ratnagūṇasaṃcayagāthā</u>
Saund	<u>Saundarananda</u>
SBB	Sacred Books of the Buddhists
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
Śikṣā	<u>Śikṣāsamuccaya</u>
SLJH	<u>Śrī Laṅkā Journal of the Humanities</u>
SSidhi	<u>Satyasiddhiśāstra</u>
Suhrll	<u>Suhrillekha</u>
Śū.Sam	<u>Śūramgama-samādhi-sūtra</u>
Thag	<u>Theraḡāthā</u>
Thig	<u>Therīgāthā</u>
tr.	translator/translation

VKNS	<u>Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra</u>
VMTS	<u>Vijñaptimātratā-Siddhi</u>
Vyākhyā	<u>Sphuṭārtha-Abhidharmakośa-Vyākhyā</u>

INTRODUCTION

What is good, what is bad? What is right, what wrong? What ought I to do or not to do? What, when I have done it, will be for my unhappiness ... or for my happiness?

Lakkhana-sutta

Questions of the above kind are the starting point of ethical enquiry, yet ethics, as an independent philosophical discipline, has not attained in Buddhism the autonomy and distinctiveness which it has in the West. For Buddhists, it seems, ethical problems do not raise themselves outside the sphere of the religious (or Dhamma) and answers to the problems of Dhamma are to be found in the pursuit of Dhamma itself rather than raised from the sidelines. As one progresses in Dhamma the answer to these problems will be known, and in the face of an ethical dilemma one will know instinctively what to do and how to act. To this extent Buddhist ethics is essentially aretaic: it rests upon the cultivation of personal virtue, the culmination of which is the perfection of Buddhahood. This is the state of the full development and harmonious integration of human potential, and in a situation of moral choice one who has achieved this goal both knows what to do and does it without doubt or hesitation. The purely intellectual consideration of questions of the kind raised in the quotation above, therefore, is not a matter which occupies the mind of such a

person. For those who are yet engaged in the quest for perfection the normative content of Dhamma has been extensively expounded by the Buddha: the urgency now is for implementation rather than questioning.¹

The Buddha's normative response to the questions of ethics is to be found within the framework of a Path or Way (magga), and specifically in the Noble Eightfold Path under its first division (khandha) dealing with matters of moral conduct (sīla). In considering ethics and its place in Buddhist soteriology my purpose, briefly stated, is to enquire into the meaning of sīla and its role in the scheme of the Eightfold Path. My objectives are threefold: i) to enquire into the meaning and content of sīla; ii) to relate sīla to the overall conception of human good culminating in liberation as expounded by the Buddha; iii) to put forward a hypothesis concerning the formal characterisation of the Buddhist ethical system.

To begin with it may be helpful to locate the present contribution in the context of existing studies of Buddhist ethics. After this I shall indicate briefly the matters I will be concerned with and outline my strategy and overall approach (methodology).

The study of Buddhist Ethics has been neglected by Western scholarship. Recent decades have witnessed an explosion of interest in all aspects of Buddhist Studies while this fundamental dimension of the Buddhist ethos, which is of

relevance across the boundaries of sect and school, has become an academic backwater. Only recently have the signs appeared that this neglect is to be remedied and the initiative has not been taken by students of Buddhism but from within the 'emerging and yet ill-defined area of the comparative study of religious ethics' [Little & Twiss 1978:251]. The lead in this field has come from the United States and has sparked off a burgeoning periodical literature dealing inter alia with the ethics of Buddhism.² Much of the work on Buddhism is in the form of tentative forays into the field and there has as yet (to my knowledge) been no full-scale attempt to provide a characterisation of the formal structure of the Buddhist ethical system in terms of an overall theoretical model using the typology of philosophical ethics. In this thesis I put forward a candidate for this role in the hope that the attempt itself, however inadequately accomplished here, will provide the orientation for further studies by identifying at least the genus, if not the species, of the subject under investigation.

Ethics, as a branch of philosophy, has many subdivisions. For classificatory purposes the discipline may be thought of as having three aspects: i) Descriptive Ethics ii) Normative Ethics and iii) Metaethics. Broadly speaking the job of the first is to give an objective account of the moral prescriptions, norms and values of a community or group and to show how these principles or precepts ('moral action guides') are (or would be) applied in specific contexts. The scope of the enquiry here may also include empirical data

which bears upon ethical matters, such as human psychology and descriptive-theoretical models of human nature [Frankena 1973:4].

The task of normative ethics is the derivation or formulation of ethical rules and standards and the provision of justification and a method for the validation or defence of the norms it seeks to establish. Finally, metaethics is concerned with the meaning of moral terms, moral reasoning, the logic of ethical legitimation and validation, and the overall question of the vindication of the claims of competing ethical systems.

Most of the work done so far on Buddhist ethics (which has been concerned almost exclusively with Theravāda ethics) has, as Razzino points out, come into the first category:

'The bulk of the literature on Theravāda Buddhist ethics has been descriptive. Scholars have gone to the Pali Canon and have compiled, systematised and represented moral injunctions, prescriptions and anecdotes much as they occur in the texts and with no more explication than that given by the Buddha who often spoke in metaphors and parables' [1981:4].

The kind of cataloguing which Razzino identifies as the work of descriptive ethics would be regarded by some as merely the preliminary stages of the enquiry. Once this information has been made available attention shifts to a more abstract level and questions concerning e.g. the logic or mode of moral reasoning and overall pattern of justification exhibited by an ethical system may be raised. Such is the expanded conception of the discipline of descriptive ethics held by Little and Twiss, for whom

descriptive ethics is 'A scientific meta-theoretical enquiry into the ethical discourse of a specified informant or group' [1978:11]. The present work falls largely within this expanded conception of the field of Descriptive Ethics. In investigating the meaning of sīla in Buddhist sources the work is primarily descriptive: Chapter One, which gives an account of the basic features of Hīnayāna sīla comes into this category, as does Chapter Four which does the same in respect of Mahāyāna śīla. So too Chapter Two, which explores the Abhidharmic conception of the function of moral virtue. Chapter Three is devoted to a critique of a specific conception of the soteriological role of sīla proposed by King and Spiro: my claim here is, in essence, that they have misdescribed the role of sīla in relation to Nirvāṇa. The remaining two chapters are broadly the provenance of metaethical concerns. In Chapters Five and Six I attempt to clarify the theoretical basis of Buddhist Ethics by considering it in the light of two Western ethical models: Utilitarianism (Ch.5) and Aristotelianism (Ch.6). Although this constitutes to some degree a venture into the field of Comparative Descriptive Ethics I do not consider the present work as belonging to that discipline: my interest is confined to Buddhist Ethics and the ethical theory and data of other traditions are introduced only insofar as is relevant to the understanding of Buddhism. Before discussing the methodology and conclusions of the present work further it will be helpful to locate it in the context of existing studies of Buddhist Ethics.

The first full-length study of Buddhist Ethics was Tachibana The Ethics of Buddhism. The book is based on a doctoral thesis submitted in 1922 and published virtually without alteration for the first time in 1926. The originality of the topic is noted in the Preface where the author states 'So far as I know, no work is specifically devoted to the study of this single subject' [1926:ix]. Although we read in the Foreword to the second impression [1975] that 'Much has been written about Buddhism in the intervening years since this book was published' [p.v] it is sobering to reflect that the number of books on Buddhist Ethics published in this period can be counted on the fingers of one hand. A measure of this neglect is the fact that Tachibana's pioneering thesis has languished unconsulted in the Bodleian Library for over half a century.

Tachibana's contribution was confined to the level of simple descriptive ethics. His purpose was 'To explain the practical morality of Buddhism' rather than 'merely to abstract its moral idea and philosophise it' [1926:xi]. His central strategy is to attempt a classification of Buddhist ethics 'according to modern method' [1926:95] (left undefined) by subsuming it under the heading of fourteen virtues with a chapter devoted to each. These virtues (Self-Restraint, Temperance, Contentment, Celibacy, Patience, Purity, Humility, Benevolence, Liberality, Reverence, Gratitude, Toleration, Veracity and Righteousness), which do not correspond to any Buddhist formulation, are used as headings under which data taken from Pali sources is accumulated and

filed.

Poussin's La Morale Bouddhique published in the following year [1927] takes its data from a later source, the Abhidharmakośa. The book is essentially a summary of the theories of karma held by the schools of the Sanskrit Abhidharma tradition. It is useful in two respects: firstly as a handbook which reduces Vasubandhu's diversified coverage to manageable proportions; and secondly it focusses attention on non-Theravādin materials and reveals the developments which had taken place after the Theravādin Abhidhamma had become established. The debates between the Abhidharmic schools of the kind recorded in the Kośa are the closest Buddhism comes to the subject of moral philosophy. A number of interesting issues are explored, such as the nature of moral intention (cetanā) and its relation to action, the status of actions performed in ignorance of moral principles and material facts, the classification of actions into various stages and degrees of seriousness, etc. Much of the discussion, however, relates to technical matters and is bound up with the elucidation of minor Abhidharmic classifications with the result that the ethical issues are not fully or consistently explored. Like Tachibana's Ethics of Buddhism, Poussin's La Morale Bouddhique is useful as a source of reference but not as an account of Buddhist Ethics in the abstract. According to N.N.Law, writing in the Poussin Memorial Volume, ethics was not a field to which the great scholar felt particularly drawn. 'In his Morale du Bouddhique' [sic], writes Law, 'he has dealt with the ethical

aspect of Buddhism - a subject in which he did not feel much interest' [p.v]. In fact La Morale Bouddhique is best regarded as an offshoot of Poussin's translation of the Kośa rather than a foray into the field of ethics, and when the book appeared in 1927 Poussin was halfway through the publication of his magnum opus.

Following the appearance of the above two works there was no significant contribution until 1964 when Winston King, referring to 'the almost total lack of contemporary material on Buddhist ethics in English' [1964:5] published his In the Hope of Nibbana subtitled 'Theravāda Buddhist Ethics'. King specified his interest in six aspects of Theravāda Buddhist ethics. 1) What is the relation of ethics to the total structure of Buddhist doctrine and practice? 2) How does Buddhist ethics relate itself to Buddhist psychology? 3) What is the effect of the Nibbāna-Kamma (Nirvāna-Karma) polarity of emphasis upon ethical values? 4) How does Buddhism practically and specifically analyze ethical goodness and badness in the sphere of concrete action? 5) Is there a genuine social ethic in Buddhism? 6) What, if any, new ethical developments are to be found in contemporary Theravāda Buddhism? [1964:v.f].

These are fundamental questions which map out specific fields within the domain of ethical enquiry. Answers to the first three of King's questions will be proposed here although the overall approach will be very different from King's own. In particular in Chapter ~~Three~~ I disagree sharply with the answer

given by King and Melford Spiro to Q.3 concerning the alleged Nibbāna-Kamma polarity. King's book contains a number of useful insights and discusses problematic issues in a thoughtful way. Its major drawback is the lack of a coherent overall conception of the relevance of ethical values to the scheme of Buddhist soteriology.

1970 saw the publication of Saddhatissa's Buddhist Ethics which has come to be accepted as the standard source for the substantive content of Buddhist ethics. In making the Buddha's basic moral teachings available in a clear and comprehensive form and observing the traditional classifications it constitutes a considerable advance on the work of Tachibana.

In 1978 two books appeared in the field of Comparative Religious Ethics [CRE] which were of relevance to Buddhism, one of which has tended to eclipse the other in terms of its impact. The more influential of the two, Little and Twiss's Comparative Religious Ethics, explores in detail the methodology of the discipline and applies its findings to three 'test cases', one of which is Theravāda Buddhism. The authors classify the conceptual distinctions between moral, religious and legal action-guiding norms and principles, and also examine the structure of practical justification adopted by religio-ethical systems. The methodology of Little and Twiss is to examine the content of moral codes with a view to elucidating the strategy for justification embodied in each. This formal strategy is then examined at three levels: first

in its 'situational application', or the manner in which norms are applied in concrete situations; second, for the pattern of validation employed, for instance whether deontological or teleological; and third, with reference to the question of vindication, which examines the grounds for accepting the proffered validatory norms. Little and Twiss's book has sparked off a considerable debate: while their conceptual clarification of the subject matter of the discipline is a major advance, the methodological procedure they recommend is feared by some to be inflexible and perhaps inappropriate in the context of cultures whose conceptual categories are still imperfectly understood. As James Childress put it when discussing their work in relation to Buddhism, 'Hardened conceptual tools may break as much as they dig out, and inappropriate tools may damage the terrain' [1979:4]. It must be said, I think, that the application of the Little and Twiss methodology to the data of Theravāda Buddhist ethics does not produce results which are spectacular. On the other hand, the burden of their work is clarificatory rather than investigative and it may require further time for its implications to be assessed by Buddhist scholars.

The other book published in 1978 was Roderick Hindery Comparative Ethics in Hindu and Buddhist Traditions. The title is slightly misleading in that only one chapter of the book (Chapter X) is devoted to Buddhist ethics. The author states, 'I have dared to include my addendum about Buddhist moral texts within both the book and the title', admitting

that it is 'merely an introduction' [p.xv]. At the same time, Hindery is unique in breaking the taboo which had developed around the study of Mahāyāna ethics and devoting his chapter to this theme. He refers to a 'lacuna' or 'perhaps a total gap' in the contemporary analysis of Mahāyāna Buddhist ethics [1978:223].

Hindery's choice of material for analysis is drawn from Far-Eastern Buddhism, particularly the Pure Land and Zen schools [p.239], which means that his conclusions cannot be generalised without caution. Nevertheless, his breakaway from the strait jacket of Theravādin sources introduces a new perspective: by looking backward at the Hīnayāna from the vantage point of the Mahāyāna it is possible to detect more clearly the value-structure of the early tradition; and by looking at the response of the Mahāyāna itself it is easier to observe the process of ethical recalibration. Those writers who have confined their attention to Theravāda sources in isolation have suffered from a lack of sensitivity to the subtly shifting pattern of development within the tradition as a whole.

This defect is mitigated to some extent in the most recent full-length study to appear, namely G.S.P.Misra Development of Buddhist Ethics [1984]. The work must be commended for broadening out the study of Buddhist ethics to include chapters on the psychological analysis of ethical data in the Abhidharma (Ch.3) and the moral values of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva (Ch.5). A final chapter (Ch.6) explores the

transcendence of ethical values in the Tantric systems. The author defines his objective as follows:

'The present work seeks to study Buddhist ethics as a developmental process not only in terms of inner dynamics inherent in its doctrinal and ethical formulations but also in terms of its response to various historical compulsions and the ensuing willingness on the part of its followers to introduce into its general framework novelties of forms and expressions' [1984:ix].

Yet although Misra locates his subject matter in an expanded philosophical and historical context he provides little in the way of a novel theoretical interpretation of the data. Much of the material which is presented is not original and it receives no new treatment from the author. The discussion of the Abhidharma in Chapter 3 admittedly 'makes evident the close relationship between psychology and ethics as it was conceived in Buddhism' [p.69] but fails to integrate its conclusions into a coherent theoretical scheme. And Chapter 6, while recognising the new ethical dimension introduced by the Mahāyāna, avoids discussion of the problematical ethical implications of upāya.

A number of problems are touched upon but left unresolved. On the relationship between ethics and the summum bonum the author follows what might be termed the 'transcendancy thesis':

'The Dhamma of Buddha was practical and dynamic, it was was [sic] also mystical. True to its mystical form, it presented an intermixture of religion and ethics as an inseparable pair, the latter being not an end in itself but a means leading to a higher stage which was a state of complete transcendence' [1984:30 my emphasis].

Yet Misra seems in some confusion about this since only two pages earlier he differs from the above view and misquotes Anesaki with approval on the non-instrumental relationship

between morality and wisdom:

Conduct and intuition are inseparably united; they form an essential pair, each performing its specific part with the help of the other. "Morality", remarks M. Anesaki, "is [sc. not] merely a means to perfection [...] it is an integral part of the perfection ..." [1984:28].

Overall the book must be commended for its scope and for rising occasionally to the discussion of theoretical issues and problems. In the end, however, too many problematic issues are avoided or go unrecognised and the opportunity to elaborate a structural model of the tradition is missed.

Turning to unpublished research material, reference must be made to the thesis of Andrea Razzino [1981] which, although promising in conception, fails to provide detailed evidence and argumentation in support of its central claim. Razzino claims, as I shall here, that ethical goodness is a central feature of the Buddha's perfection and, together with the intellectual perfection expressed in terms of liberating insight (paññā), constitutes the final human good. Razzino [1981:94] quotes the following statement by Rāhula, which expresses a view central to her thesis and to my own:

'For a man to be perfect there are two qualities that he should develop equally: compassion (karuṇā) on one side and wisdom (paññā) on the other. Here compassion represents love, charity, kindness, tolerance, and such noble qualities on the emotional side, or qualities of the heart, while wisdom would stand for the intellectual side or qualities of the mind. If one develops only the emotional neglecting the intellectual, one may become a good-hearted fool; while to develop only the intellectual side neglecting the emotional may turn one into a hard-headed intellect without feeling for others. Therefore, to be perfect one has to develop both equally. That is the aim of the Buddhist way of life: in it wisdom and compassion are inseparably linked together' [1978:46].

Razzino's support for her conclusions takes the form of a

survey of basic Buddhist concepts (such as Dhamma) where the connection with karuṇā is not always evident, and she supplies little textual evidence in support of her claim that it occupies the central position she suggests. In short, the conclusions are presented without sufficient evidence to support them. I hope that this defect has been avoided in the present work, where the conclusions are arrived at after an analysis of sīla in Buddhist sources and are couched in the context of an overall structural analysis and classification of Buddhist ethics. Also, in the present work, the countervailing evidence which is problematic for the view of sīla I propose is examined and reinterpreted, whereas Razzino makes no attempt to consider the difficulties which such evidence presents for her thesis. Finally, as a result of her failure to come to terms with these matters, Razzino is left in a quāḍṛy^a over the precise role of ethics in Buddhist soteriology: sometimes she sees it as a means to an end [e.g. 1981:44,72,135] and speaks of ethics in utilitarian terms [p.69]; yet on the other hand her central claim is that karuṇā has a strictly non-instrumental status and is a constituent of the final good itself. Thus on the same page [p.95] karuṇā is characterised as essentially other-directed yet at the same time is said to be cultivated primarily for one's own benefit as a means to some further end.

Of interest also, mainly by way of contrast with the conclusions reached in the present work, is Gudmunsen's rather indigestible M.Phil dissertation [1973], the gist of which is contained in his 1972 paper. Gudmunsen's somewhat

tangled philosophical argumentation leads him to a double-decker conception of Buddhist ethics comprising 'Higher Order Evaluation' (relating to matters concerning Nibbāna), and 'Lower Order Evaluation' (matters concerning Sīla). The distinction in turn rests upon a posited 'absolute logical and ontological gulf between Nibbāna and the conditioned world' [1973:16f], such that the concerns of ethics proper to the latter can find no foothold in the former. Given this dichotomy, sīla becomes merely 'the first part of the way to Nibbāna to be "got over"' [1973:2].

As of less relevance to our present concerns may be cited the work of Stephenson [1970] and Anuruddha [1972] in the field of Buddhist social ethics. The former claims that his study includes 'an examination of that second major branch of the tradition known as Mahayana or the Great Vehicle' [1970:iv]. However, the work as a whole, apparently relying entirely on sources in translation, contributes nothing of substance to an understanding of the dynamic of Mahāyāna ethics and fails to elucidate patterns of evolution or continuity. Anuruddha's lengthy thesis, on the other hand, confines itself to Pali material and is a useful source of information on early Buddhist social attitudes, although not embarking upon a discussion of Buddhist ethics in abstracto.

The short thesis of Rajapaksa [1975] may be thought to be misleadingly entitled in that the discussion of ethics is confined to Part II and is limited to some fifty pages in length. No attempt is made to establish that the Nikāyas do

in fact embody a doctrine of ethical hedonism, and the anticipated 'philosophical investigation' of such a view is not forthcoming. The author himself concludes:

'Our investigation has been limited to giving a picture of the doctrine implicit in his sermons showing it at least to be a coherent position, rather than attempting to present a fully argued philosophically rigorous ethical theory developed out of the views of the Buddha himself expressed in the Nikāyas' [1975:129].

Finally in this connection may be cited the work of Bush [1960], the aims of which are defined as follows:

'The purpose of this study of ethics in ancient Hinduism and early Buddhism is to examine critically the ethical material in the scriptures of both religions in order to assess the validity of the assertion that the early Buddhist movement injected a stronger ethical dimension into the existing Indian religious scene' [1960:247].

The section on 'Ethics in Early Buddhism' (Part II) discusses at a fairly general level the role of the Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha as foundations for Buddhist ethics. The author is led to the conclusion that 'in the somewhat muddled situation that confronts us':

'The only decisive sense in which Buddhism represents a moral advance over the existing Hinduism is in its moralization of the doctrine of karma: rebirth, higher or lower, is the consequence of moral or immoral deeds' [1960:226].

In the following section we consider the views of those authors mentioned above and others who have made an attempt to assess the theoretical character of the ethical teachings of the Buddha.

(11)

Of the small number of scholars who have studied the subject few have put forward hypotheses as to the formal structure of Buddhist ethics. One senses a reluctance amongst commentators, who readily acknowledge the centrality of ethics, to define its role with precision in terms of Buddhist soteriology. The importance of ethics in Buddhism is frequently stressed. Wijesekera claims boldly: 'It is universally recognised that Buddhism can claim to be the most ethical of all religio-philosophical systems of the world' [1971:49]. Saddhatissa, in the subtitle to his Buddhist Ethics, characterises ethics as the 'essence of Buddhism'. Poussin affirms that 'Buddhism is, in its essence, an ethical discipline' [1927:viii], while Mrs. Rhys Davids states in her introduction to the Dhs 'Buddhist philosophy is ethical first and last - this is beyond dispute' [xxii].

In general terms there are two schools of thought on the role and status of ethics in Buddhism, the former claiming more adherents than the latter. They are distinguished by their location of the possibility of moral action with reference to enlightenment. The first school advocates a linear soteriology in which morality is a preliminary stage or stepping stone to the intellectual goal of wisdom; thus sīla leads to samādhi which leads in turn to paññā. Wijesekera provides a good example of this view:

'This Path is said to consist of three stages or parts [...]. The first of these stages is sīla or ethical conduct, and practical morals have a meaning for the disciple only till

such time as he arrives at the next stage of the Path, namely, concentration (samādhī). But the goal is not reached even then, and a still higher stage of development must be gone through and this is technically known as paññā (wisdom) [1971:62].

A further presumption made by this school is that the attainment of paññā marks the final transcendence of all moral considerations. The second school reverses this position and holds that moral action is only possible in the post-enlightenment condition: thus it is the enlightenment experience which marks not the end but the beginning of moral potential by removing the afflictions of ignorance (avijjā), which fatally prejudice authentic ethical conduct.

I summarise briefly below some of the suggestions which have been made concerning the theoretical classification of Buddhist ethics without at this stage attempting to 'disentangle the tangle' of views and opinions. Many of the views will fall into one or other of the two camps outlined above. In (iii) below I will simply state where my own conclusions complement or differ from those mentioned here. The reasons for my conclusions will, I hope, become plain during the course of the discussion in the following chapters.

The kinds of question relevant to a formal enquiry into Buddhist ethics have been discussed briefly by Jayatilleke. 'Is it', he asks, 'egotistic or altruistic? Is it relativistic or absolutistic? Is it objective or subjective? Is it deontological or teleological? Is it naturalistic or non-naturalistic?' [1970:194]. In a more detailed discussion

P.D.Premasiri refers to the kind of theoretical issues which have occupied ethicists in the Western philosophical tradition, questions such as "Are moral judgements subjective or objective?' 'Is 'good' defineable in terms of some natural property or is it a non-natural property to be appreciated by intuition?' 'What is the logical relationship between statements of fact and statements of value?" etc. [1975:31].

Responding to the metaethical questions he himself poses, Jayatilleke is of the opinion that the Buddhist ethic is 'a form of enlightened egoism or enlightened altruism, which could best be characterised as an ethical universalism.' In terms of this framework, somewhat paradoxically, 'the egoist must develop altruistic virtues for his own good' [1970:195]. On the relativism/absolutism question he concludes 'while denying absolutism and recognising relativism, the objectivity of moral values is not denied' [1970:195]. He suggests that the ethical theory of Buddhism is 'teleological rather than deontological' in character [1970:197], right actions being an instrumental means to procure the final good. 'What is instrumentally good to achieve this end is regarded as good as a means. They consist mainly of right actions and the other factors that help in bringing about what is ultimately good' [1970a:262]. Finally, the ethical propositions of Buddhism contain 'a factual component and an emotive-prescriptive component' [1970:192].

Premasiri, after a more detailed examination of evidence from the Pali Canon, concludes that Buddhist ethics is objectivist

and naturalist.

'In conclusion it may be said that the implication of the moral discussion recorded in the Pali canonical literature is that early Buddhism considered ethically evaluative statements as involving genuine judgements, which can be found to be true or false. In morals there is genuine knowledge to be acquired and this knowledge rests largely on empirical facts. In maintaining this position early Buddhism stands with the position taken by the naturalist philosophers' [1975:44].

In the course of the discussion he rejects the possibilities of Emotivism, Prescriptivism, and Intuitionism as appropriate characterisations of Buddhist ethics.

In the full-length studies referred to earlier we find no attempt by Tachibana [1926], Poussin [1927], or Saddhatissa [1970] to define the structural form of the system. King [1964] seems generally content to bypass these questions: "Ethics' for Buddhism is psychological analysis and mind control, not the search for a foundation of ethical principles, a hierarchical arrangement of ethical values, or an enquiry into their objectivity' [1964:4f]. He does, however, at a number of points move towards a discussion of theoretical matters. He considers somewhat inconclusively the issues of relativism and absolutism [1964:70-79] and the tension between them in Buddhist cultures. Thus, on the one hand, in view of the doctrine of karma, 'We seem to be led towards a relativist and instrumentalist conception of ethical good, characterised by hedonistic overtones'. Yet on the other hand most Theravādin Buddhists affirm that the Five Precepts 'embody universally valid moral principles' [1964:72f]. King also discusses the relation of Nibbāna to ethical values [1964:88-106] but is hampered by a

misconception of the relationship between kamma and nibbāna, which I discuss more fully in Chapter Three.

Brief characterisations are provided by Poussin, who speaks of Buddhist ethics as 'eudaimonistic' [1927:28], and Mrs. Rhys Davids who writes:

'The Buddhist [...] was a hedonist, and hence, whether he himself would have admitted it or not, his morality was dependent on, in the phrase of British ethics, utilitarian, and not intuitionist' [Dhs tr.:xc1].

A suggestion that her husband did not follow her in this view may be found in his reference to 'The fundamental Buddhist doctrine that good must be pursued without any ulterior motive' [SBE XI:222]. Dayal, however, is in no doubt that 'Pure hedonism thus seems to be the ruling theory of Buddhist ethics' [1932:205], while Kalupahana notes that 'The emphasis on happiness as the goal of ethical conduct seems to give the Buddhist theory a utilitarian character' [1976:61]. Describing the Buddhist ethical teachings J.B. Pratt concluded: 'This system may be classed as a form of altruistic hedonism' [1928:20]. Furthermore:

'The principle on which the good and evil forms of happiness are to be distinguished is explicitly stated. It is the principle of utilitarianism' [1928:28].

And finally:

'The Buddha's ethic might, then, well be called Stoic, but the principle underlying and justifying his Stoicism, to which he makes appeal when argument is needed, is his fundamental utilitarian or (altruistic) hedonism' [1928:32].

The conception of Buddhist ethics as utilitarian is especially prevalent among those versed in the Theravādin tradition, many of whom regard ethics as merely a preparatory

stage on the path to enlightenment. In his Foreword to Miss Horner's essay The Basic Position of Sīla, G.P.Malalasekera notes that 'Buddhism has never regarded Sīla as an end in itself but only as a means to an end. This conception of morality is, I believe, unique to Buddhism.' The conception of ethics as instrumental to a non-moral end is not, of course, unique to Buddhism. It would, however, be unusual in the context of a system of religious ethics, of which I take Buddhism to be an instance,³ and which is perhaps Malalasekera's point. Horner herself in her essay goes on to speak of moral conduct as 'no more than the beginning, the A.B.C. of the process of development which culminates in the Highest' [1950:25]. She prefaces this with the comment that in the context of morality 'it is quite inadequate to think that good is for good's sake' [1950:24]. In the same vein Wijesekera writes: 'In fact early Buddhism administers a warning to the aspirant to master morality but not to allow morality to get the better of him, and it is clearly laid down that even virtuous conduct has to be transcended at one stage' [1971:62]. Anuruddha, speaking of 'the practicable nature of Buddhist morality and the utilitarian purpose that it serves' [1972:355], comes to the following conclusion:

'To distinguish what is good and what is bad Buddhism puts forth two criteria such as 1 cetanā, the intention which drives one to act and vipāka, the results brought about by the action. [sic] Of these two Buddhism seems to have put much more emphasis on the second and therefore Buddhist ethics may be regarded as Utilitarian in character [1972:434].

Saddhatissa [1970:19] describes the 'ultimate ideal aim of Buddhism' as 'a supramundane state beyond good and evil'

while Tachibana characterises the Arhat as 'not immoral' but 'supra-moral' [1926:55]. Bush suggests that:

'We are thus led in the direction that the state of the Arahat, the goal toward which the Buddhist Middle Path tends, is not primarily concerned with the moral life, for this is past. [...] The fruits of arahatship are certainly not to be found in any new service to mankind, any heightening of the love for one's neighbour, any good deeds done by a new person' [1960:196f].

Those who hold views of the above kind commonly make reference to the parable of the Raft [M.i.304f], which is interpreted to mean that ethical considerations are ultimately to be transcended. Thus Horner:

'Morality is to be left behind [...] like a raft once the crossing over has been safely accomplished. In other words, the arahat is above good and evil, and has transcended both' [1950:11].

The implication of this viewpoint is summarised by Hindery:

'If the regulation of one's social relations is ultimately orientated to the eradication of ignorance and the attainment of 'personal' enlightenment, then some would contend that Theravāda morality is no morality at all, but a form of philosophical egoism, subjectively amoral' [1978:231].

In a brief attempt at theoretical classification Misra contrasts Intuitionism with Ideal Utilitarianism and identifies Buddhism with the former:

'It would be well to make here a brief comparison between two diametrically opposed systems of ethical thought, viz., Intuitionism and Ideal Utilitarianism, and then to see the Buddhist position in this regard. The former is identified with the Kantian system of ethics. [...] Buddha would obviously belong to the Intuitionist school of ethical thought' [1984:43].

Misra is correct here in recognising the proximity of Buddhism to Kantian principles rather than to utilitarian ones. Unfortunately he does not develop this point further, and his general stance on the instrumental role of ethics seems at variance with the above conclusion. In fact the

following comments, made only a few pages later, seem to suggest the reverse position, i.e. that Buddhist ethics is utilitarian and not intuitionist:

'The perfect man is uncontaminated not only by evil or vice but also by good or virtue. Perfection knows no dualism. It is a disposition of mind in which good and evil both become equally undesirable [...] In the Buddhist texts this transcendence of dhamma in the final stage finds enunciation by way of the parable of Raft' [sic] [1984:46f].

Contraindications to the utilitarian presumption include the tendency among Theravādins to regard the precepts as moral absolutes, as noted by King above, and also the ideal of moral perfection as an end in itself as defined in the conduct of the enlightened and in particular the Buddha. Thus Pratt, while describing Buddhist ethics as utilitarian, also states that 'the two cardinal virtues of Buddhism are wisdom and love' [1928:36]. We may also recall Rāhula's comment quoted above concerning the importance of the cultivation of both paññā and karuṇā on the path to perfection. This is echoed by Saddhatissa: 'Remembering the Mahāprajñā of the Buddhas', he points out, 'it is incumbent on one to remember their Mahākaruṇā' [1970:50]. The point is emphasised again later: 'What cannot be maintained', he writes, 'is that either morality or wisdom should exist independently of each other' [1970:68]. In a passing reference to this alternative conception of the role of ethics Hindery suggests the possibility that in Buddhism 'morality is not merely a dispensable scaffold for faith, mind-culture or enlightenment. It is rather their symbolic (dual/non-dual or transdual) embodiment and in some sense their verification'

[1978:xv]. Razzino, while in the main adopting a position of this second kind, is forced into an ambiguous stance by evidence for the first position which she is unable to reconcile. She offers no theoretical account of Buddhist ethics in terms of answers to the questions posed by Jayatilleke above, nor does she elucidate the formal ethical structure through which these ends are attained.

If we turn to the periodical literature: the thesis of ethical transcendence was suggested by E.J. Thomas in 1914:

'But though the process is largely ethical, the end is not so. The end is entire detachment from the world of birth and death, and the ethical character remains only so far as right conduct is considered essential for attaining it.' [1914:343].

More recently the case for the dislocation of ethics from Nirvāṇa has been put by Gudmunsen [1972], arguing that 'Ethics Gets in the Way'. He allows ethics only an instrumental role in facilitating the transition from the conditioned world to Nibbāna. A mirror-image of Gudmunsen's position may be found in the view expressed by R.H. Jones that it is the Arhat who is moral (or potentially so) while those still on the Path are engaged in a non-moral pursuit. 'Thus', he writes, 'the basic path required by Theravāda Buddhism is non-moral in leading to nibbāna, but moral activity may be opted for in the enlightened way of life' [1979:371]. An earlier statement of Jones' position is articulated by Dahlke:

'This, briefly, is the primal source of the whole of Buddhism. Gautama, who later became the Buddha, does not begin his career as a saviour of the world [...] Nothing lies farther from his mind than the welfare of others. He seeks his own salvation, and that only. It is a purely egoistical impulse, but what more natural than that one who suddenly

finds himself in a burning house should seek first of all to save himself?

However, after he has attained this salvation, after he has worked his own way out of the sea of sorrow to the shore of safety, after he has reached the blest apprehension "I am saved", his mind turns back to his suffering fellowmen, and only now in this retrospective motion do we see love emerge in the shape of that compassion which comprehends' [1908:130].

Such a view, in turn, depends on an understanding of the doctrine of karma as an impersonal mechanism for personal reward or retribution, which effectively corrodes the interpersonal framework of morality. Thus Dahlke continues:

'That cordiality which forgets itself for others, that affection which breeds tenderness and emotion, is entirely wanting here. The whole moral scheme in Buddhism is nothing but a sum in arithmetic set down by a clear, cold egoism; as much as I give to others, as much will come again to me. Kamma is the most exact arithmetician in the world' [1908:130].

In the same vein Dayal writes: 'The Buddhists have developed a precise quantitative view of puñña, which seems to convert their much-vaunted ethics into a sordid system of commercial arithmetic' [1932:189].

Finally, in this connection there is Sally Wang's article 'Can Man go beyond Ethics?' in which she argues against the background of Tantric Buddhism that 'Nothing is forbidden those giants of transcendental wisdom' [1975:150]. And, although 'Buddhism does possess a set of ethics in the Ten Precepts [...] these were intended to be binding on the unenlightened, i.e., the mental children' [1975:142]. In short, 'Buddhism arrived at relativism and situational ethics before the common era' [1975:142].

Opposition to the transcendency thesis is slight but growing.

Directly or indirectly opposing the view that Theravāda Buddhism is amoral and that its ethics has only provisional status may be cited the work of Bastow [1969] (which prompted the rejoinder by Gudmunsen [1972] referred to above), and N.R.Reat [1980], who reveals the inaccuracies and distortions in the work of Jones [1979]. Opposed to the transcendence thesis and its soteriological implications are Swearer [1979:62f], Aronson [1979, 1980] and Reynolds [1979a:13,17ff; cf.1980:139-145].

As far as Mahāyāna ethics is concerned, little has been said. Articles relating to Zen have been written by Brear [1974] and Fox [1971]. Jaques May's lament on the absence of material on Madhyamika ethics [1978:234] has reached only the ears of Gomez [1973]. In the next section I will briefly set out my own position and the methodology through which it is arrived at, at the same time aligning or differentiating my position from the views summarised above.

(iii)

It is my contention that technical problems in Buddhist ethics of the kind raised above can only be successfully resolved when more basic questions concerning the role of ethics in the overall strategy of Buddhist soteriology have been explored. It is only by understanding the ^{architectonic} structure of the system that answers to specific questions will be possible or even meaningful. To this extent I side with those who maintain that the study of Buddhist ethics must proceed along holistic lines [Swearer 1979:63f; Childress 1979:4ff; Reynolds 1980:130].

Practically all the research undertaken so far into Buddhist ethics has focussed narrowly on the Theravāda and has suffered from a lack of perspective in terms of the organic relation between the Large and Small Vehicles. To counteract such a truncated presentation I consider material from both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna sources in a roughly chronological sequence. My principal sources are the Sīlakkhandhavagga of the Dīgha-Nikāya; the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivādins as preserved in the Abhidharmakośa; and the Bodhisattvabhūmi. My methodology is investigative but not theory-independent, and in the course of an analysis of the data I put forward a thesis concerning the overall structure of Buddhist ethics and its role in relationship to Buddhist soteriology. Definitions are not offered at the outset: if it be objected that the enquiry cannot commence until key terms such as 'ethics' and 'morality' are defined [cf. Little & Twiss

1978:1-7] then I am happy to adopt the Little and Twiss concept of a 'moral action-guide', and their definition of a moral statement as 'a statement expressing the acceptance of an action-guide that claims superiority and that is considered as legitimate, in that it is justifiable and other-regarding' [1978:28f].

To some extent the thesis which I put forward here goes 'against the current' of received thought which has developed by consistently approaching Buddhism through its doctrine and philosophy rather than through its ethics. The picture of Buddhism when approached through Sīla is different to that seen when approached through Paññā: in terms of the simplistic stock characterisations it is more 'positive', 'optimistic' and 'life-affirming'. It is to be hoped that greater familiarity with both perspectives will permit a more satisfactory stereoscopic perception of the tradition in the round. Among the positions commonly attributed to Buddhism which I shall implicitly or explicitly reject are the following:

- a) The soteriological goal is wisdom (paññā) alone
- b) Wisdom is transcendent of all ethical values and those who attain it pass beyond good and evil
- c) Paññā is the goal of the supermundane (lokuttara) path and ethical perfection is the goal of the mundane (lokiya) path
- d) Paññā is pursued by monks, Sīla is pursued by laymen
- e) Sīla is merely a preparatory stage for Samādhi
- f) Samādhi is merely a preparatory stage for Paññā
- g) Paññā and Puñña are antithetical

h) Nibbāna is achieved through the eradication of all Kamma.

To anticipate somewhat, my conclusions will be that ethical perfection is a central ingredient in the Buddhist summum bonum. The two basic values or categories of human good which are recognised by Buddhism are moral and intellectual excellence. These values are accepted throughout the tradition although there has been some variation in respect of the importance attached to each of them. In brief, early Buddhism emphasises the latter at the expense of the former while later Buddhism, particularly in some of its Far-Eastern forms, has tended to do the opposite. The cultivation of these powers or excellences depends upon a corresponding potential in human nature, in the absence of which no progress towards the goal could be made. Our enquiry will, therefore, make some reference to Buddhist anthropology [Chapter Two] to establish the connection between the starting point and the goal. The passage from the latter to the former is, I shall argue, achieved through the cultivation of specific virtues which promote a structured participation in the end through its progressive incarnation in the present.

If the above account seems Aristotelian in form, it is no accident. The parallel between Buddhist and Aristotelian ethics is, I believe, quite close in many respects. Aristotle's ethical theory appears to be the closest Western analogue to Buddhist ethics, and is an illuminating guide to an understanding of the Buddhist moral system. This is all

the more so since the exegesis of Aristotelian ethics has reached a more sophisticated level than the study of ethics in Buddhism. Accordingly, we may look to Aristotle for a lead, and to his commentators for guidance in the resolution of complex or difficult points in philosophical ethics. The problems which have been raised and answered there will often (but by no means always) be a guide to the identification and resolution of difficulties in Buddhist ethics. Previous references to Aristotle in the context of Buddhist ethics are almost non-existent,⁴ and Stephenson rejects the possibility of any similarity:

'In looking back at the discipline of ethics we note that its enquiry into the summum bonum has since antiquity, in the West at least, been associated with the Aristotelian notion of happiness. Happiness in turn, again at least in the West, has been strictly associated with a positive Weltanschauung which is presupposed and placed as a burden on the ethical task as such almost before it begins. It is thus time to discard this specifically Western presupposition and let ethics do its task unimpeded' [1970:35]

Stephenson's rejection of a positive characterisation and cumulative experience of the summum bonum stems from a prevalent conception which might be termed a 'Zoroastrian' view of Buddhism, according to which Nirvāna is 'the natural result or the logical conclusion to an ethical system which understood all of life and existence as crushing, suffering and deceitful' [1970:96]. According to this view, 'When not in the experience of Nirvana one lives penultimately, anticipating Nirvana while caught in the web of socio-political misery and pain' [1970:117]. In this condition 'the human possibility in a Buddhist culture of a man being free for compassionate attitudes and loving actions before he experiences Nirvana-Shunyata are rather slim and grim'

[1970:157]. The background to views of this kind is the 'ontological gulf theory' alluded to above, to be discussed in Chapter Three and expressed by Stephenson as follows:

'In the first place, we submit that the concepts of Karma and Nirvana are antitheses. In no way are the two alike either in form or in content. Nirvana is amoral or supramoral. Nirvana is experienced either above or below morality in the senses of thought, word and deed' [1970:109].

I do not deal directly with all of the questions raised in the previous section. My primary purpose is to give an account of Buddhist ethics which will make clear its formal structure in the context of Buddhism as a soteriological tradition.⁵ In providing this account, however, it will become clear what my response would be. In reply to the questions posed by Jayatilleke, for instance, and in terms of the categories he makes available, my answer would be that Buddhist ethics is altruistic, a form of qualified absolutism, objectivist, naturalist, and teleological (but not consequentialist). I will summarise my reasons for these characterisations in the Conclusion, and the central arguments in support of them will be deployed in the course of the text.

The structure of the discussion is as follows. In Chapter One I consider aspects of sīla mainly from Theravādin sources, with particular reference to one of the earliest tracts on Buddhist morality, the Sīlakkhandhavagga. Appended to this is a summary of the principal types of imagery in the Buddhist literature of both Vehicles used in connection with sīla. In Chapter Two we move on to a consideration of Abhidharmic

materials, the rationale for this being that the Abhidharma provides a theoretical classification of the relevant psychological data of Buddhist ethics. The choice of the Sarvāstivāda also provides a more rounded non-sectarian perspective and leads on more easily to the consideration of Mahāyāna material in Chapter Four. First of all, however, in Chapter Three, I consider views on the nature of Small Vehicle ethics which run counter to my own, specifically those of King and Spiro. The final two chapters, Five and Six, are devoted to a consideration of Buddhist ethics in the light of Western ethical models. In Chapter Five I consider and reject the hypothesis that ethically Buddhism is a species of Utilitarianism. In Chapter Six I pursue some specific points of contact between Buddhism and Aristotelianism, notably in their concepts of the telos or summum bonum, their conceptions of human nature, and the faculty and process of moral choice.

Notes to Introduction

1. On the absence of philosophical ethics in Hinduism see Creel [1977:20-32].

2. For a comprehensive bibliographic essay on Buddhist Ethics see Reynolds [1979].

3. For a discussion of definitional problems in connection with Buddhism as a 'religion' see Little & Twiss [1978:Ch.3]. On the analogous problem of the dislocation of Dharma from Mokṣa in Hinduism see Creel [1977:Ch.3].

4. Cf. Thomas [1914:344]; Saddhatissa [1970:17f,29]; De Silva [1979:2]. For occasional brief but intriguing speculations in the reverse direction, i.e. Aristotle elucidated by reference to (Far-Eastern) Buddhism, see Clark [1975], especially Appendix C: 'I conclude that Aristotle may profitably be considered in a Chinese setting: Aristotle can be understood and passages which have hitherto been emended or ignored given a coherent sense if we treat him as something like a Mahayana Buddhist' [1975:216].

5. On the characterisation of Buddhism as a 'soteriology' see Mathews [1975:152n.2].

h

CHAPTER ONE

Our enquiry into sīla begins in one of the oldest sections of the Pali Canon with the group of thirteen suttas known collectively as the Sīlakkhandhavagga <SKV>.¹ The 34 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya are divided into three groups: the Sīlakkhandhavagga (1-13), the Mahāvagga (14-23), and the Pāṭikavagga (24-34). In this chapter we consider (i) the sīlas of the Brahmajālasutta; (ii) the preceptual formulae derived from them; (iii) the soteriological scheme of the SKV; and (iv) the benefits of sīla. In (v) we consider the imagery used in respect of sīla in sources from both the Small and Large Vehicles.

(i) The sīlas of the Brahmajālasutta

Of the 13 suttas of the Sīlakkhandavagga 11 describe the progress of a bhikkhu to Arhatship via the cultivation of morality (sīla), proficiency in the trances (jhānas) and the development of knowledge or insight (paññā). The 9th sutta, the Poṭṭhapādasutta, follows this scheme only as far as proficiency in the jhānas, while the 13th, the Tevijjasutta, records the progress of a bhikkhu as far as the four Divine Abidings (Brahmavihāra) and stops short of Arhatship.

Let us consider the role of sīla in this scheme. A lengthy section of the first sutta of the SKV, the Brahmajālasutta,²

is devoted to the subject of sīla, and this is itself divided into three tracts or vaggas listing various observances or sīlas for which the Tathāgata might be praised by a worldly person (puthujjano Tathāgatassa vannaṃ vadamāno vadeyya). The three tracts are known as the short (cūla), medium (majjhima) and long (mahā) sīlas, and I shall refer to them collectively as the sīla-vagga <SV>. They occur consecutively in order of length in all the 13 suttas of the SKV, and since the SKV is one of the earliest parts of the Dīgha Nikāya [Norman, K.R. 1983:32] we would appear to be dealing with a stereotyped formula of some antiquity. Such is the opinion of Rhys Davids who regards the SKV as an early independent work: "The tract itself must almost certainly have existed as a separate work before the time when the discourses, in each of which it recurs, were first put together." [Dialogues l.p.3n]. The three sīlas are summarised below as abstention from all of the following:-

CŪLA-SĪLA

1. Taking life (pānātipāta)
2. Taking what has not been given (adinnādāna)
3. Unchastity (abrahmacariya)
4. Lying (musāvāda)
5. Slandorous speech (pisunā-vācā)
6. Harsh speech (pharusā-vācā)
7. Frivolous talk (samphappalāpa)
8. Causing injury to seeds or plants
(bījaḡama-bhūtaḡama-samārambha)
9. Eating more than once and after midday
(vikāla-bhojana)
10. * Shows, fairs, dancing, music and singing
(nacca-gīta-vādita-visūka-dassana)
11. Ornaments, garlands, scents and unguents
(māla-gandha-vilepana)
12. Use of large and lofty beds
(uccāsayana-mahāsayana)

* Watching

13. Accepting gold and silver
(jātarūpa-rajata-patiggahana)
14. Accepting uncooked grain
(āmaka-dhañña-patiggahana)
15. Accepting raw meat
(āmaka-maṇsa-patiggahana)
16. Accepting women or girls
(itthi-kumārikā-patiggahana)
17. Accepting bondsmen or bondswomen
(dāsi-dāsa-patiggahana)
18. Accepting sheep or goats
(aj-elaka-patiggahana)
19. Accepting fowls or swine
(kukkuta-sūkara-patiggahana)
20. Accepting elephants, cattle, horses or mares
(hatthi-gavāssa-valavā-patiggahana)
21. Accepting cultivated fields or sites
(khetta-vatthu-patiggahana)
22. Acting as a go-between or messenger
(dūteyya-pahina-gamanānuyoga)
23. Buying and selling (kaya-vikkaya)
24. Cheating with scales, bronzes or measures
(tulākūṭa-kaṇsakūṭa-mānakūṭa)
25. The crooked ways of bribery, cheating and fraud
(ukkoṭana-vañcana-nikat_i-sāci-yoga)
26. Maiming, murdering, putting in bonds, highway robbery, dacoity and violence (chedana-vadha-bandhana-viparāmosa-ālopa-sahasākāra)

MAJJHIMA-SĪLA

1. Injury to seedlings and plants
2. Use of things stored up (food, drink, clothes, etc.)
3. Visiting shows (16 kinds specified)
4. Games and recreations (18 kinds specified)
5. High and large couches (20 kinds specified)
6. Adorning and beautifying the person
7. Low forms of discourse (e.g. stories and gossip)
8. Argumentative phrases
9. Acting as a go-between or messenger
10. Simony

MAHĀ-SĪLA

Wrong livelihood, earned by:

1. The low arts such as palmistry
2. Knowledge of the signs of good and bad qualities in things denoting the health or luck of their owner.
3. Soothsaying
4. Foretelling eclipses, etc.
5. Foretelling rainfall, etc.
6. Use of charms and incantations

7. Use of medicines and drugs.

This is indeed a mixed bag of prohibitions. Taking them in reverse order, the Mahā-sīla directs its attention specifically to undesirable methods of gaining a livelihood through practices known generically as the 'low arts' (tīracchāna-vijjā).

The Majjhima-sīla is to a large extent encompassed by the Cūla-sīla. Only two additional practices are listed: item 2, the use of things stored up, and item 4, games and recreations. On the other hand there are many omissions from the list in the Cūla.

It is the Cūla-sīla which is primary. We shall see shortly that other lists of moral precepts consist largely of a reformulation of the items of the Cūla-sīla. The 26 items of the Cūla-sīla fall into four loose groupings, concerning:-

- 1) Immoral acts of body and speech (items 1-7)
- 2) Austerity in lifestyle (items 8-12)
- 3) Offerings not to be accepted (items 13-21)
- 4) Commercial or criminal activity (items 22-26)

Each of these four groupings expresses normative concern primarily in respect of matters impinging on the life of a samana. This is unremarkable since the SV as a whole takes the form of a eulogy of Gotama qua samana. The individual items are introduced by announcing them as observances of Gotama the samana. Consider the first of the Cūla-sīla:

'Putting aside the killing of living things, Gotama the samana refrains from the destruction of life . . . '

Pāṇātipātāṃ pahāya pāṇātipātā paṭivirato samaṇo Gotamo [D.i.4]

The SV as a whole is an attempt to encapsulate the conduct of Gotama the samana. The Cūla-sīla seeks to define what is most essential in this by specifying the conduct of Gotama, while the Majjhima- and Mahā-sīlas distinguish the conduct of Gotama from other samanas and Brāhmanas. Thus the latter two adopt the stock refrain : 'Whereas some Samanas and Brāhmanas do X, Gotama the Samana does Y.' This may be seen in the first of the Mahā-sīla:

'Whereas some Samanas and Brāhmanas, while living off food provided by the faithful, continue attached [to such-and-such conduct], Gotama the Samana refrains from this.'

Yathā va paṇ'eke bhonto samaṇa-brāhmaṇā saddhā-deyyāni bhojanāni bhuñjitvā, te evarūpāṃ [...] anuyuttā viharanti, iti evarūpā [...] paṭivirato samaṇo Gotamo ti.' [D.i.5]

The SV first of all describes in the Cūla-sīla what is integral to the conduct of an ideal samana, and then points out the difference between the ideal and other religieux who are deficient in their conduct. This is of importance since, as we shall now see, the various formulations of Buddhist moral rules are founded upon the Cūla-sīla. In other words, Buddhist morality is founded upon the conduct of Gotama the Samana. In the words of the refrain uttered by the Buddha's disciples:

'Things for us are rooted in the Lord, are channelled through the Lord, and have their refuge in the Lord.'

Bhagavaṃ mūlakā no bhante dhammā, Bhagavaṃ nettikā, Bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. [A.i.309f; i.317]

(ii) Preceptual Formulae

There are four major canonical formulations of moral precepts:-

- (a) the Five Precepts (pañcasīla)
- (b) the Eight Precepts (atthaṅgasīla)
- (c) the Ten Precepts (dasasīla)
- (d) The Ten Good Paths of Action (dasakusalakammamapatha)

There is also an important fifth formulation which is best described as 'paracanonial' [Prebish 1980:223] namely,

- (e) the Pātimokkha

(a) The Five Precepts are an undertaking to abstain from:-

- 1) Taking life (pānātipātā)
- 2) Taking what has not been given (adinnādāna)
- 3) Sexual misconduct (kāmesu-micchācāra)
- 4) Telling lies (musāvāda)
- 5) Taking intoxicants (surā-meraya-majja-pamādatthāna)

(b) The Eight Precepts

These are precepts 1-5 above* and additionally abstention from: ** The third precept is replaced by abstention from all sexual activity (abrahmacariyā)*

- 6) Eating at the wrong time (vikāla-bhojana)
- 7) Dancing, singing, music, watching shows, using garlands, perfumes, cosmetics and personal adornments (nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana-mālāgandha-vilepana-dhāraṇa-maṇḍana-vibhūsanatthāna)
- 8) Using high seats or beds (uccāsayana-mahāsayana)

(c) The Ten Precepts

The Ten Precepts are precepts 1-6 of the Atthaṅgasīla plus abstention from the following:

- 7) Dancing, singing, music and watching shows
- 8) Using garlands, perfumes and personal adornments
- 9) Using high seats or beds
- 9) Accepting gold or silver (jātarūpa-rajata-patiggahana)

The order of the final five of the ten precepts seems to have been rather fluid among the schools of the Small Vehicle³.

(d) The Ten Good Paths of Action

The Ten Good Paths of Action (dasakusalakammamapatha) are:

1. Abstention from taking life (pānātipātā-veramani)
2. Abstention from taking what has not been given (adinnādānā-veramani)
3. Abstention from sexual misconduct (kāmesu-micchācārā-veramani)
4. Abstention from lying (musāvādā-veramani)
5. Abstention from slanderous speech (pisunāya-vacāya-veramani)
6. Abstention from harsh speech (pharusāya-vacāya-veramani)
7. Abstention from idle talk (samphappalāpā-veramani)
8. Non-covetousness (anabhijjā)
9. Non-malevolence (avyāpāda)⁴
10. Right views (sammāditthi)

The debt these formulations owe to the Cūla-sīla is clear. The first four of the Five Precepts correspond to items 1-4 of the Cūla-sīla, with the substitution in the third of 'sexual misconduct' (kāmesu-micchācāra) for sexual abstinence (brahmacariya). The only addition is the fifth precept, which prohibits the use of intoxicants and is likely to be of more relevance to the lay community.

The Eight Precepts are compiled from the Five Precepts by the addition of Cūla-sīla 9, 10 and 11 combined, and 12.

The Ten Precepts are compiled from the Five Precepts by the addition of Cūla-sīla 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

The Ten Good Paths of Action consist of the first seven items of the Cūla-sīla with the addition of three new items. It is not hard to see the rationale for this addition. The seven items of the Cūla-sīla can be divided into two groups: items 1-3 relate to bodily acts while items 4-7 relate to speech

acts. The final supplementary group of three relate to mental states and are synonymous with the three Roots of Good (kusalamūla): thus anabhi^hjā = alobha; avyāpāda = adosa; and sammāditthi = amoha.

From the above we see that the major preceptual codes of Buddhism, which are common to the Small and Large Vehicles, are formulated directly on the Cūla-sīla. The Cūla-sīla is in turn based upon the conduct of Gotama the Samana. To observe the precepts, therefore, is to model one's behaviour on that of the Buddha.

The four formulations mentioned above can be regarded as attempts to compress and summarise the Cūla-sīla, or to abstract from it to meet the requirements of a specific group or situation. Thus the Five Precepts are for the layman and the Eight Precepts are optional additional observances for the Uposatha. The Five Precepts, like the Ten Good Paths of Action, make reference to acts of body, speech and mind; thus items 1-3 relate to the body, item 4 to speech, and item 5 to the mind, since alcohol is specified as a source of heedlessness (pamādatthāna).

(e) The Pātimokkha

Another list of precepts may be found in the 227 rules of the Pātimokkha which are incorporated into the Vinaya. Like the SV, the Pātimokkha is concerned both with morality and

monastic etiquette and combines the two in its function as a Rule for the regulation of monastic life. Since the goal of monastic life is individual spiritual development in the context of harmonious relations with others in the community, the Vinaya includes both moral precepts and regulations not primarily of a moral nature. The most serious category of Vinaya offences, the four pārājikā, can be seen as a reformulation of Cūla-sīla items 1-4 in a form more pertinent to monastic life. The correspondence would then be as follows:-

PĀRĀJIKĀ

1. Sexual intercourse (methunam dhammam)
2. Taking what is not given
(adinnam theyyasaṅkhātam ādiyeyya)
3. Killing a human being
(manussa-viggaham-jīvitā-voroṇeyya)
4. Lying about spiritual accomplishments
(ajānam evam āvuso avacam 'jānāmi'
apassam 'paṣṣāmi')

CŪLA-SĪLA

3. Unchastity (abrahmacariya)
2. Taking what is not given (adinnādāna)
- 1 Taking life (pāṇātīpāta)
4. Telling lies (musāvāda)

Many of the Vinaya rules are without a corresponding rule in the SV. In part this is because they relate to different lifestyles - that of the wandering samana versus that of the sedentary bhikkhu. Into the life of the latter additional concerns intrude such as the construction of huts, the

wearing of robes of a standard type, relationships with the laity and other members of the Order, etc. Rules concerning all of these things are to be found in the Vinaya, reflecting the adjustment to new circumstances in the historical growth of monasticism. The difference is that whereas the SV relates to Gotama the Samana alone the Vinaya relates to the Samgha as a community.

The suggestion that the rules of the Pātimokkha are a direct outgrowth of the Pañcasīla has been put forward by Pachow. He writes:

'It would not be unreasonable to say that the code of discipline of the Samgha is but an enlarged edition of the Pañcasīla which have been adopted by the Buddhists and the Jains from the Brahmanical ascetics. And under various circumstances, they have developed subsidiary rules in order to meet various requirements on various occasions. This appears to us to be the line of development through which the growth of these rules could be explained.' [1955:37]

This suggestion has been rejected by John Holt on the grounds that not all the Vinaya rules can be directly related to the Pañcasīla. 'If this hypothesis were absolutely sound', he writes, 'we could somehow relate all of the disciplinary rules in some way to the four pārājikas or to the pañcasīla. Unfortunately, we are not able to do this.' [1981:64] According to Holt there are 88 rules which resist assimilation to the pañcasīla, a fact also noted by Pachow. Pachow's solution was to generate additional categories under which the additional rules could be subsumed. He suggested four such categories, namely rules relating to:-

- 1) Food, drink, medicines, etc.
- 2) Robes, bowls, rugs, bedding, etc.

- 3) Housing, staying, association, bathing and comfort, etc.
- 4) Trade, digging, wandering, touching money and treasures, etc. [1955:Appendix 1.1-2]

The discrepant rules deal with the regulation of monastic practice and are of a kind to be found in many religious orders, Western as well as Eastern. It is not at all strange that they should be found in the Vinaya; nor is it strange that the Vinaya should concern itself with the practicalities of communal life as well as moral conduct. Indeed, it would be difficult to separate these two concerns since communal life involves both moral duties (e.g. not to steal from fellow monks) as well as the voluntarily assumed sub-moral duties of ecclesiastical office (e.g. to wear the right garments). The Vinaya embraces these twin concerns and it is unwarranted to expect it, as does Holt, to reveal only a single preoccupation.

Pachow would have met with more success had he attempted to derive the Pātimokkha not from the pañcasīla but from the Cūla-sīla in the realisation that the latter underlies the former. A number of direct equivalents can be found between the Cūla-sīla and the Pātimokkha. The handling of gold and silver is prohibited by Cūla-sīla 13 and also by Nissaggiya-Pācittiya 18 and 19. Buying and selling (kaya-vikkaya) is prohibited by Cūla-sīla 23 and Nissaggiya-Pācittiya 20. Acting as a go-between (Cūla-sīla 22) is ruled out by Saṅghādisesa 5, and damaging plants (Cūla-sīla 8) by Pācittiya 11. False speech, abusive speech and slander of a bhikkhu (Cūla-sīla 4,5, and 6) are prohibited by Pācittiya

1,2 and 3, and a rule governing the height of beds (Cūla-sīla 12) may be found at Pācittiya 87. In the opinion of Anuruddha the whole of the Pātimokkha may be explained along these lines by reference to the entire list of the sīlas of the Brahmajālasutta. 'To sum up', he writes, 'the original meaning of Pātimokkha was Sīla, the moral precepts, but later on those moral precepts were transformed into Vinaya rules governing the behaviour of monks and nuns alike' [1972:322].

Both Pachow and Holt are forced to interpret the Vinaya extremely loosely to accommodate rules of the kind mentioned above since they both expect it to perform a single function. Holt's own account of what this is is confused. He begins with the assumption that the disciplined life of the Vinaya is a sine qua non for enlightenment since it leads to the transcendence of kamma whereas the lay life does not. He regards the objectives of the lay and cenobital lifestyles as irreconcilable: monks seek to eradicate kamma while the laity seek to accumulate puñña. He then makes two further and contradictory assumptions: first, that 'disciplined behavior' (a phrase which rather surprisingly he does not define but by which he seems to mean a life lived according to the Vinaya) is the inevitable behavioural manifestation of an enlightened consciousness. He writes: "'Disciplined behavior" is none other than a characterization of the behavioral expressions of a perfected being (arahāṇa). It is the hallmark of one in whom all grasping has ceased.' [1981:4] And second, he states that a disciplined lifestyle is only of instrumental and provisional validity: 'Thus, discipline itself is not to be

retained ultimately. It is only a means to an undisclosed end, nibbāna.' [1981:16] Holt finds himself in a tangle due fundamentally to a confused idea about the role of kamma and morality in Buddhist soteriology. He shares this confusion with other writers and we shall deal with this problem more fully in Chapter Three.

So far we have looked at the most basic meaning of sīla, namely as a moral precept, and the combination of individual precepts into various preceptual formulae. We turn now to consider sīla in the wider context of Buddhist doctrine and its role in the overall programme of Buddhist soteriology.

(iii) Sīla Samādhi and Paññā in the SKV

The second sutta of the SKV, the Sāmaññaphalasutta, incorporates the sīlas of the Brahmajālasutta into an overall scheme or way of life directed towards the soteriological goal of nibbāna. We find there a sequence of 13 stages leading through the sīlas to the practice of the four jhānas and thence to arhatship with the destruction of the āsavas⁴. These three broad divisions of morality, meditation and wisdom, correspond to those of the Eightfold Path which is first mentioned in the sixth sutta and again in the eighth as follows:-

1. Right Views (sammā ditthi)
2. Right Resolve (sammā saṅkappa)
3. Right Speech (sammā vācā)
4. Right Action (sammā kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (sammā ājīva)
6. Right Effort (sammā vāyāma)
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā sati)
8. Right Meditation (sammā samādhi)

In none of the suttas of the SKV is there a division of the Eightfold Path in accordance with the three khandhas of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā which is found elsewhere⁵. The division of the 13 stages into three sections can be seen evolving in the SKV in the following manner. The first sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Brahmajālasutta, lists the sīlas; the second, the Sāmaññaphalasutta includes the sīlas in its scheme of the 13 stages towards enlightenment; and the third, the Ambatthasutta, introduces a threefold classification of the (by now 16) stages. The Ambatthasutta speaks first of all

of perfection in two dimensions, namely knowledge (vijjā) and conduct (carana). 'He who is perfect in knowledge and conduct', says the Buddha, 'is the best among gods and men' (vijjācarana-sampanno so settho deva-mānuse ti) [D.i.99]. However, when Ambaṭṭha asks him to expand on the nature of that wisdom and conduct (katamaṃ pana taṃ bho Gotama caranam, katamā sa vijjā ti?), the Buddha introduces a threefold classification into Sīla, Carana and Vijjā. The Sīla section contains only the sīlas, the Carana section culminates in the four jhānas, and the Vijjā section with Arhatship.

The fourth sutta is different again. This time it is Soṇadaṇḍa the Brahman who asks the Buddha for clarification in respect of the two categories of Sīla and Paññā which it has been established are essential in a true Brahman. The classification of the stages to enlightenment is once again given as twofold, this time with Paññā including the stages beginning with the jhānas and ending in Arhatship [D.i.124]. The fifth sutta, the Kūṭadantasutta lists the scheme but without interposing either a twofold or threefold division, while the sixth sutta, the Mahālisutta, mentions the Eightfold Path for the first time. This first reference to the Eightfold Path [D.i.157] is followed immediately by the seventh sutta, the Jāliyasutta, which recounts the scheme of progress of the Sāmaññaphalasutta, as if by way of amplification of the eight stages of the path.

The Eightfold Path is mentioned again in the eighth sutta, the Kassapa-sīhanāda-sutta, [D.i.165] and a threefold

division of the stages to enlightenment is also given [D.i.171-3]. Here the division is into Sīla, Citta and Paññā. The ninth sutta, the Potṭhapādasutta, lists the stages only as far as the attainment of the jhānas, while the tenth, the short Subhasutta, spells out the division of the Sāmaññaphalasutta for the first time into the three stages of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā. This sutta is recited by Ānanda shortly after the death of the Buddha [D.i.204], and its analysis of the stages of the Sāmaññaphalasutta in accordance with the scheme of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā is evidence for its relative lateness [Pande 1983:91]. The eleventh sutta, the Kevaddhasutta, contents itself with quoting from the scheme of the Sāmaññaphalasutta without classifying it into stages, and so does the twelfth, the Lohiccasutta. The final sutta of the SKV, the Tevijjasutta, describes the scheme of progress only as far as the Brahma-vihāras.

Let us list these twofold and threefold divisions of the soteriological Path showing the number of the sutta in which they occur in brackets:

TWOFOLD

Carana and Vijjā (111)

Sīla and Paññā (1V)

THREEFOLD

Sīla, Carana, Vijjā (111)

Sīla, Citta, Paññā (V111)

Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā (X)

It will be seen that of the 13 suttas of the SKV only four offer any classification of the stages to Arhatship, and there is no uniformity of terminology in the classification of the stages. In particular the nomenclature of the middle stage when specified is different in each case. There is also disagreement as to the number of stages involved. It is noteworthy that while 11 of the 13 suttas describe the stages towards Arhatship in detail, and the remaining two describe the stages up to the jhānas (No.1X) and the Brahma-vihāras (No.X111), nine of them are silent as far as the classification of the stages is concerned. Far from agreement on the divisions of the Path there is not even an opinion in the majority of cases.

The Eightfold Path with its three categories of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā, is itself a shortened version of the scheme of progress to enlightenment which is first enunciated in the Sāmaññaphalasutta and adopted throughout the SKV. In the Ambatthasutta and Kassapa-sīhanāda-sutta (sutta V111) the 13 stages of the scheme are already subsumed under three categories paving the way for the shorter, more manageable, formula of the Eightfold Path. The individual factors of the Path are not so important as the general categories which contain them. This may be seen from the Cūlavedallasutta in the conversation between the nun Dhammadinnā, who speaks in the presence of and with the approval of the Buddha, and the layfollower Visākha.

'But, lady, is the Noble Eightfold Path composite or incomposite? The Noble Eightfold Path, friend Visākha, is composite. Now, lady, are the three classes included in the Noble Eightfold Path or is the Noble Eightfold Path included in the three classes? Friend Visākha, the three classes are not included in the Noble Eightfold Path, but the Noble Eightfold Path is included in the three classes.'

Ariyo pan'ayye aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅkhato udāhu asaṅkhato ti. Ariyo kho āvuso Visākha aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅkhato ti. Ariyena nu kho ayye aṭṭhaṅgikenā maggena tayo khandhā saṅgahītā, udāhu tīhi khandhehi ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅgahito ti. Na kho āvuso Visākha ariyena aṭṭhaṅgikena maggena tayo khandhā saṅgahītā, tīhi ca kho āvuso Visākha khandhehi ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅgahito.' [M.i.300f. *trans. I.B. Horner*]

It seems, then, that the path to Arhatship in 13 stages described in the SKV can be conceived of as a personal development in certain general areas. In the settled formulation these are three - Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā⁶ - but it is also possible to regard these spheres of perfection as binary, that is to say as involving vijjā and carana or sīla and paññā. The ambiguity centres on the middle section, Samādhi, and I will suggest that this is because meditation is a means for the promotion of and participation in the basic human goods or intrinsic values of morality and knowledge [2(iv)]. The position I shall adopt throughout this thesis is that the final perfection to be attained by those who follow the path to Arhatship is best understood in terms of a binary model, that is to say as the perfection of morality (sīla) together with the perfection of knowledge and insight (paññā). Samādhi is a technique for the cultivation of these potentialities and the tripartite scheme of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā can be collapsed into the binary one in the manner described, for instance, in the Sonadandasutta.

Support for the notion of final perfection as binary may be found in the the Xllth sutta, the Lohiccasutta, which makes no reference to a division of any kind, but on closer examination may be seen to presuppose the twofold model. The story concerns Lohicca the Brahman who was inclined to the following wicked view:

'If a Samana or Brāhmaṇa achieves a state of realisation, then once he achieves it he should tell no-one else about it - for what can one man do for another? To do so would be like escaping from an old bond only to create a new one. This would have a similar result, and I say it is a kind of craving - for what can one man do for another?

Idha samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā kusalaṃ dhammaṃ adhigaccheyya, kusalaṃ dhammaṃ adhigantvā na parassa āroceyya, kiṃ hi paro parassa karissati? Seyyathā pi nāma purāṇaṃ bandhanaṃ chinditvā aññaṃ navaṃ bandhanaṃ kareyya, evaṃ-sampadam idaṃ pāpakaṃ lobha-dhammaṃ vadāmi. Kim hi paro parassa karissatīti' [D.i.224]

The contrast drawn here is between one's own interests and the interests of others, but it may be characterised more precisely as a clash between moral and intellectual values. The postulated Samana or Brāhmaṇa has achieved some degree of realisation or knowledge; this is a personal intellectual or cognitive experience involving intuition, insight or understanding. It falls within the ambit of paññā. Once this state of illumination has been achieved, however, in the opinion of Lohicca, it should be kept secret and not revealed to others. To share the benefit of this knowledge with others would be merely a form of attachment, he alleges.

We may note that this opinion of Lohicca is at once described as an evil view (pāpakaṃ diṭṭhiṃ) and is roundly condemned by the Buddha⁷. A person who held it, it is said, would be

selfish and inconsiderate of the needs of others. Not considering the welfare of others (ahitānukampī) his heart (citta) would not be well disposed towards them (paccupaṭṭhitam) but full of enmity and the result of this would be rebirth as an animal or in hell. A person who held such a view would be a hindrance (antarāya-karo) to the progress of others and be out of sympathy with their welfare, a condition of moral inertia. Buddhaghosa comments that Lohicca's view is evil (pāpakam) because of its absence of concern for others (pāpakam ti parānukampā-virahit⁺atā lāma-kam) [DA.ii.395]. We may conclude from the Buddha's condemnation of Lohicca's view that his own conception of human perfection (of which he is the embodiment) is not one-sided but requires the fulfilment of both intellectual and moral potential. Indeed, elsewhere he explicitly links teaching to sentiments of love and compassion (hitānukampī sambuddho yadapaññam anusāsati) [S.i.111].

We may recall the Buddha's own experience in the matter. He too had been a samāna who had achieved a state of realisation on the banks of the Nerañjarā and he too, according to tradition, had personally faced this dilemma in respect of teaching or remaining silent. The accounts of the Buddha's hesitation [e.g. Vin i.5ff; M.i.167ff] suggest that although the Buddha was moved to teach, teaching is not entailed by the intellectual realisation attained through paññā. Lohicca's opinion also suggests that the option is there to remain silent.

In the course of a discussion of the significance of the 'Great Hesitation' Wiltshire [1983] suggests that the Buddha's initial hesitation emphasises the distinct and supererogatory nature of the subsequent decision to teach. He writes:

'If he had taught automatically and without hesitation as the natural consequence of his enlightenment, then the act of teaching would not have been seen as a distinct achievement. As it was, by representing a state of affairs in which it was possible to make a negative choice, the Buddha's decision to teach would be seen as a definite act of compassion' [1983:17 emphasis in original]

The initial hesitation and subsequent decision by the founder of the tradition is also emblematic of the new scale of values introduced by Buddhism into the contemporary religious scene. It is a precedential action which establishes a new ideal of human perfection: mystical knowledge by itself is no longer adequate but must henceforth be coupled with a consciousness of moral good. By his hesitation the Buddha signals his recognition of alternative conceptions of human good, and by his choice he indicates his evaluation of one of them as superior. The reverberations of this paradigmatic choice were felt throughout the tradition, and the twin ideals of insight and teaching as a manifestation of moral concern seem to have been emulated by the Buddha's immediate disciples. Katz marshalls evidence to show that teaching is integral to state of perfection of an Arhat and concludes: 'An arahant does in fact teach, and does so for the same reasons as does the Buddha' [1982:197].⁸

There is, of course, a class of enlightened beings who do not

teach, namely the Paccekabuddhas. Their status, however, is recognised by all schools of Buddhism as being inferior to that of the Sammāsambuddha, who is distinguished by the greater moral perfection manifested in his teaching mission. The notion of supreme and perfect enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi), however, certainly embraces complete moral, as well as intellectual, perfection⁹. The goal of purely personal liberation without concern for the needs of others is not the Buddhist ideal, as the Mahāyāna was later to emphasise.

We return to the Lohiccaṣutta. The Buddha goes on to illustrate the importance of bilateral development in these twin spheres by describing three sorts of teachers (sattḥar) who fail to develop them in tandem. Each of them is worthy of reproach (codanāraha), and such reproach would be 'right and proper, in accordance with the truth and not improper' (sā codanā bhūta tacchā dhammikā anavajjā). The first teacher has not attained the goal of samāṇaship (sāmaññāttho ananuppatto) yet teaches a doctrine to his followers (sāvakaṇaṃ dhammam deseti). His followers do not profit from his teaching, cease to listen to him and eventually depart. The second teacher has also failed to reach the goal of samāṇaship yet his followers listen, profit from his words, and remain. The third teacher has attained the goal of samāṇaship yet as in the first case his followers cease to listen and depart.

What is it about these three teachers that makes them

unsatisfactory? The answer is not spelt out in the text but it is clear that they are unsatisfactory because they are deficient either morally or intellectually or both. The first teacher is deficient in both: he teaches without understanding and with no appreciation of the needs of his followers, which is why they abandon him. He communicates nothing of value to them either intellectually or as a moral exemplar. We might say that he can neither see nor act.

The second teacher is likewise intellectually deficient but has forged a bond between himself and his followers which is why they do not depart. He is at least in tune with the needs of others even if unable to satisfy them completely. He functions in the moral dimension but not the intellectual one. We might say that he can act but not see.

The third teacher is intellectually sound but morally deficient. He is not alive to the needs of others, and while having attained the goal himself is unable to communicate effectively with others who have not. This is the condition of the Paccekabuddha. He is intellectually clear but morally out of focus; he can see but not act.¹⁰

Thus neither cognitive realisation nor moral perfection are adequate by themselves. At this point Lohicca asks the Buddha if there is there is any teacher in the world not worthy of reproach. The Buddha replies that indeed there is, and this teacher is the one who has followed the path to Arhatship described throughout the SKV, a path which, we must conclude,

ensures the combination of intellectual and moral perfection lacking in the other teachers. The Buddha himself is one such teacher who has followed this path to perfection in sīla and paññā. There is no doubt of his moral perfection; we have already seen that he is eulogised in this respect in the SV, and in the Kassapa-sīhanādasutta the Buddha himself tells us that he is perfect in sīla:-

'There are some Samanas and Brāhmaṇas, Kassapa, who lay emphasis on good conduct (sīla). They speak in many ways in praise of morality (sīla). But so far as regards the most noble and highest conduct (sīla) I know of no-one who is equal to myself, much less superior. For it is I who have gone the furthest in the highest conduct (adhisīla).'

Santi Kassapa eke samaṇa-brāhmaṇā sīla-vādā. Te aneka-pariyāyena sīlassa vaṇṇaṃ bhāsanti. Yāvatā Kassapa ariyam paramaṃ sīlaṃ, nāham tathā attano sama-samaṃ samanupassāmi kuto bhīyyo. Atha kho aham eva tathā bhīyyo yadidaṃ adhisīlam. [D.i.174]¹¹

The Buddha speaks of his own moral perfection again in the Aṅguttara-Nikāya and contrasts himself with five types of teachers who are deficient in various ways.

'But I, Moggallāna, am perfectly pure in morality and know that I am. I know that my morality (sīla) is perfectly pure, clean and stainless. My disciples do not supervise me in respect of morality and I do not expect them to.'

Ahaṃ kho pana Moggallāna parisuddhasīlo samāno 'parisuddhasīlo'mhī'ti patijānāmi, 'parisuddhaṃ me sīlaṃ pariyodātaṃ asaṃkiliṭṭhaṃ' ti. Na ca maṃ sāvaka sīlato rakkhanti, na cāhaṃ sāvakehi sīlato rakkhaṃ paccāsimsāmi.
[A.iii.126]

The Buddha's moral conduct, that is to say his interaction with other beings, is perfect. His behaviour is inspired by a disposition of benevolence to all beings, a point we shall return to in the following chapter. Perfect in morality, he

is also perfect in knowledge or insight, and we may leave the SKV with a reference to the Sonadandasutta which makes perfectly clear the symbiotic relationship between sīla and paññā. Soṇadaṇḍa the Brahman has been led by the Buddha to define the essential qualities of a true Brahman, and concludes that there are only two such qualities, namely morality (sīla) and wisdom (paññā) [D.i.123]. The Buddha then enquires whether a man will still be a Brahman if either of these two qualities is left out. Soṇadaṇḍa replies as follows:

'Indeed not, Gotama! For wisdom, O Gotama, is purified with morality, and morality is purified with wisdom. Where there is morality there is wisdom, and where there is wisdom there is morality. To the virtuous there is wisdom, to the wise there is virtue (sīla), and virtue and wisdom are declared to be the best things in the world. Just as, O Gotama, one hand might wash the other or one foot wash the other, even so O Gotama, does wisdom purify morality and morality purify wisdom.'

No h'idam bho Gotama sīla-paridhotā hi bho Gotama paññā, paññā-paridhotam sīlam, yattha sīlam tattha paññā, yattha paññā tattha sīlam. Sīlavato paññā paññāvato sīlam, sīla-paññānañ ca pana lokasmin aggam akkhāyati. Seyyathā pi bho Gotama hatthena vā hattham dhopeyya, pādena vā pādam dhopeyya, evam eva kho bho Gotama sīla-paridhotā paññā, paññā-paridhotam sīlam. [D.i.124]

The Buddha signifies his assent to this (evam etam Brāhmaṇa) and repeats the first part almost verbatim. He then specifies in what morality and wisdom consist, namely in following the path to Arhatship described throughout the SKV, which is here divided into the two components of morality (sīla) and wisdom (paññā).

The commentary on this important passage relates the story of a venerable elder who exerted himself in self-control (sīla-samvara) as he lay dying so as not to lose face before the

king by groaning in pain. The relevant section has been translated by Richard Gombrich [1984] who draws the perfectly correct conclusion from this that 'sīla here refers to conduct becoming to the role of a monk; in a word, *decorum*' [emphasis in original]. It is interesting that the commentary fixes upon the negative aspect of sīla as discipline and restraint and mentions no positive moral role. The Mahāyāna, as we shall see in Chapter Four, charges the Hīnayāna specifically with holding this contracted and impoverished conception of sīla and failing to balance the two values of sīla and paññā correctly.

The interrelationship of sīla and paññā is noted again by Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the Mettasutta where he describes how morality (sīla) is purified by wisdom (paññā).

'And he [is also a good man] when he knows that virtue is cleansed by wisdom, just as a dirty cloth is cleaned with bean-water or a mirror with ashes or gold in a furnace, and he cleans his virtue by washing it in the water of wisdom, and that is where he guards all his virtue (sīlakkhandha) most carefully.'

'Yo vā yathā māsodakam paṭicca saṁkiliṭṭham vattham pariyodāyati, chārikam paṭicca ādāso, ukkāṁukham paṭicca jātarūpaṁ, tathā ñāṇam paṭicca sīlam vodāyatī' ti ñātvā ñāṇodakena dhovanto sīlam pariyodāpeti [...] tathā ativiya appamatto attano sīlakkhandham rakkhati. [SnA.1.237]

The conclusion to be drawn from these passages is that moral excellence is an essential dimension of the perfection attained by the Buddha and commended to his followers. This needs emphasising since it is sometimes overlooked altogether and almost always made secondary to his intellectual perfection. This stems in turn from the misconception that

the Buddha had transcended good and evil, a position I will be arguing against in the following chapters.

Returning to the Eightfold Path, it is quite likely that its tripartite division crystallised under the pressure of existing Brahminical categories. This suggestion is made in the article by Professor Gombrich cited above [1984]. He draws attention to the similarities between the Buddhist scheme of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā, and the Hindu soteriological strategies of karma-yoga, tapas or yoga, and jñāna-yoga. He writes: 'Thus the Buddhist sequence of sīla samādhi and paññā was very like the Hindu sequence of karma, yoga and jñāna. I refer of course to the formal structure, not to the content.' In the Hindu tradition the ways of action and knowledge are alternative paths - this is stated as early as the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (v.10.1-7) - but in Buddhism they are both essential facets of the path towards, and the experience of, enlightenment itself. Professor Gombrich writes:

'... the Buddhist view is in stark contrast to the Hindu view that the disciplines of work and gnosis are hierarchically related alternatives. The Buddha is denying both that they are hierarchically related and that they are alternatives.' [1984:9]

This is a convincing line of argument and gives good grounds for believing that the eventual threefold classification of the Eightfold Path became popular due to its power to embrace and transform pre-Buddhist modes of thought: it both includes the available alternatives and by synthesising and integrating them sets the seal of Buddhist superiority upon them. In both traditions, however, for Hinduism as much as

for Buddhism, it remains true that the basic values are binary and involve both worldly interaction and salvific knowledge. In Hinduism, unlike Buddhism, these values are usually taken as alternatives, but both traditions recognise the value of the techniques of yoga or 'Samādhi'. Professor Gombrich puts it as follows:

'The Buddha declared ritual valueless; the kind of karma he recognised was purely ethical. On the other hand even this ethical karma was powerless by itself to achieve the goal of liberation; that depended on gnosis, paññā, the Buddhist equivalent of Hindu jñāna. For the Buddhists as for the Hindus, to attain the salvific gnosis one had to practise the discipline of meditation - the discipline which in Hinduism grew out of archaic austerities (tapas) into meditative yoga . . . ' [1984:8]

To sum up this section, the main point is that sīla and paññā are integral components of the Buddhist summum bonum. As we have seen, the divisions of the path to perfection are not hard and fast, they may be twofold or threefold. Sometimes a fourth stage is added by including liberation (vimutti), and a fifth with the 'knowledge and vision of liberation' (vimuttiñānadassana), the series as a whole being known as the five sampadās¹² There are various lists of sampadās¹³ but they are all founded upon the basic values of sīla and paññā. However, it is not uncommon for sīla to be specified as a worthwhile goal without reference to paññā, and in the following section we consider to what extent sīla may be pursued in isolation, and with what consequences.

(iv) The Benefits of Sīla

As stated above, Sīla and Paññā are to be cultivated together. Buddhaghosa describes the interrelation of sīla and paññā using the metaphor of a man trapped in a dense jungle of bamboo: he escapes by standing firm on the ground of sīla (sīla pathaviyam patitṭhāya) [Vism 1.7] and cutting his way out with the knife of insight. He refers to sīla as the 'basis of all accomplishment' (sabbasampattimūlam hi sīlam) and a stage which, when consolidated, will lead to nibbāna [Vism.1.159]. If there is a choice to be made between virtue and knowledge it is better, says Buddhaghosa following the Aṅguttara-Nikāya [ii.7f], to choose virtue:

'Now if a man has little learning and is careless of his virtue they censure him on both accounts for lack of virtue and of learning.

Appassuto pi ce hoti sīlesu asamāhito
Ubhayena naṃ garahanti sīlato ca sutena ca.

But if he is of little learning yet he is careful of his virtue, they praise him for his virtue, so it is as though he also had learning.

Appassuto pi ce hoti sīlesu susamāhito
Sīlato naṃ paṃsaṃsanti tassa sampajjate sutam.

And if he is of ample learning yet is careless of his virtue, they blame him for his virtue so it is as though he had no learning.'

Bahussuto pi ce hoti sīlesu asamāhito
Sīlato naṃ garahanti, nāssa sampajjate sutam.

[Vism.1.136 tr. Ñāṇamoli]

This point is echoed in the Śīlasamyukta-sūtra, which regards

failure in morality as more serious than ignorance since it may lead to as many as a hundred thousand rebirths in a miserable and ignominious state.¹⁴ A contrary view, however, is taken by the Catuhśataka [v.286] which maintains that it is better to fail in morality (sīla) than in doctrine (dr̥ṣṭi). The ideal, of course, as the Vism points out [1.136], is to be both learned and virtuous.

In his analysis of sīla in the Vism Buddhaghosa enquires as to the benefits (ānisaṃsa) derived from it [1.16]. He summarises these from the Nikāyas as follows [1.23]:

1. Non-remorse (avippaṭisāra) :

'Ananda, good moral conduct leads to non-remorse and has non-remorse as its advantage'.

'Avippaṭisāratthāni kho Ānanda kusalāni sīlāni, avippaṭisāranisaṃsānī.' [A.v.1.]

2. For laymen:

i) A large fortune produced by working diligently
(appamāḍādhikaraṇaṃ mahantaṃ bhogaḥkhandham
adhiḡacchati)

ii) A good reputation (kalyāṇo kittisaddo
abbhūḡacchati)

iii) Entering confident and unconfused into any assembly
(visārado upasaṅkamati amaṅkubhūto)

iv) An unconfused death
(asammūlho kālaṃ karoti).¹⁵

v) A happy rebirth in heaven
(sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati) [D.ii.86]

3. A monk who practises morality will earn the love and respect of his fellows :

'And if, monks, a monk should wish 'May I be dear to my fellows in the religious life, loved, respected and honoured by them', let him perfect the moral virtues.'

'Ākañkheyya ce, bhikkhave, bhikkhu, sabrahmacārīnaṃ piyo c'assam manāpo garu ca bhāvanīyo cā ti, sīlesvev'assa paripūrakārī.' [M.i.33]

In connection with 2(iv) above, the Dīpa [v.230] states that 'The apex of śīla is said to be ^{not} abandoning one's control even at the point of death' (marane 'pi damātyāgaḥ śīlasyotkr̥stir ucyate). The Vṛtti adds that when a man who is dying does not flinch from the precepts he can be said to have truly fulfilled the perfection of morality.

In respect of 2(v) the Kośa and Vyākhyā [lv.124ab] declare that the primary effect of śīla is the attainment of heaven (śīlam prādhānyena svargāya bhavati). The Dīpavṛtti states that śīla results in both prosperity and mokṣa.¹⁶ The kārika adds that according to the śāstra (unnamed) śīla is said to result in heaven.¹⁷

That heaven is the reward of śīla is stated emphatically in the Dhsam. Chapters 22-27 deal with the six pāramitās in turn and the Śīlavargah is easily the longest, containing 86 stanzas. Of these, 49 refer to the ends attained by śīla and in 40 cases this is given as heaven (svarga). Two stanzas say that śīla promotes dhyāna and the remaining seven describe other effects.¹⁸ As examples of the last category the reward (phalam) of śīla is said [v.26] to be without comparison and indescribable (anupamam anirdeśyam); v.35 describes it as countless pleasures (asamkhyāni ca saukhyāni); and v.64 says that it gains nirvāṇa (nirvāṇam ca adhiḡacchati).

Śīla is frequently associated with the production of merit

(puñña) and occurs as a component part in the three 'spheres of meritorious action' (puññakiriyavatthu) [PKV] namely, generosity (dāna), morality (sīla) and mental culture (bhāvanā). Like the sampadās these collapse into moral (dāna-sīla) and mental (bhāvanā) components. The effects of the first two are described at A.iv.241. The man who practises dāna and sīla on a small scale (parittam katam hoti), it is said, is reborn among men of low fortune (dobhaggam) such as trappers and cartwrights. Someone who practises them on a medium scale (mattaso katam hoti) is reborn among men of good fortune (sobhaggam) such as one of the twice-born castes. And someone who practises them on a high scale (adhimattam katam hoti) is reborn among the gods. By practising dāna and sīla it is said that the gods can be surpassed in ten ways; in divine life, beauty, happiness, pomp and power, divine shapes, sounds, perfumes, taste and touch. Harivarman comments that different combinations of the three PKV produce different results. Thus śīla may be practised in conjunction with dāna with consequent rebirth in the kāmadhātu. If śīla is practised along with samādhi rebirth in the rūpadhātu is secured.¹⁹

Likewise, emphasis on the different components of the Eightfold Path produces a different result. By concentrating on sīla one becomes a Sotāpanna or a Sakadāgāmi, and by concentrating on sīla and samādhi an Anāgāmin. Only by practising all three perfectly does one become an Arhat.²⁰

The Dhsam says that one who has dāna and sīla and is compassionate to all beings realises all his desires.²¹ According to the RGS sīla produces a good rebirth and avoids rebirth in the animal world [Conze 1973:71]. The Prātimoksa of the Dharmaguptakas states that a monk who guards the precepts receives the triple benefit of a good reputation, alms from the faithful, and a rebirth in heaven if he has not attained Arhatship [Wieger 1910:259]. The Cullavagga is of the opinion that even animals who keep the five precepts will be reborn in heaven [161].

The benefits of morality are extolled in the short story of Sīlavat which occurs in the Theragāthā [608-619]. It is said that sīla brings success of every kind (sabbasampattim upanāmeti), which the commentary interprets to mean as a man, as a god, or in nibbāna. It produces a threefold happiness: a good name, worldly goods, and the joys of heaven. The moral man (sīlavā) wins many friends, fame (vaṇṇam), approval (kitti), and praise (pasamsā). As well as producing material benefits sīla is sometimes specified in connection with nibbāna. In Vism 1.24 sīla is described both as a stair that leads to heaven (saggārohana-sopānam) and an entrance to the city of nibbāna (dvāram va pana nibbāna nagarassa pavesane)

There is a danger in obsessive attachment to sīla just as there is in excessive devotion to paññā. Undue emphasis on either will lead to imbalance and fixation rather than progress towards the goal. If intellectual development is favoured at the expense of moral development there will be a

tendency to cling to theoretical notions (ditthi). And if moral development is favoured at the expense of intellectual development there will be a tendency to become obsessed with external forms of conduct such as rules, rituals and rites. The Buddha tells Māgandiyā that neither of these alternatives is satisfactory:

'Purity is not attained through views (ditthi), learning or knowledge, nor through rules and rituals' [the Lord] said.'

Na ditthiyā na sutiya na ñāṇena [...] sīlabbatenāpi na suddhim āha. [Sn.839]

On the contrary, the man who stands on dhamma, speaks the truth and is held dear is the man who has perfected both morality and insight (Sīla-dassana-sampannam dhammattham saccavādinam, attano kamma kubbānam, tam jano kurute piyam.) [Dh:217] If undue emphasis is placed on knowledge one may fall into the net of 62 speculative views of the BJS, or become obsessed with the kind of learning mentioned in the Tevijjasutta. If too much emphasis is placed on morality one may fall into the error of attachment to rules and rituals (sīlabbataparāmāsa) [SBP].

SBP is the third of the Ten Fetters (saṃyojana), and according to Vism XVll.243 is one of the four kinds of clinging (upādāna). It is defined there as follows: 'Clinging to rules and rituals is the view that purification comes through rules and rituals' (sīlabbatehi suddhī ti parāmāsanam pana sīlabbatupādānam). Buddhaghosa says [Vism 1.29] that the reason for the false belief that rules and rituals will produce purification is twofold: (i) due to craving (tanhā) i.e. in the hope that the rite will produce a desired result

such as rebirth as some god or other ('iminā'ham sīlena devo vā bhavissāmi devaññataro vā ti'); (ii) due to a false view (dīṭṭhi) about the means of purification, namely that it can be achieved by ritual practices alone ('sīlena suddhī' ti). The fetter may therefore arise from either affective (i) or cognitive (ii) deficiency or error. According to M.i.67 attachment to rules and rituals is wrong because it has its roots in tanhā.²²

Śīlavrataparāmārsā is also one of five false views and is listed as such at Kośa V.7. It is said to include false views such that suicide will result in a heavenly rebirth, a criticism perhaps directed at the Jains, or that Prajāpati is the creator of the world. Such beliefs are condemned along with the view that morality and ascetic practices by themselves (śīlavratamātraka) can lead to liberation. The Vṛtti on Dīpa 271 instances SVP as the lifelong practice of the agnihotra sacrifice, while Harivarman defines SVP as the taking of ritual baths and other such observances in the hope of purification by one who is not concerned with understanding. He adds that purity is attained by prajñā (prajñayā eva viśuddhi lābhah) but that morality is the basis of the faculty of wisdom (śīlam tu prajñendriyasya mūlam) [SSidhi:133].²³

The danger of following rules mechanically is obvious and in complete contradiction to the Buddha's emphasis on mindfulness and correct motivation. He was concerned to avoid the excesses of Brahmanism with its obsessive attachment to

ritual observances leading to moral sterility and specified six ineffectual methods of purification clearly drawn from the sphere of Brahmanic ritual [A.v.263]. In another place he describes these forms of behaviour as follows: 'Such ways as fasting, crouching on the ground, bathing at dawn, reciting of the Three [Vedas], wearing rough hides, and matted hair [...] chanting and empty rites and penances [...] washings, ablutions, rinsing of the mouth ...' [S.iv.118 PTS tr.]. Horner suggests that the category of SBP was introduced specifically as a safeguard against the influence of such Brahmanical practices [1936:273]. If followed mechanically or obsessively moral observances can have a stultifying effect on soteriological progress as can an excessive fascination with speculative views and opinions (ditṭhi). The Buddha's strategy was to steer between both extremes and pursue the even-handed cultivation of morality and insight.

To conclude this chapter we now turn to a survey of the imagery which is used to describe sīla in the literature of both the Small and Large Vehicles.

(v) The Imagery of sīla

The various aspects of sīla are illustrated by many different types of imagery. These images can be divided into five main groups as follows:

- (a) Images of a basis or foundation
- (b) Images of protection
- (c) Images of motion or ascent
- (d) Images of purification
- (e) Images of precious objects

Before considering each of these groups in turn below we may look briefly at the etymologies of sīla which are also informative in respect of imagery and metaphor.

Buddhaghosa proposes three etymologies for sīla, firstly his own and then two alternatives. His own etymology relates sīla to sīlana in the sense of 'composing', which is in turn defined as 'coordinating' (samādhāna) or 'upholding' (upadhāraṇa):

'It is morality (sīla) in the sense of composing. What is this composing? It is either a coordinating, meaning non-inconsistency of bodily actions etc. due to morality; or it is an upholding, meaning a state of basis owing to its serving as a foundation for profitable states. For those who understand etymology admit only these two meanings. Others, however, comment on the meaning here in the way beginning 'The meaning of morality (sīla) is the meaning of 'head' (siras), the meaning of morality is the meaning of 'cool' (sītala).'

Sīlanaṭṭhena sīlaṃ. Kim idaṃ sīlanaṃ nāma? Samādhānaṃ vā, kāyakammādīnaṃ susīlyavasena avippakiṇṇatā ti attho: upadhāraṇaṃ vā kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ patiṭṭhānavasena ādhārabhāvo ti attho. Etad eva hi ettha atthadvayaṃ saddalakkhaṇavidū anujānanti. Aññe pana siratṭho sīlatṭho sītalatṭho sīlatṭho ti evamādinā pi nayan'ettha attham vaṇṇayānti.'

[Vism 1.19 tr. Ñāṇamoli (amended)]

Buddhaghosa also gives sīlana as the characteristic (lakkhana) of sīla [Vism 1.20] and later on uses sīla as the equivalent of 'character' or 'nature' (pakati).

'But in common usage the character of such and such beings is called their 'nature'(sīla), of which they say 'This one is of happy nature (sukha-sīla), this one is of unhappy nature, this one is of quarrelsome nature, this one is of a gaudy nature.'

Loke tesam tesam sattānam pakati pi sīlan ti vuccati, yaṃ sandhāya , yaṃ sukkhasīlo, yaṃ dukkhasīlo, yaṃ kalahasīlo, yaṃ maṇḍanasīlo ti bhaṇanti. [Vism 1.38]

Other sources tend to favour Buddhaghosa's second and third etymologies. Vasubandhu derives śīla from √śī in the sense of 'refreshing' and alludes to its cooling effect: 'The taking up of morality is pleasant; because of that the body does not burn' (sukham śīlasamādānam tena kāyo na tapyate) [Kośa 1V.16ab]. The Vibhāṣā lists two of the meanings of śīla as coolness and refreshment²⁴. The MSA states that 'Coolness (śaitya) is gained through morality since one is not burnt by the defilements' [XVI.15]. The M.Av interprets the meaning as follows: 'Morality, or śīla, because it is cool (śītala), appeasing the fire of remorse of the mind through resistance to the passions and the non-production of sin; or because being the cause of happiness it is taken as a point of support by the good' [11.1a tr. Poussin]. Sgam po pa states that śīla (tshul khrims) is so called because it leads to coolness [Jewel p.150]. Much of the imagery used in respect of sīla is based upon these etymologies, as we may now see.

(a) Images of a basis or foundation

This is the most common image used to represent sīla. It occurs in three main forms: (i) organic (ii) physical and (iii) abstract.

(i) Organic

At Vism 1.159 the final stanza reads:

'Such is the fruit of morality in its many varied forms,
So let a wise man know it well, this root of all perfection.'

Sabbasampattimūlam hi sīlam hi iti paṇḍito,
anekākāravokāraṃ ānisaṃsaṃ vibhāvaye ti.

The tree imagery is clear here, with its fruit and roots. The fruit referred to is nibbāna, mentioned in the preceding verse. And in the Milindapañha, sīla is compared to a seed which will yield the fruit of recluseship:

'As, Sire, a seed, even though small, if sown in a propitious field, and the gods bestow showers (upon it) properly, will yield abundant fruit, even so, Sire, morality (sīla) if practised by the yogin, the earnest student of yoga, will yield the whole fruit of recluseship; thus it must be rightly practised (by him).' [PTS tr. amended]

Yathā mahārāja bījam appakam api samānam bhaddake khette vuttaṃ deve sammā dhāraṃ paveccante subahūni phalāni anudassati, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja yoginā yogāvacarena yathā paṭipāditam sīlaṃ kevalam sāmāññaphalam anudassati evaṃ sammā paṭipajjitabbam. [Miln 375]

Continuing the organic metaphor there are many images of sīla as the Earth. Thus Miln 33:

'As, Sire, whatever vegetable growth and animal growth comes to growth, increase and maturity, all does so in dependence upon the earth; even so, Sire, does the earnest student of yoga, depending on morality and based on morality, develop the five faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.' [PTS tr. amended]

Yathā mahārāja ye keci bījagāma bhūtagāmā vuddhiṃ virūlhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjanti sabbe te paṭhaviṃ nissāya paṭhaviyaṃ paṭiṭṭhāya evaṃ ete bījagāma bhūtagāmā vuddhiṃ virūlhiṃ

vepullaṃ āpajjanti, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja yogāvacaro sīlaṃ
nissāya sīle patitṭhāya pañc'indriyāni bhāveti:
saddhindriyaṃ, viriyindriyaṃ, satindriyaṃ, samādhindriyaṃ,
paññindriyaṃ ti.

The M.Av compares sīla to a field as follows:

'Morality is a field because it is the point of support for all good qualities (guṇa). In this [field] the good qualities such as charity etc. develop; and there develops through an uninterrupted and cumulative sequence of cause and effect the harvest of fruits to be enjoyed in a far-off time.'

Yon tan thams cad kyi rten du gyur pa'i phyir, tshul khrims nyid zhing ngo, der sbyin pa la sogs pa'i yon tan rnam rnam par 'phel ba na, rgya dang 'bras bu rgyu pa gong nas gong du rim pa rnam par ma chad pa'i sgo nas 'bras bu'i tshogs nye bar 'phel zhing, dus ring por nye bar longs spyod par nus kyi. [41.11-15]

Conversely, according to Āśvaghoṣa, the shoots of the vices are unable to take root and grow in sīla, just as seeds fail to germinate in the wrong season [Saund XVl.34].

(ii) Physical

Other images emphasise the earth as a physical foundation rather than its fecundity. For example. Miln 34:

'As, Sire, a city architect, when he wants to build a city, first has the site for the city cleared, and has it levelled when the stumps of the trees and thorns have been removed, and builds the city after that and after he has planned the distribution of the carriage-roads, the squares and the places where three or four roads meet - even so, Sire, does the earnest student of yoga, depending on morality and based on morality, develop the five faculties (indriya)' [PTS tr. amended]

Yathā mahārāja nagaravaḍḍhaki nagaraṃ māpetukāmo paṭhamam nagaratthānam sodhāpetvā khānukaṇṭakaṃ apakaḍḍhāpetvā samam kārapētvā tato aparabhāge vīthi caṭukka-singhātakādi-paricchedena vibhajitvā nagaraṃ māpeti, evaṃ eva [...]

Also:

'As, Sire, a tumbler (langhaka) who wants to show his craft has the ground dug, the grit and gravel removed and the ground made level, and then shows his craft on the soft ground, even so, Sire, . . . etc.' [Miln 34 PTS tr. amended]

Yathā mahārāja langhako sippaṃ dassetukāmo paṭhaviṃ
khanāpetvā sakkhara-kāṭhalakam apakaddhāpetvā bhūmiṃ samaṃ
kārapetvā mudukāya bhūmiyā sippaṃ dassēti, evaṃ eva ...

The Suḥrillekha states that morality is the support of everything valuable, just as the earth is the support for the animate and inanimate. Mi Pham comments that sīla is the support for an elevated existence and liberation [Kawamura 1975:11f]. Just as the Earth is the foundation for all kinds of activity so sīla is the foundation for the cultivation of all the limbs of enlightenment (bojjhaṅga):

'Just as, monks, whatsoever creatures adopt the four postures, now going, now standing still, now sitting, now lying, all do so in dependence on the earth; even so monks, dependent on virtue, supported by virtue, does a monk cultivate the seven limbs of wisdom.'

Seyyathāpi bhikkhave ye keci pānā cattāro iriyāpathe kappenti
kālena gamanaṃ kālena ṭhānaṃ kālena nisajjaṃ kālena seyyaṃ;
sabbe te paṭhaviṃ nissāya paṭhaviyaṃ paṭiṭṭhāya evaṃ ete
cattāro iriyāpathe kappenti; evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhu
sīlaṃ nissāya sīle paṭiṭṭhāya satta bojjhaṅge bhāveti.
[S.v.78 PTS tr.]

(iii) Abstract

The final category here is sīla as a soteriological foundation. The Theragāthā [612] describes sīla as the support of all good things (sīlaṃ paṭiṭṭhā ca kalyāṇānaṃ ca)

And again in the Madhu:

'Sīla is the foundation of all virtuous qualities. Founded on sīla one does not deteriorate in respect of virtuous qualities, but acquires all the mundane and supermundane attributes.'

Sīlaṃ nāma sabbesaṃ kusaladhammānaṃ paṭiṭṭhā, sīle paṭiṭṭhito
kusalaḍḍhammehi na parihāyati, sabbe lōkiyalokuttarāgūṇe
paṭilabhati [Madhu:106].

And at Miln 32:

'Sīla, Sire, has as its distinguishing mark that it is the basis of all good things; [...] In one who is based on sīla, Sire, none of these good things decreases.'

Patitṭhāna-lakkhaṇaṃ mahārāja sīlaṃ sabbesaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ; [...] sīle patitṭhitassa kho mahārāja sabbe kusalā dhammā na parihāyanti iti.

Buddhaghosa [Vism 1.20] defines the characteristic (lakkhaṇa) of sīla as 'the coordination of bodily action, etc., and the foundation of all good states' (kāyakammādīnaṃ samādhānavasena kusalānañ ca dhammānaṃ patitṭhānavasena) The MSA listing six benefits of śīla at XV.20 describes it as the basis of all good qualities (śīlaṃ hi sarvaḡuṇānāṃ pratiṣṭhā bhavati). It also says at IV.4 that the thought of enlightenment (cittopāda) rests upon śīla.

Aśvaghoṣa uses the simile of śīla and the earth in the Saundarananda (X111.21):

'For by taking your stand on morality all actions take place in the sphere of the supreme good, just as standing and other actions of the body are performed by taking your stand on the earth.'

Śīlaṃ āsthāya vartante sarvā hi śreyasi kriyāḥ, sthānādyānīva kāryāṇi pratiṣṭhāya vasundharāṃ. [tr. E.H.Johnston]

He also declares that morality is the foundation for yoga and meditation, a point which is echoed by Kamalaśīla, who says that the yogin must be supported (āśrita) by pure morality (śīlaviśuddhi) [Demiéville 1952:338]. The Śrāvakabhūmi states that śīla is the foundation (mūla) for meditation and insight [Wayman 1961:70]. Sgam po pa quotes several sources to the effect that śīla is the foundation for meditation and enlightenment and mundane and spiritual success [Jewel:163-171]. Finally, as already mentioned above, Buddhaghosa employs the image of a man standing firm on the ground of

sīla and cutting his way through the tangle of samsāra with the knife of insight (vipassanāpaññāsattam).

(b) Images of Protection

The second group of images stress the protective power of sīla. In the Theragāthā [614], sīla is described as 'a wonderful invulnerable coat of mail' (sīlam kavacam abbhutam). The commentary glosses 'wonderful' (abbhutam) as 'unbreakable' (abhejjam). The same image occurs in the Madhu [269] where there is a reference to 'moral armour' (sīla-kañcuka). In the same vein the Miln describes sīla as an umbrella to hold off the rain of the defilements [Miln 416]. The Madhu says that sīla is 'a shelter, a cave and a succour for one who has come into samsāra' [PTS tr. p.172]. The Sāmaññaphalasutta [D.i.69] compares the bhikkhu who has mastered the sīlas to a powerful monarch who has beaten down his enemies on all sides and is confident that there is no further danger. He experiences within himself a sense of ease.

A number of medical analogies also occur. The Miln says that sīla is an antidote for destroying the poison of the kilesas and a healing balm for allaying the sickness of the kilesas in beings [195]. The VKNS describes it as an antidote to convert beings of opposite (immoral) tendencies [p.29]. Āśvaghoṣa in the Saundarananda likens śīla to a guide in the wilderness (kāntāra iva daiśikah) [Xl11.28] and says that śīla goes in front as the foremost (śīlam nayaty/agram). He

describes it as a refuge (sāraṇam), a friend (mitram), a kinsman (bandhu) and a protector (rakṣā) [Xl11.28].

The Śīlaparikathā gives several images of the protective power of śīla:

'Śīla is like the best doctor in diseases. It is like a lamp in darkness, the refuge of the distressed and protection in times of fear, like a friend in danger and a boat in this endless ocean of death.' [v.9]

Tshul khrims nad pa sman pa'i mchog yin zing, mun pa'i sgron me nyam thag la skyabs dang, 'jigs la bsrung dang phongs la nye du dang, 'chi ba'i rgya mtsho mtha' med gzing gyur ying.

According to the M.Av the Buddha taught morality for the safeguarding (avipranāśa/mi za bar) of good qualities (guṇa) such as generosity (dāna/sbyin pa) [41.5-8].

(c) Images of motion or ascent

In this connection the Vism asks:

'Where can such another stair be found that climbs, as śīla does, to heaven? Or yet another door that gives onto the city of nibbāna?'

Saggārohaṇasopānam aññaṃ sīlasamaṃ kuto, dvāraṃ vā pana nibbāna-nagarassa pavesane. [1.24 tr. Nāṇamoli]

Moving horizontally this time the Theragāthā [613] compares śīla to a strand for all the Buddhas (tiṭṭhañ ca sabbabuddhānam) which, according to the commentary, means the place from which the Buddhas ford the sea of nibbāna. The verse following this describes śīla as a 'mighty causeway' (sīlam setu mahesakkho). Continuing the nautical metaphor, the Miln [195] describes the moral man (sīlavā) as a ship for beings to cross the four floods (nāvāsamo sattānam caturoghapāragamane) of sense-pleasures, becoming, wrong views and ignorance. The same man is like a caravan leader

(satthāvaho) for leading beings across the desert of births, a teacher (ācariya) and a guide (sudesika). In the Prātimokṣa of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, the Prātimokṣa itself is compared to a raft for crossing over the deep ocean of samsāra and is also said to be a ladder for ascending to the city of nibbāna [v.6; v.7]

Morality is frequently compared to the feet which make movement towards one's destination possible. The Prātimokṣa of the Dharmaguptakas states that just as a man without feet cannot walk, so one who lives without the precepts cannot be reborn as a god in heaven. It adds that one who has violated the precepts will be, at the hour of death, like a coachman about to cross a dangerous path who notices that he has lost the bolt from a wheel or that his axle has a crack in it [Wieger 1910:213].

(d) Images of Purification

Vism 1.24 says that only the water of sīla (sīlajala) can wash out the stain (mala) in beings. According to the opening verse of the Dīpa in Ch.24 śīla destroys the kleśas such as deceit and jealousy just as a fire cooks food. The Miln [195] compares the possession of morality to water that carries off the dirt and dust of the kilesas (udakasamo sattānam kilesarajojallāpaharane), and to a wind (vāta) that extinguishes the three fierce fires of greed, hatred and delusion in beings. According to S.i.183 the Dhamma is

compared to a lake with virtue as a strand for bathing; after being purified in it one passes over to the beyond.

(e) Images of Precious Objects

This final category is the most disparate and includes many precious objects which please the senses. Perfume (gandha) is extremely common²⁵. The Śīlaparikathā describes the fragrance of śīla in verse 7:

'The supreme fragrance of śīla is imperishable even in the uppermost heaven. Even the garlands do not spread such fragrance, nor even the pomades.'

Ji ltar tshul khrims bla med ldan pa'i dri/ dam pa mtho ris
'di na mi zad ldan, de ltar phreng ba'i dri ni khyab min
cing/ de bzin byug pa'i dri yang 'byung mi 'gyur.

Then there is the imagery of jewels or treasures.²⁶ Nett 56 compares śīla to an ornament (alamkāra), a treasure (nidhānam) a wealth of corn (dhaññam) a mirror (ādāso) and a palace (pāsādo). The Śrāvakabhūmi speaks of śīla as an ornament (alamkāra), as ointment (anulepana) and as 'full of perfume' (gandhajāta) [Wayman 1961:70]. The image of cloth also occurs at Vism 143 not in the sense of being a valuable possession but as an illustration of śīla as a complex web of observances which can easily be damaged or torn. According to the Prātimokṣa of the Dharmaguptakas the precepts of the prātimokṣa are more precious than treasure [Wieger 1910: 213].

The various images of śīla which have been mentioned above are not exclusive to Buddhism. In the Mahābhārata [124.62], śīla is said to be the basis of law (dharma), truth (satya)

and conduct (vr̥tta)²⁷. Dhṛtarāṣṭra stresses its importance for becoming successful in life (na hi kiṃ cidāśādhyaṃ vai loke śīlavatāṃ bhavet) [124.16]. Śīla is also described as the best ornament by Bhartṛhari²⁸. The Prātimokṣa of the Dharmaguptakas states that the bimensual recital of the prātimokṣa is like a mirror held up before the face which causes one to rejoice or grieve at the beauty or ugliness of the reflection [Wieger 1910:213]. The same image occurs in the Śīlasamyuktasūtra along with several of the kind already referred to above, and we conclude this section on imagery with a short extract from this source.

'Whoever possesses morality is associated (samprayukta) with the Buddha. The possession of morality is the best of all ornaments. The practice of morality is like perfume and ointment. Whoever possesses morality is the abode of all joys. Whoever possesses morality is like water which removes desires. The practice of morality is praised by all the world. Through pure morality the highest goal (paramagati) is reached. [...] The one who has morality is radiant. The possessor of morality becomes renowned and gains happiness. The possession of morality is the cause of reaching heaven.

Just as it is not possible to see forms without eyes so the Dharma cannot be seen without morality. Just as without feet one cannot travel along the road, so without morality liberation cannot be reached.'

Just as the fair earth is a casket of jewels, so morality is the foundation for the production of all good qualities (dharma). Just as a broken vessel is not suitable as a jewel casket, so through a torn morality all the doctrine is lost. If morality is lost at the beginning, can it be hoped that Nirvāṇa will be gained later on?

Those who have mutilated noses and ears do not desire a clear mirror. Their ears do not hear and their eyes do not see what is before them. But the man who keeps the teachings reaches heaven.

Tshul khrims ldan pa sangs rgyas 'byung dang phrad// tshul khrims ldan pa rgyan rnams kun gyi mchog/ tshul khrims 'byor pa dri dang byug pa yin//tshul khrims ldan pa dga' ba kun gyi ne // tshul khrims gdung ba sel ba'i chu// tshul khrims ldan pa 'jig rten kun gyis bstod// tshul khrims dag gis 'gro ba dam pa mnos [...]. Ji ltar mig med gzugs mthong mi rung ltar// de bzhin tshul khrims med na chos mi mthong// ji ltar

rkang med lam 'jug ga la nus// de bzhin tshul krims med na
thar mi 'gyur. Ji ltar bum pa bzang po rin chen snod// de
bzhin tshul khrims chos rnams skyed pa'i gzhi// ji ltar bum
chag rin chen snod mi rung// de bzhin tshul khrims ral pa
chos kun gtugs// dang po tshul khrims med par gyur pa des/
phyi nas mya ngan 'das pa thob snyam 'am// sna dang rna ba
rdum la sogs gang yin pa// de la me long dag ni dgos mi
'gyur// rna bas ma thos mig sngar ma mthong bzhin// bstan
srung mi de mtho ris 'gro bar 'gyur.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have seen that sīla circumscribes the conduct of the Buddha, and that the condensed description of his behaviour encapsulated in the sīlas of the Brahmajālasutta, particularly the Cūla-sīla, becomes the blueprint for Buddhist preceptual formulae. The Buddha's sīla, or moral perfection, becomes an essential goal for all who aspire to his status, and in the thirteen suttas of the SKV sīla is incorporated into the foundations of the Buddhist soteriological programme. The settled formulation of this emerges in the form of the three khandhas of the Eightfold Path. Of these I have suggested that sīla and paññā constitute the primary dimensions of perfection with samādhi providing the impetus for their full development. I will give my reasons for this more fully in the following chapters. If sīla and paññā are cultivated asymmetrically a psychological imbalance will emerge in the form of intellectual or legalistic fixation instead of insightful knowledge and compassionate moral concern.

The five groups of imagery used in respect of sīla illustrate its many facets; when they are considered together a picture

of sīla is built up as a complex quality or state with both static and dynamic dimensions. It is both a starting point (a) and a way forward (c); it conserves what has been achieved (b) and seeks further development and transformation (d). In one respect sīla provides a static platform for the establishment and cultivation of good qualities of all kinds, especially the intellectual virtues of meditation and insight; and in another it is a source of dynamic potential which contains within itself the seed of flourishing and growth in respect of moral qualities. Thus it is the sphere of moral cultivation and at the same time a precondition for proper intellectual development.

It is important to bear in mind these twin functions of sīla through which it stands in both a direct and an oblique relation to nibbāna. On the one hand nibbāna is an organic outgrowth from sīla - it is the fruit of which sīla is the root, and sīla is the door through which nibbāna is entered. And on the other sīla is the support for the intellectual virtues which follow a separate course of development. For the sake of clarity, and at the risk of exaggerating the distinction, we may say that sīla is dynamic in respect of moral development and passive in respect of intellectual development.

As well as being a support, sīla provides protection for whatever good qualities are developed. It is an impermeable defence against evil of all kinds, but also takes on an offensive role against the kilesas by engaging and

overwhelming them, with the result that vice is transformed into virtue. Sīla provides the impetus and dynamism without which liberation cannot be reached: it is the feet which make travel along the road possible in cooperation with the eyes which seek the correct destination. Finally, whatever stage of the path has been reached, sīla is an intrinsically valuable and desirable quality. The good is analagous to the beautiful, and the language of aesthetics is commonly invoked to describe sīla as seen in section (e).

In the following chapter I consider more fully the antagonism between sīla and the kilesas and explore the role of samādhi in the soteriological Path.

Notes to Chapter One

1. On the chronology of these 13 suttas see Pande [1983:77-94.] For a summary of their contents see Barua [1971:403-432].

2. For a translation with commentarial extracts see Bhikkhu Bodhi [1978].

3. Wieger [1910:145ff] translates a selection of Vinaya texts preserved in Chinese in which the order of the final five precepts varies considerably. Despite the reordering the provisions remain substantially the same. Additional prohibitions include marriage, breeding animals and hunting.

4. On these 13 stages and their conceptual relation to the goal see Bastow [1969]. On discourses relating to Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā see Barua [1971:Ch.3].

5. M.i.301; A.i.291. The Mahīśāsakas maintained that the Path had only five factors and that the category of Sīla (right speech, action and livelihood) should not be included since as physical action it was separate from the mind (cittavippayutta). The Theravāda contested this and reaffirmed that Sīla enjoyed an equal status with the other components. Cf. Bareau [1955:187, 237].

6. Cf. Pande [1983:516-8]

7. The Buddha rejects a similar view put forward by Sakka [S.i.206]. Cf. the proposition in the Kvu [18.3] that compassion is rooted in passion.

8. A Mahāyāna version of the account may be found in the Lotus Sūtra, chapters 2 and 7. On the hesitation of the Buddha Vipassi [D.ii.35f] see Saddhatissa [1970:48ff]. On the division of monastic duties into study and teaching (ganthadhura) versus meditation (vipassanādhura) see Gombrich [1971:Ch.7]; Carrithers [1983:141].

9. According to Katz there are suggestions in the Canon that the Buddha does not hesitate before teaching. He concludes: 'There is no one Buddhist canonical attitude, then, towards the Buddha and teaching, and this canonical ambivalence led to some hermeneutical difficulties for the Buddhist commentators [...]. The point to note, however, is that the Buddha [...] must and does teach' [1982:193].

10. On Paccekabuddhas and teaching see Kloppenborg [1974:76ff].

11. Cf. S.i.139

12. M.i.145; S.i.139

13. PTS Dictionary 'Sampadā'.

14. Mdo Shu 132b

15. Cf. Vism 1.154 describing the unvirtuous man. On the sequence of events at death and the 'death-consciousness' (cuti-citta) see Abhs tr. pp.26ff; 72-75; Vism Vlll.1-41; Collins [1982:244f]. On 'rebirth-linking' (patisandhi) Vism XVll 133-145. On the sequence and signs of death Kośa 3.42d-44.

16. Vrtti on Dīpa v254: Etad api śīlamayaṃ puṇyakriyāvastu mahābhogatāphalaṃ mokṣaphalaṃ ca.

17. Dīpa 254cd: Śāstre tu tatpradhānatvāt proktaṃ svargopapatāye.

18. The 40 stanzas praising heaven as a reward for śīla are: 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 20, 21, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 66, 67, 68, 70, 75, 77, 78, 85.

19. SSiddhi Varga 99 p.230: Śīlasamādhi pratyayaśāt rūpadhātau utpadyate. Dānaśīlakuśalābhyāsa pratyayeṇa kāmādhātau utpadyate.

20. A.i.232sq; M.i.62f; A.ii.136f.

21. Dhsam 1.11: Dānaśīlavato nityaṃ, sarvasattvānukampinaḥ, sidhyante sarvasamkalpās, tasmāt śīlaparo bhavet.

22. Cf. Kloppenborg [1983:161ff].

23. On SVP Cf. also Laṅk 117; Abhidhsam p.10; Dhs 1005.

24. Kośa lV p.47n3 tr. Poussin

25. Vism 1.24; 1.159; Thaq 615; Miln 163

26. Vism 1.24; Miln 195

27. Quoted by Jauhari [1968:83]

28. Jauhari [loc.cit]

CHAPTER TWO

'Our moral appreciation is extraordinarily sensitive to our desires and passions, which should not surprise us since it is not exaggerating very greatly to say that our moral appreciation can only exist in the absence of our selfish desires, in the absence of exclusive love of self.'

R.Beehler [1978:49]

'Of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some Good to himselfe'

Hobbes Leviathan

In this chapter we follow the theme of Chapter One into the scholastic maze of the Abhidharma. We shall find in section (i) that the systematised scheme of the Abhidharma lends support to the notion of final perfection as bilateral and provides a key to understanding the structure of Buddhist ethics and its soteriological role. The Abhidharma is cognisant of the moral and intellectual dimensions of human nature and the system provides a skeletal soteriological model which takes account of the two. In part (ii) we consider the nature of the relationship between moral and intellectual virtue or excellence, and the concluding section (iii) explores the role of Buddhist meditational techniques in the perfection of morality and insight.

(i) Dharmas and Virtues

At the core of the Abhidharmic system lies the theory of dharmas. Dharmas are the basic constituents or elements of

reality; they are ultimate reals or ontologically grounded existents which cannot be further subdivided or analysed. Dharmas exist in the most fundamental sense (dravyasat) and provide the framework across which the web of conceptual reality (prajñapti) is woven. The goal of the Abhidharma is to pick away at the subtle threads of the world of prajñapti and to uncover the world of real existents or dharmas which lies beneath.

The Abhidharmikas adopted a strategy of rigorous analysis and classification and in so doing regarded themselves as faithfully continuing the methodology of the Buddha. The Abhidharma, not without justification, claims the Buddha as the originator of the Abhidharma tradition [Asl 34f]. The Buddha had begun to unravel the skein of false consciousness within which the notions of permanence and selfhood were erroneously fostered. The theory of the skandhas was the first step in this process of critical analysis, and the categories of the Abhidharma, which are essentially based on the skandhas, represent the continuation of this analytical critique and an extension of its application beyond the human subject to reality as a whole.

As such, the Abhidharma is absolutely central to Buddhist thought, and no account of Buddhist ethics can be considered securely founded which does not take cognisance of Abhidharmic ethical data. The only theoretical approach to the study of ethics within the Buddhist tradition is to be found in the Abhidharma, and it is essential that we direct

our attention to its conclusions. An opinion contrary to the above is held by Winston King, who maintains that in an enquiry into Buddhist ethics the Abhidharma is best dispensed with. He writes:

'... it is doubtful whether the statement of Abhidhammic ethical theory would be of much use or significance to the Westerner. Attempts in this direction up to the present are not particularly promising. The usual result seems to be a vocabulary and system of distinctions almost completely foreign and meaningless to the Western mind, in which the ethical element, in the Western sense, is lost sight of in an unfamiliar maze of Buddhist psychological terminology.' [1964:5]

I disagree entirely with this view. On the contrary, it seems to me that the Abhidharma provides a promising and fruitful line of enquiry to pursue in connection with Buddhist ethics. Its clear and logical categories and classifications will lead us in the shortest possible time to what is most essential to our investigation, provided, of course, that we know how to interpret the data it provides us with. That the terminology is unfamiliar, moreover, can hardly be pleaded as a reason for neglecting what the tradition itself regards as a summary of its most important elements. Part of my argument in the remainder of this chapter will be to the effect that far from being 'almost completely foreign and meaningless to the Western mind', the Abhidhammic ethical classifications are readily intelligible in terms of one of the oldest and most influential concepts in Western ethics - the concept of a virtue.

It is difficult to overlook the ethical significance of the Abhidharma. The Dhs embarks upon probably the most ambitious ethical programme ever conceived, namely a classification of

the whole of reality in terms of ethical predicates. The three groups of real existents (paramattha dhamma) susceptible to this analysis (the fourth, nibbāna as an ontological category, is not) are grouped into the ethical categories of good (kusala), bad (akusala) and neutral (avyākata). In her introduction to the translation of the text Mrs. Rhys Davids describes the import of the work as mainly ethical:

'... its subject is ethics, but [...] the enquiry is conducted from a psychological standpoint, and, indeed, is in great part an analysis of the psychological and psychophysical data of ethics.' [xxxii]

This interrelation of ethics and psychology is also noted by De Silva who comments 'A close study of Buddhist ethics would show that it betrays a significant link with psychology' [1979:3].

The Dhs systematises the raw data of Buddhist ethics and provides an evaluative classification of reality in terms of Buddhist soteriology. However, one looks there in vain for a theoretical structure in terms of which this data may be interpreted, and it bears no resemblance to what would be regarded in the West as a treatise on ethics or moral philosophy.¹ Yet we must not be intimidated by this unfamiliar moral landscape, which is familiar territory to those within the tradition. In the Vism Buddhaghosa begins his definition of sīla by describing it as 'the states beginning with volition (cetanādayo dhammā) present in one who abstains from killing living things, etc.' Here he is defining sīla by reference to the 52 cetasika-dhammas of the

Theravāda, and without an understanding of the ethical function of these dhammas it is impossible to provide an analysis of sīla at its most basic level.

I propose now to isolate those aspects of the dharma-theory which are relevant from the point of view of ethics. Our primary source in this chapter is the Kośa and I shall follow the system of the Sarvāstivāda along with Vasubandhu. According to W.S. Karunaratna this was the most influential of all the Abhidharmic systems. He writes: 'The classification of caitasikas (caittas) which gained the widest currency and exercised the greatest degree of impact on all schools of Buddhism of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna alike is that of the Sarvāstivādins.'² Useful tabular summaries of the Sarvāstivāda classificatory system have been provided by Stcherbatsky [1923] and Takakusu [1956], and extracts from these are given in the tables which follow. The Sarvāstivāda dharma-system differs from that of the Theravāda in the range of its taxonomical categories and the number and occasionally the specification of the dhammas comprising each category and sub-category. Other schools have formulations which are different again but such variations are only of minor importance. Despite the variations in detail all schools acknowledge the same basic classificatory rubrics, and the ethical relevance of the dharma-theory is unaffected. The standard classification is a fourfold one into matter (rūpa), mind (citta), mental forces (caitta) and the unconditioned (nirvāṇa). To this the Sarvāstivāda add a further category of non-mental forces (citta-viprayukta-samskāra).

The Seventy-five Dharmas (Elements of Existence) 七十五法
The Kusā School

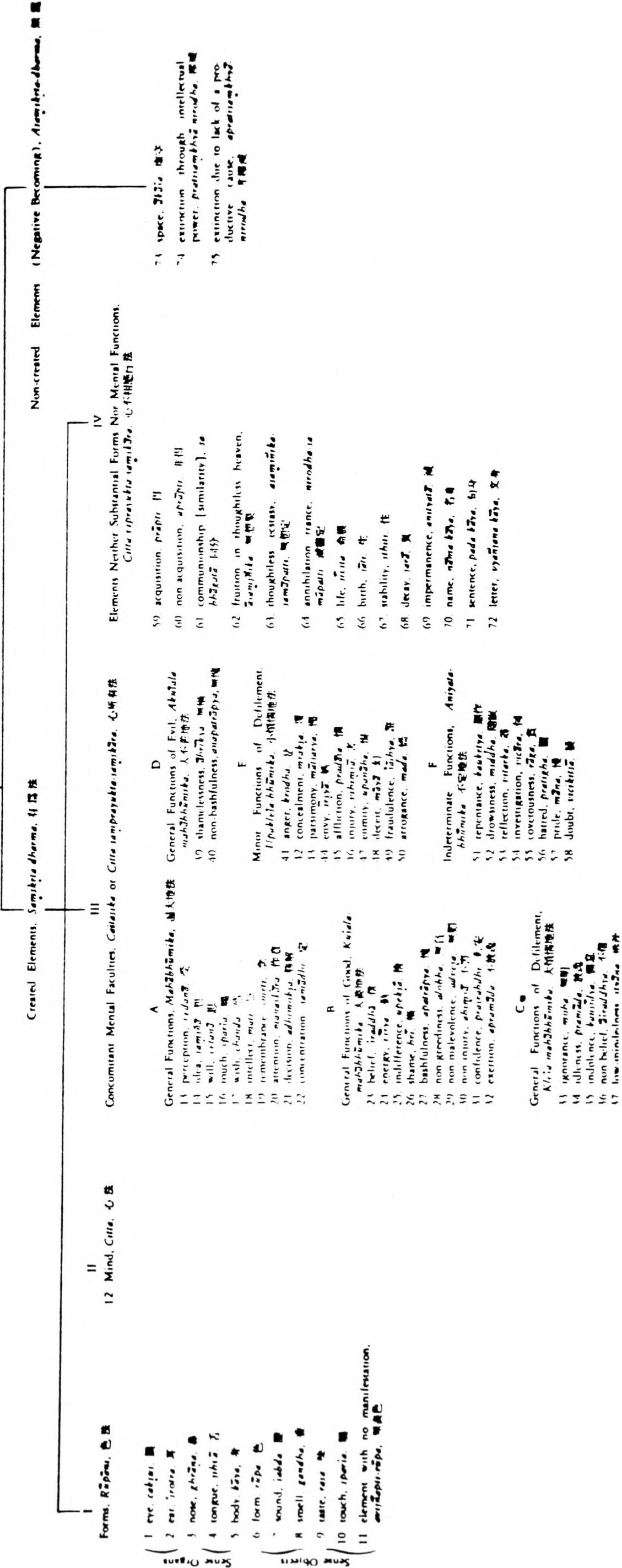


TABLE I

The 75 Dharmas of the Sarvāstivāda

(Source: Takakusu 1956)

Let us look at the Sarvāstivāda classification in more detail. A complete tabulation of all 75 dharmas may be found in Table I (from which item 38 is omitted in the original). A breakdown of the system is shown in Table II, and an analysis of the classification by content in Table III. Table IV shows the relation of the dharmas to the five skandhas.

TABLE II

Breakdown of the 75 Dharmas of the Sarvāstivāda

1)	A	<u>RŪPA</u>	Number of <u>dharmas</u>	-	11
2)	B	<u>CITTA</u>		-	1
	C	<u>CAITTA</u>		-	46
3)	D	<u>CITTA-VIPRAYUKTA-SAMSKĀRAS</u>		-	14
4)	E	<u>ASAMSKRTADHARMAS</u>		-	3
					75

TABLE III

Category C by Content

(a) CAITTA

<u>Citta-mahābhūmika-dharmas</u>	10
<u>Kuśāla-mahābhūmika-dharmas</u>	10
<u>Kleśa-mahābhūmika-dharmas</u>	6
<u>Akuśāla-mahābhūmika-dharmas</u>	2
<u>Upakleśa-mahābhūmika-dharmas</u>	10
<u>Aniyata-bhūmika-dharmas</u>	8
	46

(b) The 10 Kuśāla-mahābhūmika-dharmas are :

1. Faith (śraddhā)
2. Energy (vīrya)
3. Equanimity (upekṣā)
4. Modesty (hrī)
5. Bashfulness (apatrāpya)
6. Non-craving (alobha)
7. Non-hatred (adveṣa)
8. Non-injury (ahiṃsā)
9. Serenity (praśrabdhi)
10. Non-heedlessness (apramāda)

(c) The 6 Kleśa-mahābhūmika-dharmas are :

1. Ignorance (moha)
2. Heedlessness (pramāda)
3. Torpor (kausīdya)

4. Lack of conviction (aśraddhā)
5. Sloth (sthyāna)
6. Restlessness (auddhatya)

(d) The 10 Upakleśa-bhūmika-dharmas are :

1. Anger (krodha)
2. Hypocrisy (mrakṣa)
3. Envy (mātsarya)
4. Jealousy (īrsyā)
5. Envious Rivalry (pradāsa)
6. Causing harm (vihimsā)
7. Malice (upanāha)
8. Deceit (māyā)
9. Trickery (śāt^hya)
10. Conceit (maḍa)

(e) The 2 Akuśala-mahābhūmika-dharmas are :

1. Lack of shame (āhrīkya)
2. Arrogance (anapatrāpya)

TABLE 1V

A breakdown of the 72 samskr̥ta-dharmas into the 5 Skandhas

<u>RŪPA</u>	11 <u>dharmas</u>
<u>VEDANĀ</u>	1
<u>SAMJÑĀ</u>	1
<u>SAMSKĀRA</u>	58
<u>VIJÑĀNA</u>	1
	—
	72
	—

We may begin by eliminating those aspects of the dharma-theory which are not directly relevant to our purpose. The group of 3 unconditioned (asamskr̥ta) dharmas (E) is made up of space (ākāśa) and the two kinds of cessation (nirodha), analytical (pratisaṅkhyā) and non-analytical (apratisaṅkhyā). These three elements may be left to one side for the moment since the first, space, has no ethical relevance and I shall return to consider the significance of nirvāṇa as the goal of ethical striving in Chapters Three and Six. The remaining 72 conditioned (samskr̥ta) dharmas are divided into three main groups: matter (rūpa), mind (citta-caitta), and non-mental forces (citta-viprayukta-samskāra). The last of these has no bearing upon ethics and will not concern us.

As far as the relationship between the remaining two groups, matter and mind, is concerned, the Abhidharma analyses the individual into a stream (santāna) of dharmas in which both elements are present. The santāna of animate forms

(sattvākhya) is influenced by two factors; the law of cause and effect (sabhāga-hetu), and moral causation (vipāka-hetu). Matter is influenced only by the first of these and has no intrinsic ethical significance.³

We have now eliminated three of the four divisions of the dharmic taxonomy from our enquiry and may turn our attention to the remaining mental phenomena of citta and caitta. Citta, mind or psyche, is the common denominator of mental and emotional operations and the centre around which the constellation of psychic events (caitta) revolves. Citta is defined in the Asl [63] as 'that which thinks of its object, that which knows' (cittan ti ārammaṇaṃ cintetī ti cittaṃ, vijānātīti attho). And later as follows:

'The distinctive characteristic of citta is cognising the object; its function is the forerunning; its manifestation is connecting; and its consequence is the sustenance of mind and body.

Lakkhaṇādito pana vijānanalakkaṇaṃ cittaṃ, pubbaṅgama-rasaṃ, sandhāna-paccupaṭṭhānaṃ, nāmarūpa-padaṭṭhānaṃ.' [Asl 112]

Citta and its concomitants (caitta) are invariably connected. According to the Adhs they arise and perish together (ekuppādanirodhā) and share a common object and a common basis (ekālamghanavattukā) [2.1]. Buddhaghosa compares citta to a king who arrives with a retinue of over fifty attendants [Asl 67]. Yaśomitra states that citta and caitta share the same basis (āśraya), object (ālambhana), form (ākāra), time (kāla) and substance (dravya) [Vyākhyā 11.49,14-50,15].

Citta is the personal mental or psychic centre. 'Judged by

its general usage in the Pali Nikāyas', writes Karunaratna, 'citta appears basically to refer to the centre and focus of man's emotional nature as well as to the seat and organ of thought in its active dynamic aspect.' And again, 'Citta is viewed as an arsenal of dispositional properties which take the form of mental predispositions, proclivities, tendencies and dormant and latent forces which activate themselves at the subliminal level of consciousness.'⁴ Citta is the centre of subjective consciousness. Johansson describes its most typical meaning as 'a personal psychological factor responsible for the unity and continuity of the human being' [1979:158]. It is 'a centre for conscious activity' and 'corresponds fairly closely to "mind"' [1979:161]. Again it is 'a conscious centre of activity, purposiveness, continuity and emotionality', including not only momentary conscious processes but also 'the continuous, unconscious background, e.g. all the moral traits which are not manifest in every moment but are latent, prepared to influence thoughts and behaviour as soon as the opportunity is given' [1979:161]. Piyananda comments that 'the Pali citta primarily pertains to the sensorily perceptual and emotional functions of the active consciousness of mind' [1974:18].

Various translations for citta have been proposed: Karunaratna lists 'mind, thought, heart, conception, consciousness, mood, emotion, spirit, idea and attitude'.⁵ While 'mind' captures the operation of the conscious processes 'psyche' is preferable as a translation since it embraces both intellectual and emotional life and encompasses

better the dimension of moral traits, dispositions and character.

Citta is encountered in the many states or modes of subjective consciousness, its total potential at any one time being roughly equivalent to a person's mood or general state of mind. In this sense citta is the aggregate of mental forces (caitta) and resonates, so to speak, according to the pitch and tone of the dynamic psychic energies (caitta) in operation at any given moment. To understand the pattern of primary mental energies, therefore, we must turn our attention to the category of basic mental forces, or caitta.

There are 46 caitta-dharmas in the Sarvāstivāda classification and a breakdown of them may be found in Table III. As may be expected, not all mental operations have moral status, and we find among the 46 dharmas two groups which include general non-moral mental faculties: these are the 10 common mental elements (citta-mahābhūmika-dharma) and the 8 indeterminate mental elements (aniyata-bhūmika-dharma). We may leave these 18 elements to one side and focus instead on those which are ethically determinative.

We have now eliminated all those elements of the dharma-theory which are not of primary ethical significance. The list of 75 dharmas with which we started out has been narrowed down to 28, as listed at Table III (b)-(e). The 28 remaining may be structured in terms of the simple opposition good (kuśala) :: bad (akuśala, kleśa). There are 10 morally

good elements and 18 morally bad elements as shown below.

morally good elements : 10 kuśāla-mahābhūmika-dharmas

morally bad elements : 2 akuśāla-mahābhūmika-dharmas
 6 kleśa-mahābhūmika-dharmas
 10 upakleśa-mahābhūmika-dharmas

18

Thus so far we have seen that in the field of ethics the dharma-theory recognises a simple and basic distinction between psychic elements, qualities or states (caitta-dharma) which are good (kuśāla) and those which are bad (akuśāla). This distinction is found in all the Abhidharmic formulations: in the Theravādin Abhidhamma there are 25 good qualities and 14 bad ones and in the Abhs the tally is 19:14. According to the Abhs the function of kuśāla-dharmas is to eliminate forces which are hostile to them, while the function of the kleśas and upakleśas is to obstruct their opposites.⁶ It would be premature at this point to offer precise definitions of these evaluative predicates, and for the moment we may accept a working definition of kusala as soteriologically efficacious, and akusala as soteriologically deleterious.

The dharma-theory is only intelligible in the context of Buddhist soteriology. It exists for the purpose of enlightenment, and enlightenment is achieved through a process of gradual purification. The object of the dharma-theory is to identify and facilitate the elimination of those

factors which impede enlightenment, namely the defilements (kleśa). To this end the dharma-theory is indispensable. According to the Kośa:

'There is no way of removing the defilements apart from the analysis of dharmas. It is because of the defilements that the world wanders in the sea of existence.'

Dharmāṇām pravīcayam antareṇa nāsti, kleśāṇām yata upaśāntaye abhyupāyaḥ, kleśaiś ca bhramānti bhavārṇave'tra lokāḥ.' [1.3]

According to the Abhidharma, enlightenment is achieved by purifying the santāna of all defilements (kleśa). Good qualities (kuśala-dharma) bring about this purification and evil qualities (kleśa) oppose it. Due to the presence of the defiling elements the santāna is polluted (sāsrava) and the whole stream is brought into a state of instability and disquiet. The goal, therefore, is to neutralise the destabilizing elements and bring the santāna into a state of quiescence.

How are we to understand these caitta-dharmas which are so influential in the stabilization or destabilization of the santāna? They are recognised by all the Abhidharmic schools and average out at around 50 or so in the various tabulations. At first glance we seem to be presented with a disorganised collection of all the possible permutations of mental phenomena, but I suggest that they can be made readily intelligible if we divide them up into three groups in more or less the same manner as the Abhidharma. First of all there are the general mental faculties, the 10 citta-mahābhūmika-dharmas and 8 aniyata-bhūmika-dharmas which we have already

isolated. Those elements constitute the basic functions of psychic life and are the support of the moral consciousness. They include the capacities of cognition (saṃjñā), feeling (vedanā) and volition (cetanā) which are the foundations of moral responsibility. Yet by themselves these 18 general faculties (13 for the Theravāda) are mere capacities - they may be exploited either for good or for evil.

The direction in which the general mental faculties are exploited is determined by the influence of the remaining two groups. These are best understood as corresponding to the Western notion of virtues and vices. The concept of a virtue will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six but for the moment we may take the following as our definition of a virtue:

'In ethics, virtue is moral excellence, a settled attitude which conduces to habitually good action in some respect. The virtues have been variously classified. The intellectual virtues (e.g. wisdom) are distinguished from the practical virtues (e.g. courage), the former being associated with the life of contemplation, the latter with the life of action.'

In the Abhidharma formulation we are considering, then, the virtues are the 10 kuśala-mahābhūmika-dharmas, namely:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Faith (<u>śraddhā</u>) | 6. Non-craving (<u>alobha</u>) |
| 2. Energy (<u>vīrya</u>) | 7. Non-hatred (<u>adveṣa</u>) |
| 3. Equanimity (<u>upeksā</u>) | 8. Non-injury (<u>ahiṃsā</u>) |
| 4. Modesty (<u>hrī</u>) | 9. Serenity (<u>praśrabdhi</u>) |
| 5. Bashfulness (<u>atrāpya</u>) | 10. Non-heedlessness (<u>apramāda</u>) |

And the vices consist of the 18 kleśa, upakleśa-, and akuśala-mahābhūmika-dharmas, namely:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ignorance (<u>moha</u>) | 10. Jealousy (<u>īrsyā</u>) |
| 2. Heedlessness (<u>pramāda</u>) | 11. Envious Rivalry (<u>pradāsa</u>) |
| 3. Torpor (<u>kausīdya</u>) | 12. Causing harm (<u>vihiṃsā</u>) |
| 4. Lack of faith (<u>aśraddhā</u>) | 13. Malice (<u>upanāha</u>) |
| 5. Sloth (<u>sthyāna</u>) | 14. Deceit (<u>māyā</u>) |

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6. Restlessness (<u>auddhatya</u>) | 15. Trickery (<u>śāṭhya</u>) |
| 7. Anger (<u>krodha</u>) | 16. Conceit (<u>madā</u>) |
| 8. Hypocrisy (<u>mraksa</u>) | 17. Shamelessness (<u>ahrīkya</u>) |
| 9. Envy (<u>mātsarya</u>) | 18. Arrogance (<u>anapatrāpya</u>) |

It will be noted, in accordance with the definition above, that the virtues and vices listed here are of both an intellectual and a practical or moral nature. Again it will be seen that some of the vices are mere negations of the virtues (e.g. śraddhā/aśraddhā; ahimsā/vihiṃsā) while others are opposed indirectly (e.g. vīrya/kausīdya). Some items listed separately are almost identical (e.g. sthyāna and kausīdya). Indeed, in traditional Buddhist thinking all the vices may be derived from the three Roots of Evil (akuśalamūla) consisting of attachment (rāga), aversion (doṣa) and delusion (moha). Likewise all of the virtues may be derived from their contraries, namely the three roots of good or, as I will also refer to them, the three 'cardinal virtues' of generosity (arāga), benevolence (adoṣa) and understanding (amoha).⁸ It is the nature of a virtue to be counteractive, to overcome the weakness and deficiency which is vice. This point is made by Phillipa Foot in her essay 'Virtues and Vices':

'I shall now turn to another thesis about the virtues, which I might express by saying that they are corrective, each one standing at a point at which there is some temptation to be resisted or deficiency of motivation to be made good. As Aristotle put it, virtues are about what is difficult for men' [1978:8]

It is the task of virtue to combat vice. What is to count as a vice will depend upon the theory of human nature one holds as well as historico-cultural circumstances and the

prevailing mores. In the present instance we have the vices conveniently tabulated for us by the Abhidharma. In the context of Buddhist soteriology it is not difficult to see why these items should count as vices; they are those factors deemed antithetical to the state of final perfection which is the Buddhist ideal. The vices are obstacles to enlightenment and the obstacles to enlightenment are of two kinds: intellectual and moral. The moral vices are eradicated by the moral virtues, which are encompassed by the term śīla: śīla is directly antagonistic to the kleśas and according to the Dīpa, as mentioned in Chapter One, it destroys or transmutes them like a fire cooks food.

This is a convenient point at which to review the conclusions of this section. I began by suggesting that the Abhidharma is a technology for the analysis and classification of reality according to the values of Buddhist soteriology. It is not a value-free analysis; the purpose of the operation is to classify those psychological elements which are desirable, those which are undesirable, and those which are neutral. The criterion for desirability is the degree of approximation to the enlightened consciousness which a quality embodies or encourages. Delusion (moha) is therefore undesirable, as are attachment (rāga) and aversion (doṣa). The Abhidharma formulation of caitta-dharmas distinguishes clearly between those elements which are desirable and beneficial (kuśala) and those which are undesirable and deleterious (akuśala). I have suggested that these correspond to the Western notion of virtues and vices.

Virtues and vices may be either cognitive or non-cognitive. Aristotle, for instance, as we shall see in Chapter Six, distinguishes between the intellectual virtues (aretai dianoetikai) such as insight (sophia) and practical wisdom (phronesis) or prudence; and the moral virtues or virtues of character (aretai ethikai) such as courage and justice. We find a similar distinction latent within the list of caitta-dharmas as pointed out above. I shall argue in the next section that this distinction may be seen in Buddhism in the form of an opposition between the intellectual vices rooted in moha, and the moral vices rooted in rāga and dosa. In the subsequent section (v) I will apply the arguments of this chapter to the problem of the two different kinds of meditational technique (samatha and vipassanā).

(ii) Moral and Intellectual Virtue

For the moment I wish to focus on the distinction between intellectual and moral virtues and vices. I suggested above that this may be seen in the formulation of the three root virtues and vices. We may illustrate this binary distinction as follows, using the three akusalamūlāni:

INTELLECTUAL VICE

MOHA

MORAL VICE

LOBHA



DOSA

All the intellectual vices are forms of cognitive error and stem from moha. The moral vices, on the other hand, are forms of non-cognitive error; they are inappropriate emotional responses or propensities which may be located at the polar extremes of the emotional continuum marked by lobha and dosa. Lama Govinda observes that 'lobha and dosa are only two sides of the same force i.e. tanhā' [1974:54]. And according to De Silva: 'Man's desires influence his cognitive powers and his cognitions have an impact on his desires. There is both a cognitive and an emotional component to man's suffering, and these arise from his craving and ignorance' [1979:29]. Emphasis may be placed upon either craving or ignorance as causes of the arising of suffering. In the scheme of the Four Noble Truths it is the emotional aspect of attachment and

clinging (tanhā) which is specified under the Second Noble Truth. And in the formula of Dependent Origination (paticca-samuppāda) it is ignorance (avijjā) which is the first link in the chain with tanhā figuring as the eighth. Tanhā often does duty for all three of the akusalamūlāni as the root cause of suffering:

'Whatever suffering arises, all that is because of tanhā'

Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti sabbaṃ taṇhāpaccayā [Sn. p.144].

'The world is led by tanhā and carried about by it. All have come under the sway of this one thing called tanhā.

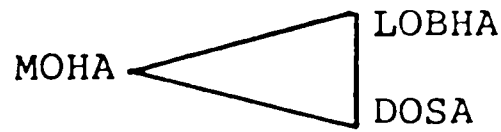
Taṇhāya niyati loko, taṇhāya parikissati,
Taṇhāya[^] ekadhammassa sabbeva vasam anvagū ti
[S.i.39].

'From tanhā arises grief, from tanhā arises fear. For him who is totally free from tanhā there is no grief, let alone fear.'

Taṇhāya jāyatī soko, taṇhāya jāyatī bhayaṃ
Taṇhāya vip̐pamuttassa natthi soko kuto bhayaṃ [Dh.216].

Tanhā and avijjā overlap, and as Johansson points out avijjā involves both cognitive deficiency and an 'unfavourable attitude' or 'prejudice'. He states that 'avijjā is a dynamic term, involving lack of motivation for Buddhist pursuits' [1979:137].

Linked together the three root vices form the triangle of tanhā which is the sum of intellectual and moral deficiency and the cause for the arising of suffering. The destruction of tanhā (tanhākkhaya) is nibbāna [S.38.1].



Although these two categories of vices may be logically abstracted they cannot in the final analysis be disentangled and isolated within the psyche. The current of tanhā flows around all three sides of the triangle: tanhā involves both a misconception of the good through a failure to perceive rightly, plus an emotional attachment or fixation in respect of that misconception. False views could be quickly replaced by right views through a process of reasoning and analysis were it not for the stubborn emotional attachment (lobha) to the wrong view and fear of and aversion (dosa) to the right view. The three akusala-mūlāni are mutually reinforcing in respect of what is bad and the three kusalamūlāni in respect of what is good. Ñāṇaponika writes: 'In their positive aspects, non-greed and non-hate are likewise strong motives of good actions. They supply the non-rational, volitional or emotional motives, while non-delusion represents the rational motive of a good thought or action' [1965:79].

In its simplest terms the problem concerns the interrelation of reason and emotion in the human psyche. Reason and emotion cannot be disentangled and they cannot be perfected in isolation without resulting in psychic disequilibrium. They are 'washed around together' and must be perfected in conjunction. I am not suggesting, therefore, that enlightenment can be achieved merely through the elimination of moral vice; what I hope to show is that moral perfection

no less than intellectual perfection is an integral ingredient in the Buddhist ideal because the capacity for moral sentiment is an integral part of human nature.

How is this expressed in terms of Buddhist anthropology? Both the nāma-rūpa analysis and the more sophisticated scheme of the Abhidharma distinguish between the cognitive and affective powers or dimensions of the psyche (citta). These functions are subsumed under the khandhas (or cetasika-dhammas/citta-mahābhūmika-dharmas) of saññā and vedanā respectively. It is clearly stated in the Nikāyas that these are powers of citta:

'Cognition and feeling are mental processes dependent on citta: therefore they are called functions of citta.'

Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro ti [S.iv.293].

However, the exact nature of the relationship between vedanā, saññā and viññāna is difficult to state with precision, as is pointed out in the Mahāvedallasutta:

'That which is feeling, your reverence, that which is cognition, and that which is consciousness - these states are associated not dissociated, and it is not possible to lay down a difference between these states having analysed them again and again. Your reverence, whatever one feels, that one cognises; whatever one cognises, that one is variously aware of.'

Yā c'āvuso vedanā yā ca saññā yañca viññānaṃ ime dhammā samsatṭhā no visamsatṭhā, na ca labbhā imesaṃ dhammānaṃ vinibbhujitvā vinibbhujitvā nānākaraṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ. Yaṃ h'āvuso vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti [M.i.293].

We suggest that in broad terms it is helpful to regard the khandhas of vedanā and saññā respectively as denoting the

cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of psychic life. The functions of saññā and vedanā may be logically distinguished but do not correspond to any real division in the structure of the human subject. Each is merely a power of the psyche: yet as the function of each is different so is its respective virtue or excellence. The virtue of the cognitive aspect (saññā) is to see, understand and discriminate correctly; its vice is delusion and error. The virtue of the non-rational part of the psyche is to sense, feel, and respond affectively in an appropriate manner; its vice is to swing to the extremes of craving (rāga) and aversion (dosa) under the influence of the ego.

The practice of the Eightfold Path cultivates a middle course between these two extremes, and it is suggested at M.i.15 that it is the emotional polarisation into rāga and dosa which underlies extreme views and attitudes of all kinds:

'Herein, Brethren, greed is evil and hatred is evil, and for the abandoning of greed and hatred there is the Middle Path which makes for vision, knowledge and leads to tranquillity, to awakening and to nibbāna. And what, Brethren, is this Middle Path [...]? It is this Noble Eightfold Path.'

Tatr'āvuso lobho ca pāpako doso ca pāpako, lobhassa ca pahānāya dosassa ca pahānāya atthi majjhimā paṭipadā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati. Katamā ca sā āvuso majjhimā paṭipadā [...]? Ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo [M.i.15].

The commentary on this expands as follows:

'Greed is one extreme and hatred is one extreme, but the Path does not go near, does not approach the two extremes. It is free from these two extremes, which is why it is called the Middle Path. It is 'Middle' because it is between them, and a 'Path' because it is to be followed through. One extreme is the pursuit of sensual pleasure and another is self-mortification; one extreme is eternalism and another is annihilationism, and this is to be explained by what has been said above [concerning greed and hatred].

Maggo hi lobho eko anto, doso eko anto ti ete dve ante na upeti, na upagacchati, mutto etehi antehi, tasmā majjhimā paṭipadā ti vuccati. Etesaṃ majjhe bhavattā majjhimā, paṭipajjitabbato ca paṭipadā ti. Tathā kāmasukhallikānuyogo eke anto, attakilamathānuyogo eko anto, sassatam eko anto, ucchedo eko anto ti purimanayen'eva vitthāretabbam [MA.i.104].

The malfunction of vedanā and saññā, which is tanhā, is the basic soteriological problem of Buddhism. Here one is both deluded as to what is the case (moha), and emotionally attached (rāga) to the misconception and averse (dosa) to the truth. Immoral conduct is not simply the result of ignorance or of a maladjusted emotional response alone: it comes about through a misapprehension of the facts (most fundamentally involving the belief in a self) together with an emotional investment made on the basis of that factual error (attachment to the imputed self).

Let us look at the functions of vedanā and saññā in more detail. The PTS Dictionary gives two meanings for vedanā, namely 'feeling' and 'sensation'. Various classifications of vedanā are given in the Nikāyas: the most basic is a threefold one into feelings which are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral:

'It feels, monks, therefore it is called feeling. What does it feel? It feels pleasure, pain, and that which is neither pleasure-nor-pain..'

Vediyatī ti kho bhikkhave tasmā vedanā ti vuccati. Kiñca vediyati? Sukham pi vediyati dukkham pi vediyati adukkhamasukham pi vediyati. [S.iii.86f]

This is expanded into a fivefold one by making the distinction between bodily and mental feelings which are pleasant, unpleasant and neutral, and a sixfold one by reference to the six sense-doors. The Asl defines vedanā as

follows:

'Feeling is that which feels. It has experiencing as characteristic, enjoying as function, or possessing the desirable portion of an object as function, taste of the mental properties as manifestation, and tranquillity as proximate cause.'

Vediyatī ti vedanā. Sā vedayitalakkhaṇā anubhavanarasā iṭṭhākārasambhogarasā vā cetasika-assāda-paccupaṭṭhānā passadhipadaṭṭhānā [Asl 109 PTS tr.].

Vedanā is a basic psychological process and its function cannot be further reduced or expressed in terms of any other psychic operation. In this respect the Asl compares it to a king who alone tastes the food prepared by his many attendants and alone experiences its flavour [109f.]. According to De Silva, 'vedanā may be considered as the basic concept for affective experience' [1979:77]. In its most fundamental sense the khandha of vedanā represents the human capacity for affective response: it is 'the feeling component of our experience' [De Silva 1979:18]. Its function is limited and specific: Lama Govinda states that 'vedanā covers only the hedonic aspect of feeling and emotion' [1974:117]. However, insofar as the affective response may be positive or negative, vedanā may be said to perform an evaluative function. Thus Guenther defines vedanā as:

'a basic psychological function which imparts to every conscious content [...] a definite value in the sense of acceptance ('like') or rejection ('dislike') or indifference [...]. Thus, feeling is a kind of judging, although it does not establish an intellectual connection but merely sets up a subjective criterion of acceptance, rejection or indifference' [1976:37].

Johansson makes a similar point when he states that vedanā 'is defined in terms of feeling and clearly refers to an evaluating function' [1979:87]. Any affective 'evaluation'

carried out by vedanā is preconceptual and non-cognitive; the cognitive function of the psyche is designated by the khandha of saññā.

Whereas the paradigm function of vedanā is to feel, the role of saññā is to cognise:

'It cognises, it cognises [...] which is why it is called cognition. And what does it cognise? It cognises blue, yellow, red, white.'

Sañjānāti sañjānāti kho [...] tasmā saññā ti vuccati. Kiñca sañjānāti? nīlakampi sañjānāti, pītakampi sañjānāti, lohita-kampi sañjānāti, odātampi sañjānāti.' [M.i.293]

The Kośa and Bhāṣya explain saññā as follows:

'Cognition (saññā) consists in the apprehension of characteristics. The apprehension of different natures - noticing that it is blue, yellow, long, short, man, woman, friend, enemy, pleasant or unpleasant, etc: this is the faculty of cognition.'

Saññā nimittodgrahaṇātmikā. Yāvan nīla pīta dīrgha hrasva strī puruṣa mitra amitra sukha duḥkha ādi nimittodgrahaṇam asau saññāskandhaḥ. [1.14cd]

Cognition may be of external objects (patigha-saññā) or of ideas, images or concepts (adivacana-saññā). Although its paradigm function is to cognise the attributes of an object, saññā also refers in a broader sense to intellectual activity in general. On the problem of translating the term Mrs. Rhys Davids comments that 'The apparently capricious way in which the intension of the term saññā is varied in the Piṭakas makes it difficult to assign any one adequate English rendering.' She notes that 'Some experts in mediaeval Buddhist metaphysics (Stcherbatzky, MacGovern) prefer the rendering 'conception' [Dhs tr:6f.n]. De Silva relates saññā to 'sense-impressions, images, ideas, concepts' [1979:16].

Johansson states that 'mental representations of all the sense-modalities are then called saññā, including memories and imaginations' [1979:93]. Accordingly he translates saññā as 'ideation'.⁹ Saññā may mean simply 'an idea':

'One idea (saññā) arose in me: the end of becoming is nibbāna'

Bhavanirodho nibbānan ti kho me [...] saññā uppajjati [A.v.9]. Saññā may thus be said to include the cognition of external and internal objects and the power of conceptual thought in general.

Vedanā and saññā operate closely in conjunction. As we have seen, both are basic and irreducible functions of citta and the human predicament may be expressed in terms of a malfunction of these powers which manifests itself in the form of the root vices of attachment, aversion, and delusion. This is the cause of the formation of psychic complexes or saṅkhāras.

Buddhist psychology provides an explanation of how the operation of these two psychic faculties may be disturbed with the result that complexes (saṅkhāra) are formed leading to suffering and rebirth. The two input channels for the formation of saṅkhāras are craving (taṇhā) and ignorance (avijjā).¹⁰ In the scheme of Dependent Origination the second link, saṅkhāra, is conditioned in dependence on ignorance (avijjā) [M.i.67]. S.iii.96 describes how saṅkhāras are formed out of ignorance and craving:

'In the untaught lay people stimulated by sensation that is born of the impact of ignorance, craving arises; from that is born this saṅkhāra'

Avijjāsamphassajena [...] vedayitena phutṭhassa assutavato puṭṭhujjanassa uppannā taṇhā: tatojo so saṅkhāro.'

The soteriological goal of Buddhism is the eradication of saṅkhāras and taṇhā, and on the night of his enlightenment the Buddha declared himself to be free of both:

'My mind is free of saṅkhāras. I attained the extinction of all forms of taṇhā'

Visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ - taṇhānaṃ khayam ajjhagā [Dh.153-4].

However, the Buddha was not left without the capacity to feel or think, and the eradication of saṅkhāras means only that the affective and cognitive faculties operate perfectly and without hindrance, such that 'in the seen there is just the seen', [Ud.8] etc. Saṅkhāras are an inappropriate interaction of thought and feeling resulting in patterned forms of behaviour which produce suffering. In the Madhupiṇḍika-sutta Mahākaccāyana explains the role of feeling (vedanā) and cognition (saññā) in the formation of these complexes which assail the individual:

'Because of the eye and material objects, O Brethren arises visual consciousness; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement; because of sensory impingement arises feeling (vedanā); what one feels one cognises (sañjānāti); what one cognises one reasons about; what one reasons about one proliferates conceptually; what one proliferates conceptually is the origin of the number of perceptions and obsessions which assail a man in regard to ~~mental~~ objects cognisable by eye, past, present, and future.'

Cakkhuñ c'āvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā; yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti; yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi; yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti; yaṃ papañceti tattonidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācaranti atītanāgata-paccuppannesu cakkhuviññeyyesu rūpesu' [M.i.3f].

According to Yaśomitra, vedanā experiences (anubhavati), saññā discriminates (paricchinatti), and cetanā accumulates

(abhisamskaroti) [Vyākhyā 11.50 2-4]. This is the manner in which the process occurs in a worldly person under the sway of tanhā. For the enlightened there is no tanhā, no papañca,¹¹ and no saṅkhāra-formation, and the faculties of feeling and thought no longer give rise to the formation of complexes. According to S.ii.82 one free from ignorance produces no saṅkhāras either good, bad, or neutral. The fact that no new saṅkhāras are produced, however, does not mean that the capacity for goal-directed volitional activity is lost, and the Arhat retains all five khandhas until he dies:

'The five aggregates being well understood continue to remain although their roots are cut off'.

Pañcakkhandhā pariññātā, tiṭṭhanti chinnamūlakā [Thag:90].

The implication is that the capacity for volitional activity remains although no new saṅkhāras are created. It is only under the sway of tanhā that feeling and thought become fixated and lead to the formation of saṅkhāras. It is in the saṅkhārakkhandha that we find what are nowadays known as 'emotional complexes' and were more traditionally referred to as vices. The virtues, on the other hand, are healthy psychic dispositions directed towards the eradication of vice. When this process is completed the subject is in a state of perfect virtue, free from vices, complexes, and saṅkhāras. He is not , however, devoid of the capacity for feeling and sentiment, as we shall see in a moment when we consider the conduct of the Buddha.

I suggested above a connection between morality and the

emotions by which emotional disequilibrium manifests itself in the polar moral vices of lobha and dosa. That there exists a relationship between morality and the emotions has long been recognised by moral philosophers although the nature of the relationship has been disputed. Some, e.g. Hobbes and Hume, have sought to account for morality entirely in terms of the emotions while others, e.g. Kant, have attempted to ground morality in reason alone and in a refusal to accede to the emotions. Buddhism is commonly identified with the Socratic position which holds that virtue is reducible to wisdom; this is a view I challenge in this thesis on the grounds that neither of the two basic values of Buddhism is reducible to the other.¹² Others have regarded the reason-emotion bifurcation as artificial and sought a middle way between them: this is the position of the Aristotelian tradition and the view most congenial to Buddhism. For both, reason and feeling are complementary rather than disjunctive. 'What affirmation and negation are in thinking', says Aristotle, 'pursuit and avoidance are in desire' [NE VI.8 1139a22]. The argument I am putting forward here, therefore, is not innovative or radical in the context of moral philosophy although it has not previously been applied to Buddhism.

What, then, in the context of Buddhism, is the evidence for a link between morality and the emotions? In speaking of the emotions here I am referring to that non-rational dimension of psychic life which manifests itself across a spectrum or continuum of non-cognitive responses ranging from aversion,

hostility, anger and wrath, etc. (encapsulated by dosa), to attachment, craving, longing and lust, etc. (encapsulated by lobha). These are the extremes; the middle range of this continuum embraces attitudes such as benevolence, kindness, affection and sympathy. Katz [1979] describes these as the 'nibbānic' emotions. We have already seen the Abhidharma classify the extremes as vices and the absence of extremes (arāga etc.) as virtues. This is one piece of evidence for the link, although the terse Abhidharmic summary does not bring out the moral implications of these qualities in terms of their effects on others. For clearer evidence we must look elsewhere, and once again we turn to the Buddhist paragon of moral perfection - Siddhattha Gotama.

What we are seeking to discover is whether the Buddha's ethical perfection was underpinned by a sentiment of moral concern. By 'moral concern' I mean simply non self-referential concern for the well-being of others. By 'sentiment' I mean a non-cognitive state as distinct from the intellectual understanding or acceptance of the validity or rationality of a set of moral rules or principles. It is this sentiment which animates moral life and its absence which reduces morality to prudentialism or self-interest.¹³ Is there any evidence, then, of this other-regarding sentiment at the root of Buddhist ethics?

That precisely such a sentiment underlies the conduct of the Buddha and his disciples has been demonstrated by Harvey Aronson [1980]. The Buddha's moral concern is found in his

sympathy (anukampā) for all beings. This is how Aronson describes the Buddha's ethical motivation:

'Gotama Buddha was a sympathetic teacher as is clear from the numerous references to Gotama's sympathy in the Theravāda discourses. Etymologically, "sympathy" (anukampā) can be understood as the condition of "being moved" (kampa) "in accordance with [others]," or "in response to [others]" (anu). Though not defined in Buddha's discourses, there are definitions in the commentaries - "the preliminary level of love" (mettāya pubbabhāga, DA.ii.456), or "the state of having a tender mind" (muḍucittatā SA.ii.169). Similarly it is said to be synonymous with "tender care" (anuddayā, SA.ii.169) and "simple compassion" (kāruṇṇā, SA.ii.169). [1980:3]¹⁴

The Buddha's moral concern was not a consequence of his enlightenment: it preceded it and, indeed, motivated it.¹⁵

'Gotama's fundamental motive in arising and coming to be', says Aronson, 'was his concern for others' welfare.' He quotes the Buddha's own words in support:

'Monks, there is one individual who arose and came to be for the welfare of the multitudes, for the happiness of the multitudes, out of sympathy for the world; for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Who is that one individual? The Harmonious One, the Perfectly Enlightened One.' [1980:3]

On the view put forward here, moral appreciation means caring about others and the effects one's acts or omissions will have upon them. As noted by Beehler [1978:26], this caring about or regard for other persons is what in the Eighteenth Century was spoken of as 'natural affection', but perhaps may best be characterised as a form of love. In the absence of this sentiment there can be no motive for true moral action since the needs of others will fail to make any claim upon us. One's actions can, of course, mimic those inspired by moral concern, but the motivation of the counterfeiter will inevitably be self-interest.

The Buddha often describes his motivation in terms of sympathy and affection. As Aronson points out, '... he uses the term "sympathy" and its etymological relatives at least twenty times in connection with himself as in describing his motivation for arising and coming to be. He also uses it to motivate the monks to go out and teach others' [1980:15]. The Buddha is described as 'concerned for the welfare of his fellow man' (bahujana-hitānukampī) [Sn. 693] and as 'sympathetic to all creatures' (sabbabhūtānukampī) [A.ii.9].

And it is said of the Buddha at S.i.206:

'Compassion moves his mind. And if with mind thus satisfied, he spend his life instructing other men, yet he thereby is nowise bound as by a yoke. Compassion moveth him and sympathy.'

Manasā anukampitum manasā ce pasannena yad aññam anusāsati na tena hoti samyutto. Sānukampā anuddayā ti. [PTS trans]

In the face of the above it is difficult to take seriously the suggestion noted in the Introduction that Buddhist ethics is motivated basically by the self-interested pursuit of pleasure. This stems from a misunderstanding of the doctrine of karma, which I shall deal with in the following chapter, and the practice of some individuals in Buddhist countries. The fact that sub-moral self-interest is displayed by some members of the Buddhist tradition is not, of course, any more an argument for the claim that Buddhism espouses ethical egoism than is the fact that because some Christians keep the Commandments in the hope of going to heaven Christian morality is merely enlightened self-interest. It should be clear by now that the contrary is the case, and that the

fundamental inspiration for the Buddhist moral life is concern for others.

There can be no ulterior motive for ethical action in Buddhism in the sense that one can ask for and be given a non-moral reason for such action. To require such an incentive already indicates a lack of moral concern. Sympathy is not a reason in this sense: it is a non-rational sentiment which precedes the formulation of rationally arrived at objectives. One cannot become sympathetic by formulating the wish to do so; sympathy does not lie in the power of the will. A sentiment of sympathy or concern is given: it cannot be engendered by a cognitive act. Moral concern lies beyond the sphere of rationally based motivation, which is why there can be no such thing, strictly speaking, as a prudential motive for morality. If the motive is prudential self-interest then the action is not moral. We see from the conduct of the Buddha that morality is not a means to an end but an end in itself. It is not a means to enlightenment but a part of enlightenment. It was not chosen as a means to enlightenment since one cannot choose to care or not to care about others. One cannot adopt the moral life as a means to an end because one cannot 'adopt' anukampā. At best one may strive to cultivate it, and as the claims of self lower on one side of the scale so fraternal concern will rise on the other.

The touchstone of Buddhist ethics is concern for others. This concern or sympathy is not a quality which needs special

cultivation to arise, nor is it the prerogative of the religious virtuoso. 'Sympathy', writes Aronson, 'is the fraternal concern that is present in an individual and does not require cultivation or meditative development' [1980:16]. At the same time, it is possible for this sympathy to be cultivated and deepened, and anukampā, as noted above, is defined as the preliminary level of benevolence or love (mettā) [DA.ii.456]. The cultivation of feelings of concern for others is closely linked to the practice of the Brahma-vihāras in samatha meditation, and it is interesting to note that the Brahma-vihāras are particularly effective in counteracting those dharmas identified above as moral vices (kleśa). Thus mettā is said by the Buddha to be unique in its power to counteract anger by preventing its arising and dissipating it once arisen [A.i.4]. The elimination of anger is produced by 'freedom of the mind through love' (mettā cetovimutti).

Buddhaghosa reaffirms the effectiveness of mettā in counteracting hatred [Vism lX.10] and describes the other three Brahma-vihāras as efficacious in eliminating other vices. Compassion (karuṇā) counteracts harmfulness, sympathetic joy (muditā) counteracts displeasure and equanimity (upekkhā) counteracts lust (rāga). Since the Brahma-vihāras counteract moral vices we are justified in regarding them as moral virtues. According to Vism lX.106 they are the correct attitudes to adopt towards beings. Vasubandhu states that the Brahmavihāras are opposed to the vices such as hatred (vyāpāda-vipakṣataḥ). Individually the

four Brahmavihāras counteract hatred (vyāpāda), injury (vihiṃsā), discontent (arati), and sensual attachment (kāmarāga) and hatred combined [Kośa 8.29ab]. Each of the Brahmavihāras has the effect of bringing about liberation from certain vices: thus benevolence (maitrī) causes those who are given to hatred to abandon it (vyāpāda-bahulānām tatprahāṇāya maitrī), and so forth for the other three. The states or dispositions cultivated through the Brahmavihāras in samatha meditation also occur in waking consciousness in the course of daily life - they are not exclusive to meditation or to the meditator. The technique of transic meditation (jhāna), however, is a powerful device for accelerating their cultivation and pervasion of the psyche. Love (mettā) and compassion (karuṇā) are frequently spoken of as 'liberation of the mind' (cet ovimutti), a condition in which the psyche is entirely permeated with these qualities. The Buddha himself says:

'Monks, I see no other single cause [dhamma] by which hatred which has not yet arisen does not arise, or once arisen passes away, as freedom of the mind through love.'

Nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekadhammam pi samanupassāmi yena anuppanno vā vyāpādo n'uppajjati uppanno vā vyāpādo pahīyati yathayidaṃ bhikkhave mettā cetovimutti.' [A.i.4]

I will conclude this section by summarising the position so far reached in terms of the overall context of Buddhist soteriology. The picture emerging is of Buddhist ethics resting upon feelings of sympathy or concern for others. This basic fellow-feeling or sentiment of moral concern (anukampā) may be deepened, expanded and strengthened through a technique of depth meditation involving the Brahma-vihāras.

These are healthy modes of emotional functioning cultivated out of anukampā, and habituation to them will deepen one's concern for others until it becomes the natural condition of the psyche in the state of enlightened consciousness epitomised by the Buddha.

Moral evil in Buddhism is due to the perversion of this basic feeling towards the extreme emotional responses of rāga and dosa which crystallise into vice under the pressure of habituation. The vices stemming from this perversion, as might be expected, manifest themselves as emotional instability in the form of anger (krodha), envy (mrakṣa), jealousy (īrṣyā), and malice (upanāha), etc., which are the result of both emotional overinvestment and cognitive error.

In this section I have attempted to do two things:

(i) to indicate the nature of the relationship between intellectual and moral virtue. I have suggested that these are logically distinguishable but fundamentally interdependent. In the words of Khantipalo:

'As Paññā is the cultivated intellect, so these Brahma-Vihāras are the cultivation of the emotions. As the intellect has to balance in development emotion, so wisdom is complemented by friendliness and compassion' [1964:78].

And again:

'Compassion for others, a feeling with other's misery with a desire for their weal, is highly regarded in Buddhadharma; indeed, together with Paññā, it forms a dyad indispensable for the attainment of Full Enlightenment' [1964:80].

(ii) to illustrate the connection between ethics and

affective life. Without concern for others there can be no ethical conduct in Buddhism. This concern is non-rational and non-motivational in the sense that it is not preceded by a ratiocinative calculation of any kind. It is a basic, non-self-referential concern for one's fellow man.

In the course of the discussion I referred to the Brahma-vihāras as a technique of meditation for fostering the basic sentiment of anukampā. I also stated in Chapter One that meditation (samādhi) stands between and unites the two basic values of ethics (sīla) and insight (paññā). I will conclude this chapter by pursuing further the role of meditation as a soteriological ethical technique.

(iii) Virtue and Meditation

In the scheme of the Eightfold Path, samādhī stands between sīla and paññā and supplements them both.¹⁶ It is a powerful technique for the acceleration of ethical and intellectual development towards their perfection in nibbāna. Since progress is made on two fronts there exist two kinds of meditational techniques. I wish to suggest, in short, that samatha-bhāvanā cultivates moral virtue and vipassanā-bhāvanā develops intellectual insight.

The existence of two meditational techniques within the one tradition has been regarded as problematic. Paul Griffiths speaks of the 'unsatisfactory combination' of these two soteriological techniques, and finds evidence of uncertainty within the tradition as to their relative importance. He summarises the essentials of the problem as follows:

'There are presented in the canonical and commentarial texts of Theravāda Buddhism two radically different types of meditative practice which have different psychological effects and issue in different soteriological goals.'
[1981:618]

For Griffiths these facts are problematic but in terms of the thesis set out here they are not. Indeed, they are exactly as we should expect. Griffiths' difficulty arises from the suppressed premise of his argument that the unique soteriological objective of Buddhism is paññā. Any soteriological technique which does not issue in paññā is therefore redundant and its existence puzzling, since Buddhism is not a tradition which accumulates unnecessary

baggage. Griffiths fails to allow for the fact that nibbāna embraces moral as well as intellectual perfection. He identifies the content of nibbāna exclusively with paññā and thus for him vipassanā is essential while samatha is a curious anomaly.

Assuming for the moment that paññā were the unique soteriological objective, would it not be a sterile and incomplete end for which to strive? Griffiths defines paññā as follows: 'In terms of Pali grammar it is an awareness that can be contained within a ti clause, a discursive and intellectual understanding' [p.612]. Later he speaks of it again in terms of awareness: 'Such awareness appears to be a kind of detached, emotionless, intuitive vision of the nature of things as a flux of causally conditioned point-instants' [p.614]. This is echoed by Johansson:

'Basically, paññā seems to be a pure theoretical function of understanding, without a motivational power of its own.[...] Paññā is referred to as a purely intellectual tool, clearly distinguishable from motivational and emotional factors' [1979:200].

The technique of samatha meditation exists to enrich and deepen the capacity for human sympathy which exists in all to some degree and which reached its perfection in the personality of the Buddha. Central to samatha practice are the jhānas or stages of trance, and immersion in the jhānas leads directly to the elimination of discursive thought. In this the technique contrasts sharply with vipassanā where discriminating awareness is a sine qua non for propositional knowledge of the paññā kind. In samatha meditation reasoning

(vitakka) and discursive thought (vicāra) are left behind after the first jhāna [Vism 1V.146] and in the higher stages the intellectual functions are progressively reduced until they 'wink out' (Griffiths' phrase) altogether in the stage of saññā-vedayita-nirodha.

The suppression of intellectual activity in samatha practice is a precise technique for gaining access to the non-rational emotional dimension of the psyche. It is a means of penetrating the deeper layers of consciousness and restructuring them in accordance with virtue rather than vice. According to De Silva, knowledge of the consciousness-continuum (viññāna-sota) is only within the reach of those who practice meditation and is achieved by entry into the third jhāna [1979:76]. And Michael Carrithers is quite correct when he states that the purpose of samatha is 'to cultivate an attitude, not to learn a doctrine' [1983:225].¹⁷ Thus in the first jhāna there occurs a temporary suppression (vikkhambhana-pahāna) of sensuous desire (kāmacchanda [=rāga]); ill-will (vyāpāda [=dosa]); and the remaining three nīvaraṇas [A.iv.437]. The suppression and dissolution of these vicious tendencies brings about a transformation in attitude towards others: the elimination of ill-will (vyāpāda) is described as follows:-

'Putting aside the fault of ill-will, he dwells with a heart free from ill-will, compassionate and kind to all living creatures he cleanses his heart of ill-will.'

'Vyāpādadosaṃ pahāya avyāpannacitto viharati, sabbapāṇabhūta hitānukampī vyāpādadosā cittaṃ parisodheti.' (A.iv.437)

That samatha and vipassanā have distinct objectives has been recognised by others who have considered the problem of Buddhist meditational theory. Thus Gimello:

'It is in general a twofold discipline. On the one hand, there is what might be called a psychosomatic and affective component. This consists in arts of calming and concentrating the mind-body complex of the meditator, usually by the deliberate inducement of certain rarified states of mind. [...] The purpose allegedly served by these practices is that of quelling, if not extirpating, desire, attachment, and other elements of the affective life. On the other hand, there is an intellectual or analytic component of meditation. This consists in the meditatively intensified reflection upon the basic categories of Buddhist doctrine and in the application of them to the data of meditative experience' [1978:187f].

Why Gimello thinks that samatha only 'quells' but does not 'extirpate' desire, attachment and so forth is not clear, since earlier in the article [p.181] he cites a text suggesting the contrary:

'With his mind thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, spotless, with the defilements gone, supple, ready to act, firm and impassable [all as a result of samatha], he [the meditator] directs his mind to the knowledge of insight.' [my emphasis]

The passions will not be extirpated in the course of a single samatha session any more than a single session of vipassanā will boost paññā to the point of perfect illumination; both techniques are slow and gradual but each is the most appropriate in its own sphere. Underlying Gimello's opinion is the assumption that since vipassanā is the only technique culminating in paññā, samatha must be only partially effective as a soteriological tool.

Griffiths comes close to acknowledging the autonomy of the two techniques in the last two paragraphs of his paper. He compares the 'radical tension' between ignorance (avijjā) and

desire (tanhā) with the 'tension' between concentrative and insight meditation.

'Clearly, if ignorance is regarded as the root of all evil for the Buddhist, then he should take steps to remedy this condition by gaining insightful knowledge. There is no better way of doing so than the practice of insight meditation [...]. If, on the other hand, craving and desire are regarded as the root causes of suffering, then the Buddhist should at once take steps to rid his mind of all desire. Once again, there is no better way of doing this than the practice of concentrative meditation . . . ' [p.619].

Griffiths regards these options as exclusive alternatives and does not consider the possibility that there exist two techniques of meditation precisely because the obstacles to enlightenment are themselves twofold, both moral and intellectual. The Buddha learnt the technique of jhāna meditation from his own teachers and practised it himself first; his genius lay in supplementing it with the method of vipassanā. Both have an essential function to perform and the Buddha makes this abundantly clear in a passage cited by Griffiths:

What is the result, O monks, of the development of tranquillity [samatha, here equivalent to samādhi]? The mind is developed. What is the result of a developed mind? Passion is abandoned [rāga, here equivalent to tanhā]. What is the result, O monks, of the development of insight [vipassanā]? Wisdom (paññā) is developed. What is the result of the development of wisdom? Ignorance (avijjā) is abandoned.¹⁸

Both meditative techniques are required for the eradication of the roots of evil and the attainment of the ethical and intellectual perfection which is nibbāna. An image in the Miln illustrates nicely how meditation is the focal point and support of all virtuous qualities (kusaladhamma):

'The King said: Reverend Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of meditation?

-The distinguishing mark of meditation, Sire, is being the chief. All virtuous qualities have meditation as the chief; they lean, tend and incline towards it.

-Make a simile.

-As, Sire, in a house with a ridge-pole, all the rafters go to the ridge-pole, lean towards it and join it, and the ridge-pole is pointed to as their chief - even so, Sire, all virtuous qualities have meditation as the chief; they lean, tend and incline towards it.

Rājā āha: Bhante Nāgasena, kiṃlakkhaṇo samādhi ti?

-Pamukhalakkhaṇo mahārāja samādhi, ye keci kusalā dhammā sabbe te samādhipamukhā honti samādhininnā samādhipoṇā samādhipabbhārā ti.

-Opammaṃ karohi ti.

-Yathā mahārāja kūṭāgārassa yā kāci gopānasiyo sabbā tā kūṭangamā honti kūṭaninnā kūṭasamosaraṇā, kūṭam tāsaṃ aggamakkhāyati, evam eva kho mahārāja ye keci kusalā dhammā sabbe te samādhipamukhā honti samādhininnā samādhipoṇā samādhipabbhārā ti. [Miln 38].

That samatha functions as the support of ethical development is not a novel suggestion - it was pointed out almost thirty years ago by Conze:

'How then does concentration as a spiritual virtue [samatha] differ from concentration as a condition of the intellect [vipassanā]? Spiritual, or transic, concentration results less from intellectual effort than from a re-birth of the whole personality, including the body, the emotions, and the will. [...] Further, the change of outlook, on which it is built, can well be described as an 'ethical' one. Tradition is quite unambiguous on this point' [1956:20].

More recently the ethical connection has been noted by Gimello, who describes the input of meditative experience into ethical values in the penultimate paragraph of his article quoted earlier:

'Regarding finally the problem of the relationship between mystical experience and other human concerns, Buddhist meditation, especially as it is defined in Mahāyāna, suggests that there may be connections between them deeper than normally supposed. The point of Buddhist meditation, including the mystical experience it allows, is, as Dogen has said, 'not to obtain a certain thing' but to 'become a certain man'. Mystical experience thus has no sovereign

autonomy in Buddhism. Rather it is seen to have important consequences for all areas of human life - not the least of which is morality - and to be judged according to those consequences. The mystical experience affects the moral life, Buddhists believe, and they therefore take the greatest pains in their meditative disciplines to see that its effect is the proper, just, and compassionate one. In so doing, they may offer instruction to those who examine mystical claims for antinomianism or the transcendence of good and evil, and may offer caution to those who would hold that mysticism can be a refuge from a life of moral responsibility' [1978:194 my emphasis].

SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with three topics. The first (i), and most important for understanding the place of ethics in Buddhist soteriology, concerned the relationship between śīla and the dharma-theory. The Abhidharma posits two classes of mental forces which produce either defilement or purification of the mind. I described these forces as virtues and vices in accordance with Western ethical terminology since they perform a similar role in respect of promoting or inhibiting the attainment of the final good. In section (ii), again in common with the classical Western tradition, I divided these forces into two groups, intellectual and moral, and argued that the collective interaction of the vices was^{raṇhā,} the root from which all suffering arises. The eradication of this root source is synonymous with nirvāṇa and the virtues are engaged in the promotion of this condition. The intellectual virtues remove mental obscuration (moha) and the moral virtues counteract the emotional complexes which manifest themselves in habits of attachment and aversion and inhibit the concern for others (anukampā) which is fundamental to the moral life.

To conclude the chapter, in section (iii) the results of our investigation so far were applied to a practical problem, namely the existence of two types of meditational technique which has often been thought paradoxical. It was suggested that the two techniques exist precisely because final perfection can only be achieved when both dimensions of psychic functioning, the emotional and the intellectual, are purified of vice.

The notion of sīla has now been examined in some depth and from a number of different angles, and in the course of this examination I have put forward a thesis concerning its role in Buddhist soteriology. In the next chapter we consider an alternative conception to our own and discuss the countervailing evidence which it presents to our views.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Perhaps the closest equivalent is Bentham's The Springs of Action, which provides an exhaustive classification of states of mind which motivate action; ed.A.Goldworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) in The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham gen.ed. J.R.Dinwiddy.
2. EB 'Cetasika' p.102.
3. On the ethical significance of rūpa see Y.Karunadasa [1967:Ch.9]
4. EB 'Citta' p.169, 172
5. EB p.169
6. Api khalu kuśalānāṃ dharmānāṃ svavipakṣaprahāṇaṃ karma/ kleśopakleśānāṃ svapratipakṣaparipañthanaṃ karma [10.13f].
7. Macquarrie [1967]
8. The Roots of Good have a positive force which is often overlooked. Poussin notes in this connection: 'Alobha, non-desire, adveśa, non-hatred, are other than the absence of desire, the absence of hatred, the ataraxy of the sage. We are often mistaken about this, forgetting that the 'non-friend' (amitra) is the enemy, that the 'non-truth' (anṛta) is a lie. In the same way, non-desire and non-hatred are that which opposes desire and hatred' [1927:147].
9. For a list of terms used as translations of vedanā and saññā by western translators see Piyananda [1974:84f].
10. I am indebted here to Dickwela Piyananda's thesis [1974] on early Buddhist psychology from which this abbreviated account of the process of saṅkhāra-formation is taken.
11. Cf. Dh.254: 'The Tathāgatas are free from conceptual proliferation' (nippapañcā Tathāgatā)
12. For Aristotle's critique of Socrates on this point see NE VIII.1145b.21-1147b.19; cf.VI.13 1144b.16-1145a.10.
13. For a full-length discussion and defence of this position see R.Beehler [1978]. Also Bradley 'Why Should I be Moral?' in Ethical Studies [1927].
14. On anukampā and friendship see Mrs.Rhys Davids [1936:301-5]
15. For a contrary view see Jones [1979].

16. On the role of moral purity in meditation see Paravēhera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera [1975:Ch.6].

17. I disagree with him, however, when he sums up as follows: 'The most convenient way to summarise the samatha meditations, of which there are traditionally forty, is that they are preparatory to the real work on the Buddhist path.' The fact that the samatha meditations 'inculcate certain desirable character traits' [loc.cit] makes the technique as much a part of the 'real work' as vipassanā.

18. [1981:619] (bracketing in original). The translation of paññā as 'wisdom' may be misleading since wisdom connotes moral as well as intellectual maturity whereas paññā is essentially cognitive. This translation has helped popularise the widespread acceptance of paññā as the exclusive goal of Buddhism, with sīla as merely a preliminary stage. Mrs. Rhys Davids quotes Croom Robertson to the effect that 'wisdom' '... is a term of practical import; it is not mere insight, but conduct guided by insight [...] Good conduct is wise; wise conduct is good.' [1936:268]. According to Rajapaksa, the Buddha's concept of knowledge is 'not only an intellectual recognizing of the truth and an ability to take the appropriate action', but also includes 'the imaginative and emotional redirection of one's conception of facts and therefore actually taking up the proper relation to reality' [1975:120].

CHAPTER THREE

In the preceding chapters I have argued that moral and intellectual perfection are integral components of the Buddhist summum bonum. I now wish to consider an alternative thesis which runs flatly counter to my own: that morality is at best a preliminary to enlightenment and at worst an obstacle to its attainment. This proposal has been put forward independently by Winston King [1964] and Melford Spiro [1970], and may also be found as an implicit assumption in the work of other writers. My purpose in the present chapter is twofold: (1) to examine the King-Spiro hypothesis and to offer a critique of its view of the soteriological relationship between ethics and nibbāna; and (11) to offer an alternative account of the relationship between the kammic and the nibbānic which escapes the defects of the King-Spiro thesis and is consonant with canonical Buddhism.

(1) THE KING-SPIRO HYPOTHESIS

Introduction

Both King and Spiro have undertaken anthropological research in the field in Burma, and it may be some distinctive feature of Burmese Buddhism which led them to their similar conclusions concerning the nature of Buddhist ethics. I

doubt, however, that this is the case, and believe that their theory of the structure of Buddhist soteriology stems from a misinterpretation of their field data rather than being implicit in it. King's work on Burmese Buddhism, A Thousand Lives Away, was published in 1964, the same year as his volume on Theravāda Buddhist ethics In the Hope of Nibbana, in which he sets out in the central chapters the theory now to be considered. Six years later, in his Buddhism and Society Spiro set out in chapters 2-6 a theory almost identical to King's. Spiro makes no reference to King's work on ethics even in the second expanded edition of his book published in 1982.

Briefly, King and Spiro allege there are two forms of Buddhism (both confine their remarks to Theravāda Buddhism), and that these two forms of Buddhism are regulated separately through the disjunctive values of nibbāna and kamma. They argue, moreover, that these two values are pursued by distinct sociological groups, namely laity and monks. Thus while a layman seeks to generate merit (puñña) through dāna and sīla in the hope of a good rebirth, a monk seeks to eradicate all kamma through mental culture (bhāvanā) in the hope of putting an end to rebirth by gaining nibbāna. These two forms of Buddhism are termed respectively (i) 'Kammatic Buddhism' (Spiro) or 'the ethic of kamma' (King); and (ii) 'Nibbanic Buddhism' (Spiro) or 'the ethic of nibbāna' or 'the ethic of equanimity' (King). The basic polarities between the two forms of Buddhism may be tabulated as follows:-

FORM OF BUDDHISM - GOAL - PURSUED BY - MEANS - TECHNIQUE

1. Nibbānic	Nibbāna	Monks	destroy <u>kamma</u>	<u>bhāvanā</u>
2. Kammatic	good rebirth	laity	produce <u>puñña</u>	<u>dāna-sīla</u>

In the terms of this polarisation moral values are confined to the sphere of kammatic Buddhism and excluded from nibbānic Buddhism in a manner contrary to the argument of this thesis. In view of the fact that ethics (sīla) is intrinsic to only one of these two divisions I shall refer to this polarity as 'the problem of discontinuity'. And since it suggests that nibbānic values may be specified independently of moral perfection, I shall also describe it as a problem of value-disjunction. The argument for discontinuity rests upon three grounds: i) sociological ii) historical iii) doctrinal and I shall shortly examine the evidence for each in turn. Before doing so let us consider Spiro's own summary analysis of the situation. His claim is that the two forms of Buddhism were originally distinct and that confusion has arisen from an attempt made in the past to combine them. This is how he sets out the problem:

'It should be apparent, then, that the attempted integration of the doctrine of nirvana with the doctrine of karma has produced an inherent and complex "double-bind." Whereas according to the doctrine of nirvana (in which even the blissful life of a deva is a detour rather than a way station on the road to salvation), samsāra and nirvana comprise two distinctive and discontinuous planes of existence, by contrast, according to the doctrine of karma they comprise one hedonistic continuum, ranging from the suffering of hell at the one pole to the nonsuffering of nirvana at the other.

And whereas according to the doctrine of karma samsaric pleasure is the just and proper reward for (Buddhist) moral action, according to the doctrine of nirvana this is not only an illusion but a snare, diverting one from the quest for true salvation; hence such pleasures should not be sought, and if achieved, should not be cathected. Hence the antinomies in nibbanic Buddhism: the consequence of moral action is a pleasant rebirth which, on the one hand, it holds out as a reward (while denigrating its pursuit as unworthy of a true Buddhist), but which, on the other hand - since all samsaric existence is painful - it sees as a persistence of suffering (although it is the harvest of action which it itself requires). [1982:69]

I am not alone in denying that this radical discontinuity exists, and the King-Spiro hypothesis has been criticised by Nathan Katz [1982] and Harvey Aronson [1979; 1980]. Both Katz and Aronson attack the discontinuity on Canonical grounds either by adducing conflicting scriptural evidence (Katz) or by pointing out the misinterpretation of doctrinal formulae (Aronson). Neither, however, offers an alternative soteriological framework within which the ethical values they defend may be appropriately located. Katz redefines the discontinuity in terms of an opposition between puñña (Kammatic Buddhism) and kusala (Nibbānic Buddhism). I do not follow Katz's terminology since I shall argue later that he has misunderstood the precise meaning of these terms. His conclusion, however, which abolishes the discontinuity, is basically sound:

'We offer that puñña was a type of action which leads to pleasurable results of action and by which the laity or the saṅghikas could develop that attitude which, when habituated, leads to the type of activity which we characterize as free and spontaneous, and which was exemplified by the Buddha and his arahant disciples. Far from leading to merely another rebirth, then, puñña could be and was used as a way leading to arahattā' [1982:180]

In the same vein Aronson writes:

'There is no unbridgeable breach between the "nibbanic" and the "kammic," rather a mutually supportive mesh of the two.

Such a relationship of love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity to each other in meditation, to the cultivation of insight, and to activity subsequent to insight has been misunderstood by Spiro and King, resulting in their bifurcated vision of Theravāda Buddhism' [1980:80].

Let us turn now to a consideration of the three grounds upon which the discontinuity thesis rests, beginning with the sociological evidence.

(i) The Sociological-Soteriological Rift : laity v monks

According to King and Spiro, whereas monks seek an end to rebirth through the practice of meditation and the elimination of kamma, laymen seek to generate good kamma through charity (dāna) and morality (sīla) in the hope of a good rebirth. I do not wish to claim on a priori grounds, as Katz appears to, that this sociological distinction is necessarily invalid. It could conceivably be the case that such a situation obtains in Burma, and it is an issue to be resolved by empirical research. Let us begin with Spiro's own data.

In his book Spiro questions both monks and laymen as to their soteriological aspirations. On page 285 he tables the result of a survey in which monks were questioned concerning the functions of a Buddhist monk. Out of 20 questioned only four considered one of his functions as a monk to be 'to strive for nirvana.' The great majority therefore dissented from Spiro's conception as to 'the culturally stipulated end or ends for which monasticism is the culturally prescribed means.' When laymen were questioned the results were equally

embarrassing for the theory. On page 81 the results of a questionnaire are tabulated in which 159 laymen and laywomen were asked the question 'What do you desire for your next existence?'. The 'overwhelming majority' replied 'nirvana'; according to Spiro's statistics 61 out of 83 males gave this answer and 104 out of 159 males and females combined. Only 3 out of 159 wanted rebirth in heaven and none wanted rebirth as a monk which, as Spiro admits, is 'more than a little surprising' [1982:80n]. So far, then, the theory does not fit the facts: monks, who are supposed to strive for nirvāṇa, say they do not; and laymen, who are supposed to desire rebirth, seek nirvāṇa. Faced with this falsification of his theory Spiro falls back on the auxiliary hypothesis of 'normative and rhetorical pressures' upon his respondents. Thus:

'Given the fact that "nirvana" is a stereotypic response (and its meaning, moreover, obscure), it is at least plausible that many who offered "nirvana" as their first choice view it as a kind of superparadise.' [1982:80]

The suggestion here is that lay Burmese are unable to distinguish between nirvāṇa and heaven - yet this is the crucial distinction which ex hypothesi they are held to make if there are to be two forms of Buddhism at all. The ability to make this distinction is a sine qua non for the existence of kammatic and nibbānic Buddhism.

Not only this, but Spiro himself states earlier in the book that the Burmese do not view nibbāna as a 'superparadise' in the way he suggests above. On page 59 he writes: 'Believing (as they do) that nirvana means extinction, most Burmese do not view it as a desirable goal' [my emphasis].

And on page 76 he seeks to have it both ways:

'Since most Burmese reject the Buddhist doctrine of suffering, there are basically two attitudes towards nirvana [...] in Burma. Those who conceive of it as total extinction reject it as a desirable goal, while those who accept it as a desirable goal have transformed it into a state of great pleasure, a kind of superheaven.'

To summarise: Spiro has now attributed three different attitudes concerning nirvāṇa to Burmese lay Buddhists.

i) 'most Burmese' believe that nirvāṇa means extinction and do not view it as a desirable goal.

ii) the 'overwhelming majority' of Burmese lay Buddhists conceive of nirvāṇa as a superparadise and hence as a desirable goal.

iii) the Burmese hold two contradictory (and heretical) views about nirvāṇa, namely i) and ii) above.

Not only are these contentions mutually contradictory but no evidence at all is adduced in support of them. Point i) is contradicted by Spiro's own survey on p.81; ii) is merely a tentative suggestion ('it is at least plausible') to support the discontinuity thesis in the face of the conflicting testimony of lay Buddhists (note that no such reinterpretation of the conflicting testimony of monks is offered); and iii) simply compounds the defects of i) and ii). Both ii) and iii) are in any event fatal to Spiro's case and since there is no evidence for i) it must be concluded that Spiro has failed to provide sociological support for his double-decker soteriology.

Looking beyond Burma the evidence from other Theravāda Buddhist societies does not support Spiro's theory of the teleological divergence of the two social groups. According to Professor Gombrich the religious aspirations of monks and laymen in Śrī Laṅkā coincide rather than diverge. He writes: 'Most people, monks included, devote themselves exclusively to acts of merit (piṅkam), the aim of which is a good rebirth in heaven or on earth' [1971:322]. The centrality of sīla in the lives of Śrī Laṅkan monks is also made plain by Michael Carrithers [1983]. To cite a final example, the research of Jane Bunnag in Thailand, which was devoted specifically to the relations between laymen and monks, reveals complementarity in respect of lay and monastic objectives. She writes:

'In practice [...] none of the Thai monks to whom I spoke appeared to consider Nirvana a relevant goal for which to strive; those who considered that salvation was attainable in modern times, believed that only after billions of years of tireless effort could they or their contemporaries achieve this state. [...] Thus both the Buddhist bhikkhu and the Buddhist householder pursue the same end, though by different means; each "seeks the secondary compensation of a prosperous rebirth" (Tambiah 1968, p.41) by doing good and avoiding evil' [1973:19f.].

We may conclude, then that the sociological-teleological aspect of the discontinuity thesis is invalid. Generally speaking both monks and laymen pursue the same proximate religious objective, usually specified as a pleasant rebirth. There is no anthropological evidence to indicate that laymen and monks as distinctive social groupings pursue antithetical soteriological goals.

(11) The Historical 'Shift'

Both King and Spiro consider that the bifurcation they find in Buddhist values was absent at the earliest times and came into being later. Thus there was an original pure form of nibbānic Buddhism, and kammatic Buddhism came into being as parasitical upon this, as Buddhism ceased to be the prerogative of renunciates and found favour with society at large. King states his opinion in a single paragraph:

'Roughly speaking it would seem that the tendency in Buddhism has been towards the "kammaticization" of nibbanic values and the smoothing over of the contrasts between the two value-realms in favor of the layman. This has many roots, historically and doctrinally, which cannot be discussed here. But that it has occurred seems clear' [1964:174].

King also speaks of this polarity in terms of an 'original sharp division between the authentic Buddhist way of the monk (Nibbana-seeking) and the way of the layman (better-rebirth-seeking) that was added thereunto.' [1964:169] This is echoed by Spiro's claim that there occurred a 'shift from a nibbanic to a kammatic soteriology, i.e., from a radical (otherworldly) to a proximate (worldly) salvation.' [1982:73]

No evidence at all is offered by either King or Spiro to support the thesis of an historical shift, and the claim seems to rest entirely upon an uncritical reading of Weber. In fact it is quite fallacious. The message of early Buddhism was unitary; it recognised and made provision for both the lay and cenobital lifestyles. The only distinction the Buddha made was in respect of the different capacities of beings to comprehend and implement the Dhamma, and for this he made

provision in his teaching¹. The goal for all is nirvāna through progress in the Eightfold Path, and although the aspirations of laymen may in general be more humble their progress in dāna-sīla will in the course of time equip them for a deeper understanding of the Dhamma. Buddhism does not embrace two stark and incompatible values; it would be more accurate to say that it offers proximate and remote objectives. The sociological analysis is by no means the primary one here - what constitutes progress is the degree of understanding and practice of the Dhamma. Indeed, according to the earliest sources, there is no reason why a layman should not become an Arhat, and many lay Arhats are mentioned in the Canon.²

(iii) Doctrinal : Ethics and the further shore

The proponents of the discontinuity thesis regard the disjunction as not merely ethical but ontological. Spiro puts it as follows:

'From an ontological point of view, Buddhism postulates the existence of two planes which, like parallel lines, never meet. On the one hand there is samsāra, the worldly (lokiya) plane; on the other hand there is nirvana, the otherworldly (lokuttara) or transcendental plane. [...] These two planes, however, are not only ontologically discontinuous, they are also hedonistically dichotomous. The former is the realm of unmitigated suffering; the latter is the realm of the cessation of suffering' [1982:68].

If nirvāna and samsāra were ontologically dichotomous it is difficult to see how nirvāna could ever be attained at all for, as Spiro says, 'In the parallel planes of nibbanic Buddhism, no road leads from samsāra to nirvana' [1982:83].

It would certainly be futile to exert oneself in the Eightfold Path since progress in the moral sphere (sīla) would produce kamma leading inexorably to rebirth. All kamma-producing activity is held to be 'subversive of salvation'; in other words, morality is not just irrelevant to the quest for nibbāna but counterproductive to it. All participation in the sphere of the kammatic, par excellence through ethical conduct, is therefore soteriologically retrograde.

Such, then, is Spiro's conception of the double-decker ontology of early Buddhism. He suggests that in the course of time the Burmese have 'wittingly or unwittingly' transformed this into a one-plane continuum embracing both kammatic and nibbanic values: 'Unlike nibbanic Buddhism, in which admission to nirvana requires the extinction of merit as well as demerit, Burmese Buddhism insists that nirvana, like samsāra, is attained by the accumulation of merit.' [1982:84] I wish to argue that in adopting this position the Burmese are unimpeachably orthodox.

The confusion underlying the discontinuity thesis stems from an overestimation of the significance of the distinction between lay and monastic lifestyles. Both King and Spiro set up a false dichotomy between merit and meditation, and morality and insight, as shown in the diagram above. Thus Spiro writes: 'Whereas in nibbanic Buddhism, salvation must ultimately be attained by knowledge, in kammatic Buddhism it is attained by meritorious action.' [1982:91]. In other words nibbanic Buddhism specifies paññā without puñña while

kammatic Buddhism specifies puñña without paññā. I shall argue that this conception is erroneous and inaccurate.

It has been my contention throughout Chapters One and Two that enlightenment consists of the fusion of perfect knowledge with perfect morality. These two excellences are the necessary and sufficient conditions of human perfection. As for the ideal teacher in the Lohicca sutta, knowledge and meritorious action are required together; if either is deficient there can be no perfection. Since the discontinuity thesis seeks to separate insight from moral or meritorious action it is to be rejected as incompatible with canonical Buddhism. Some problems with the discontinuity thesis have been suggested above; let us now consider further grounds on which it may be criticised and what the implications of the theory are for the overall Buddhist soteriological strategy. This will lead us into an assessment of the ethical significance of nibbāna and a reassessment of its relationship to kamma.

According to King and Spiro the spheres of kamma and nibbāna are distinct and can never meet. Having said that, it should be pointed out that King and Spiro hold slightly different positions on the function of kamma and puñña. Let us outline King's position first. King holds the weaker hypothesis that puñña leads in the direction of nibbāna but must finally be discarded before nibbāna is attained. We may call this the 'scaffold theory' since it envisages merit as a means of raising oneself upwards towards a higher goal. King writes as

follows:

'Thus in the end the ethical significance of Kamma is ambiguous. Or perhaps it is better to say that its ethical significance is relative, not absolute. For kammic evils are only temporary evils, and kammic goods only half-way houses on the way towards the truly good. Kammic goodness is the necessary but not sufficient condition for either the saintly life or the attainment of Nibbana. True perfection is transcendent of all kammic values.' [1964:67]

Yet although kamma is a halfway-house on the way to nibbāna and a necessary condition of its attainment it is simultaneously and paradoxically a hindrance to enlightenment. Immediately after the quotation cited above King continues:

'Indeed kamma and all that it represents are a bondage and a danger to the life of the saint in the final analysis. He must kick away from under him the laboriously built ladder of kammic merit by which he has risen towards sainthood, and take to the transcendental flight on the wings of super-normal (super kammic) wisdom. [...] The abundance of that good Kamma itself which raises one to such a realm, and the love even of the highest kind of goodness to be found in the realm of Kamma, no matter how much preferable to the love of evil, bind him more subtly and dangerously than before to the realm of time and space, that is, birth death and suffering.'

Curiously, in A Thousand Lives Away, King adopts a very different position more in line with the argument of this thesis. He speaks of sīla as a 'kammic good', but this time there is no reference to an antagonism between kamma and nibbāna - quite the contrary:

'One cannot say that Sila is first perfected and then left behind when one reaches Samadhi and Panna stages - even though there is talk of rising above mere morality as one progresses in the meditative life. For even the meditating saint remains moral in his actions. Indeed his saintliness, at least in part, is the perfection of his morality, the turning from mere observance of external standards to the spontaneous exercise of inward virtues. So it is that morality is never left behind' [1964a:188].

Here progress towards enlightenment is seen quite correctly

as a long gradual process of development and maturation with no sudden and abrupt leaps into the transcendent fuelled by the rejection of what has long been patiently cultivated.

Spiro's general stance is similar to King's first position, namely that kamma is fatal to the quest for nibbāna. We have already quoted Spiro to the effect that the kammic consequences of moral action are 'not only an illusion but a snare'. For him any activity other than meditation is soteriologically deleterious:

' . . . meditation is the soteriological act of nibbanic Buddhism. Any other kind of action, even moral action, is subversive of salvation, for morality produces karma, which in turn causes rebirth' [1982:93].

It is Spiro's contention that the original Buddhist conception was of nirvāṇa and samsāra as ontologically and hedonistically dichotomous; in the course of history this dichotomy was transformed into a continuum such that nirvāṇa and samsāra now lie in the same plane and are ontologically and hedonistically unidimensional. Spiro illustrates this 'shift' diagrammatically as follows:

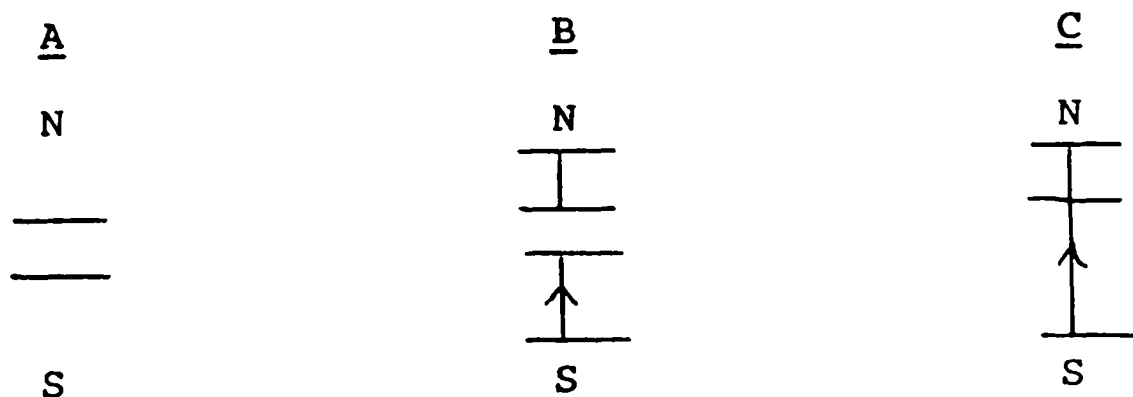


Figure A illustrates the original dichotomy as postulated by the discontinuity thesis. Figure B depicts the 'scaffold theory'; merit takes one part of the way and then there is a gap which must be crossed over by kicking away the ladder of puñña and leaping into the transcendent on the wings of pañña. Figure C represents what we might refer to as the 'continuity theory' which envisages no discontinuity between kammic and nibbānic values. It is our contention that orthodox Buddhism has only ever recognised the last of these as its blueprint for liberation and that figures A and B are inaccurate depictions of the doctrinal position. Let us set out the reasons why this is so. An explanation of the defects of figure A will at the same time make clear the deficiencies of figure B.

Figure A depicts nirvāṇa and samsāra as ontologically dichotomous, yet if this were correct there would be no means of passing from the latter to the former. But if Buddhism has any raison d'être at all it is to effect this very transition. It is the purpose of the Eightfold Path to bring about this transformation. The Eightfold Path is only linear in a metaphorical sense: it does not list stages which are passed through so much as describe the dimensions of human good and the technique for their personal cultivation. The Eightfold Path is something which is participated in rather than something which is followed; and by participating in the Eightfold Path one participates in those values, excellences or perfections which are constitutive of enlightenment, namely morality and wisdom. The following of the Eightfold

Path is therefore the gradual cultivation of moral and intellectual virtue. Nibbāna is the perfection of these virtues and not an ontological shift or soteriological quantum leap. The beginning and end of this perfection must take place in the same continuum otherwise the process could never begin at all.

Needless to say, not all of those who follow the Path will progress at the same speed; in particular, the spiritual development of the layfollower would normally lag behind that of the virtuoso monk. As noted by Collins [1982:92ff], in later parts of the Canon and in the commentaries a distinction is made between those within the teaching who are learners (sekho) and those who are adepts (asekho). Various levels of attainment are acknowledged among the body of the Buddha's followers, both in the lay community and in the elite saṅgha: nevertheless, the long-term objectives of all are the same and there is no ontological impediment to progress from the lower stages to the higher.

Spiro's inability to appreciate how the quest for nibbāna can begin and end in the same continuum may be due to his failure to distinguish between nibbāna as an event in life (sopādisesa-nibbāna) and final or post-mortem nibbāna. According to Buddhaghosa these correspond to the extinction of the defilements (kilesa-parinibbāna) and the extinction of the aggregates (khandha-parinibbāna) [DhA.11.163]. We have seen in Chapter Two that the extinction of the kilesas is clearly an ethical objective and does not involve any kind of

ontological transcendence. In the condition of kilesa-parinibbāna the Buddha remains a moral subject and member of the moral community. The application of moral predicates to him was unproblematic for his contemporaries and it is through their interaction with him as a moral agent that the foundation of Buddhist ethics was laid, as we saw in Chapter One. It is only in the state of final nirvāṇa that ethical predication and evaluation become problematic due to the absence of a moral subject. Yet even here there is no real difficulty since for the Small Vehicle the Buddha's parinibbāna in any event marks the end of all possible interaction with him; and for the Large Vehicle he still remains among the community of moral agents, and a moral relationship with him still subsists by virtue of the trikāya doctrine. For the Theravāda the goal is the termination of moral relationships whereas for the Mahāyāna it is their eternal and indis⁵soluble prolongation.

It is not my purpose here to enter into a discussion of the problems of nirvāṇa and I wish only to show contra King and Spiro that there is no discontinuity between ethical perfection and enlightenment. In particular I wish to repudiate the claim that the attainment of perfection necessitates the transcendence or rejection of ethical values and marks the entry to a state beyond good and evil. In part this view arises from the confusion referred to above between nirvāṇa as an ontic state and as a subjective experience. It is relatively easy to conceive of a state of affairs escaping ethical predication but more difficult to do so with

reference to the actions of a human moral subject. Some, indeed, would argue that nirvāṇa was originally understood exclusively as the lived experience of ethical perfection. The views of Rhys Davids on this matter are well known:

'Nibbāna is purely and solely an ethical state, to be reached in this birth by ethical practices, contemplation and insight. It is therefore not transcendental. The first and most important way to reach Nibbāna is by means of the eightfold Path, and all expressions which deal with the realisation of emancipation from lust, hatred and illusion apply to practical habits and not to speculative thought.'³

The notion of nibbāna as a self-existent state, he suggests, is a product of the speculative and dogmatic categorisation of the Abhidhamma period.⁴ One may accept this opinion or not;⁵ our concern is not with the nature of nibbāna but with the means by which it is reached, and for the remainder of this section I wish to argue against the notion of nibbāna being attained by means of a trans-ethical shift. In terms of the diagrams above I am proposing that only figure C accurately depicts the position of orthodox Buddhism according to which nibbāna is attained within the continuum of ethical perfection.

The first point in favour of figure C is that it is compatible with the programme of Buddhist soteriology envisaged in the Eightfold Path. As we have seen, this itself is a condensation of the stages to Arhatship described in the SKV. Rhys Davids comments upon these stages as follows:

'Now it is perfectly true that of these thirteen consecutive propositions or groups of propositions, it is only the last No.13, which is exclusively Buddhist. But the things omitted, the union of the whole of those included into one system, the order in which the ideas are arranged, the way in which they are treated as so many steps of a ladder whose chief value

depends on the fact that it leads up to the culminating point of Nirvāna in Arhatship - all this is also distinctively Buddhist' [Dialogues 1:59].

This sentiment is echoed by Saddhatissa, who underlines the fact that this continuum of perfection is internal to the Eightfold Path:

'The ultimate ideal aim which may serve as the ultimate standard of right conduct, relates, according to Buddhist thought, to the supramundane or lokuttara state, and the connection between the moralities of everyday life and this lokuttara state is one which is entirely covered by the Buddha's teachings. It is, in fact, that which is known to Buddhists as mārga, magga, the Path, the Road, along which each person must travel for himself beginning with the practice of the common moralities up to the supramundane state beyond good and evil. From this point of view Buddhism can be said to provide the complete ethical study' [1970:18f].

While agreeing with the Reverend Saddhatissa that the Eightfold Path is one of cumulative perfection culminating in nirvāna we must respectfully differ from his opinion that its conclusion is 'beyond good and evil', unless it is to the state of nirupādisesa-nibbāna to which he is referring as, indeed, is suggested by a passage shortly afterwards:

'It must be emphasised at the outset that recognition of a state beyond good and evil in no way implies that a person who has performed a number of 'good' deeds may then relax morally and do anything he pleases; it merely hints at a state described by the Buddha when he was asked: 'Where do the four primary elements [...] entirely cease?' [1970:19].

The state of sopādisesa-nibbāna is a condition of ethical perfection, being the end of greed, hatred, and delusion [S.38.1]. If it were beyond good and evil then the Buddha would have passed beyond the possibility of ethical predication and become a moral zero. Yet there is ample

evidence that the Buddha continued to be characterised and to refer to himself in terms of ethical perfection. He had not so much transcended morality as fulfilled it; what he had 'gone beyond' was the possibility of evil.

Let us consider some of the evidence. The Buddha's moral perfection is often referred to, and he is frequently described not merely as perfect in wisdom (viññā) but as perfect in both wisdom and conduct (viññācāraṇasampanna) [e.g. Vin 3.1]. So perfect is the Buddha's conduct that it is unnecessary for him to guard against misdeeds of body, speech and mind.

'Three things which a Tathāgata has not to guard against: a Tathāgata friends, is pure in conduct whether of act, or speech or thought. There is no misdeed of any kind concerning which he must take care lest another should come to know of it.'

Tīṇi Tathāgatassa arakkheyyāni. Parisuddha-kāya-samācāro āvuso Tathāgato, n'atthi Tathāgatassa kāya-duccaritaṃ yaṃ Tathāgato rakkheyya 'mā me idaṃ paro aññāsīti'. Parisuddha-vacī-samācāro āvuso Tathāgato [...] Parisuddha-mano-samācāro āvuso Tathāgato [...] [D.iii.217].

Having achieved this state of spontaneous moral perfection himself, the Buddha encourages others to do the same, and expresses disapproval of all immoral conduct:

'I detest, O Brahman, evil conduct in body, word and thought, and the arising of manifold bad and evil states.'

Ahaṃ hi Brāhmaṇa jigucchāmi kāyaduccaritena vacīduccaritena manoduccaritena anakavihitānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ samāpattiyā. [Vin.3.3]

Moral excellence is not peculiar to the Buddha alone and is possessed by all who win enlightenment, although not all will possess the Buddha's supererogatory compassion. The conduct of an Arhat images that of the Buddha to the extent of an

inability to commit immoral actions.

'A monk who has destroyed the āsavas [i.e. an Arhat] is unable intentionally to kill a living creature, to take by theft that which has not been given, to have sexual intercourse, to tell a deliberate lie, or to take pleasure in things stored up, as he did before as a layman.'

Abhabbo āvuso khīṇāsavo bhikkhu sañcicca pāṇaṃ jīvitaṃ voropetum [...] adinnaṃ theyyasaṃkhātaṃ ādātum [...] methunaṃ dhammaṃ paṭisevitum [...] sampajānamusā bhāsitaṃ [...] sannidhikāraṃ kāme paribhuñjitaṃ seyyathā pi pubbe agāriyabhūto. [D.iii.235]

There are more positive formulations describing the virtues Arhats continue to display:

'The Arhats, as long as they live, abandon the slaying of creatures and hold aloof from it, laying aside the rod and the sword; they are modest and kind and dwell friendly and compassionate to all living beings.'

Yāvajīvam arahanto pāṇātipātāṃ pahāya pāṇātipātā paṭiviratā nihitadaṇḍā nihitasatthā lajjī dayāpannā sabbapāṇabhūta-hita-anukampino viharanti. [A.i.211]

If the Buddha and his Arhats had truly transcended good and evil their conduct should not be susceptible to moral evaluation in terms of the moral criteria of the non-Arhat. Moreover, if the Arhat's perception of the world was ethically transparent why should immoral action be impossible for him? And why should actions which display moral perfection be the norm in his case? The only satisfactory solution is that at the end of the Eightfold Path the Arhat still stands within the same ethical continuum in which he began to tread the path to enlightenment.

The Eightfold Path begins with sīla but ends with sīla and paññā. Sīla is the starting point since human nature is so constituted that the cultivation of sīla facilitates the

cultivation of paññā. That moral discipline facilitates intellectual discipline is simply a fact about human nature. Until correct attitudes and dispositions have been inculcated through a process of training and discipline it is easy to fall prey to speculative views and opinions of all kinds. This does not mean there is a line leading arrow-like through sīla to paññā, or that morality is merely a means of limbering up for the intellectual athlete. No: morality is taken up first but constantly cultivated alongside insight until the two fuse in the transformation of the entire personality in the existential realisation of selflessness. We may say that paññā is the cognitive realisation of anattā while sīla is its affective realisation.

In the Canon this broad scheme of development is often expressed using a linear metaphor as a series of separate stages or hurdles, like rungs on a ladder. This metaphor can be misunderstood if it is not remembered that each of the stages is part of an overall pattern of cumulative development. Each stage develops out of and includes the previous ones. As an example of this we may consider the Buddha's description of the scheme of progression from morality to enlightenment in the Aṅguttara-Nikāya. Here he describes how morality leads up to the highest goal:

'So you see, Ānanda, good moral conduct (kusalāni-sīlāni) has freedom from remorse as object and profit; freedom from remorse has joy; joy has rapture; rapture has calm; calm has happiness; happiness has concentration; concentration has seeing things as they really are; [...] revulsion and fading of interest; [...] release by knowing and seeing as their object and profit. So you see, Ānanda, good moral conduct leads gradually up to the summit.'

Iti kho Ānanda kusalāni sīlāni avipphaṭṭisāratthāni
avipphaṭṭisāranisaṃsāni, avipphaṭṭisāro pāmujjattho
pāmujjānisamso [...] pīti [...] passaddhi [...] sukhaṃ [...]
samādhī [...] yathābhūta-ñāṇa-dassana [...] nibbidāvirāgo
[...] vimutti-ñāṇa-dassana iti kho Ānanda kusalāni sīlāni
anupubbena aggāya parentī ti. [A.v.2]

Clearly the meaning here is not that all of the stages are passed through once and forever left behind. The state of samādhī, for instance, would be repeated many times even by Arhats. Sīla, too, is a central enduring feature of their conduct. What the text describes is a series of spiritual breakthroughs and the order in which they occur for one following the Path. This is the sequence in which these developments will occur; the list is in experiential order and functions as a spiritual handrail. It is not arranged according to priority of values. We may also note that the Buddha's statement here completely overturns the discontinuity thesis according to which there is no means of transit between sīla and nibbāna.

A further illustration of the way in which the Eightfold Path may be arranged in experiential order may be seen in the Rathavinīta-sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. The text describes the spiritual sequence from sīla to nibbāna using the analogy of a series of chariots by which King Pasenadi of Kosala might travel from Sāvatthī to his palace at Sāketa [M.i.148-50]. The parable again emphasises the linear sequence of events since its purpose is to provide orientation in respect of subjective spiritual experience. It portrays the order in which personal development occurs and the stages should not be interpreted as being in ascending evaluative order. In the

wider perspective of the Eightfold Path, the king's arrival at the palace is the product of all of the chariots in the relay and not just the last one. Ironically, Spiro cites as an allegedly erroneous conception of Buddhist soteriology an updated version of this parable supplied by an informant according to which the journey to nirvāṇa is like a train journey from Mandalay to Rangoon calling at stations en route. [1982:84]

I hope by this point to have established that the discontinuity thesis is untenable and that it is sociologically, historically and doctrinally erroneous. Nirvāṇa and samsāra are not ontologically dichotomous and there is no transcendental shift involved in the attainment of kilesa-parinibbāna. One final point to be dealt with here is the recurrent Canonical image of crossing to the further shore which may be thought to lend support to the transcendency thesis.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the parable of the raft at M.i.134f is commonly interpreted to mean that nibbāna involves the transcendence of both good and evil.⁶ This interpretation derives from the Buddha's remarks at the end of the parable:

'Therefore, O monks, I have taught you dhamma - the parable of the raft - for crossing over with, not for retaining. Understand, monks, from the parable of the raft, that one must even let go of good things, how much more so evil things.'

Evam eva kho bhikkhave kullūpamo mayā dhammo desito nittharaṇatthāya no gahaṇatthāya. Kullūpamam vo bhikkhave ājānantehi dhammā pi vo pahātabbā, pag eva adhammā. [M.i.135]

The first point to note is that although the image of fording a stream by a raft or boat is a common metaphor in the Nikāyas⁷, the gaining of the further shore is normally identified with the practice of dhamma and not its rejection. Consider A.v.252 where the further shore is equated with the Ten Good Paths of Action and symbolises moral perfection:

'Pray, Gotama, what is the hither and what the further shore?

-Taking life, Brahman, is the hither shore; abstaining therefrom is the further shore. Taking what is not given is the hither shore; abstaining therefrom is the further shore. Sexual misconduct is the hither shore; abstaining therefrom is the further shore. Falsehood [...] spiteful speech [...] harsh speech [...] idle talk [...] coveting [...] harmfulness [...] wrong views [...] are the hither shore and abstinence therefrom the further shore'.⁸

Kin nu kho bho Gotama orimaṃ tīraṃ, kiṃ pārimaṃ tīraṃ ti? Pāṇātipato kho brāhmaṇa orimaṃ tīraṃ, pāṇātipātā veramaṇī pārimaṃ tīraṃ. Adinnādānaṃ kho brāhmaṇa orimaṃ tīraṃ, adinnādānā veramaṇī pārimaṃ tīraṃ. Kāmesu micchācāro orimaṃ tīraṃ, kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī pārimaṃ tīraṃ. Musāvādo [...] pisunā vācā [...] pharusā vācā [...] samphappalāpo [...] abhijjā [...] vyāpādo [...] micchādiṭṭhi [...].

Similarly, in A.v.232 the further shore symbolises the practice of the Eightfold Path and not its abandonment:

'Pray, Gotama, what is the hither shore and what the further shore?

-Wrong view, Brahman, is the hither shore, right view the further shore. Wrong thinking, speech, action, livelihood effort, mindfulness, concentration, wrong knowledge and wrong release are the hither shore. Right view and the rest are the further shore.'

Kin nu bho Gotama orimaṃ tīraṃ, kiṃ pārimaṃ tīraṃ ti? Micchādiṭṭhi kho brāhmaṇa orimaṃ tīraṃ, sammādiṭṭhi pārimaṃ tīraṃ. Micchāsaṅkappo - micchāvācā - micchākammanto - micchājīvo - micchāvāyāmo - micchāsati - micchāsamādhī - micchāñāṇaṃ - micchāvimutti.

It is made perfectly clear here that sīla along with samādhī

and paññā are part of the further shore and are not left behind on the hither side after enlightenment. The standard Canonical symbolism of the further shore is a way of life in accordance with the Dhamma, in other words the implementation and practice of the Buddha's teachings. Why, then, in the passage quoted above [M.i.134f], does the Buddha speak of leaving behind both dhammā and adhammā? The answer must be sought in the context in which the passage occurs, and an examination of this reveals that the Buddha was using the parable in this instance to make a more specific point.

The passage occurs in the Alagaddūpamasutta or 'Parable of the Water Snake' [M.i.130-142] in which the Buddha censures the monk Ariṭṭha for stubbornly holding a wrong attitude towards dhamma. The Buddha then warns the assembled company against those like Ariṭṭha who master the dhamma in a mechanical fashion but do not exert themselves to understand or implement it:

'Herein, monks, some foolish men master dhamma: the Discourses in prose, in prose and verse, the Expositions, the Verses, the Uplifting Verses, the 'As it was Said', the Birth Stories, the Wonders, the Miscellanies. These having mastered that dhamma do not test the meaning of these things (dhamma) by intuitive wisdom (paññā), and these things (dhamma) whose meaning is untested by intuitive wisdom do not become clear; they master this dhamma simply for the advantage of reproaching others and for the advantage of gossiping, and they do not arrive at that goal for the sake of which they mastered dhamma. These things (dhamma) badly grasped by them conduce for a long time to their woe and sorrow. What is the reason for this? Monks, it is because of a wrong grasp of things [M.i.133].

Idha bhikkhave ekacce moghapurisā dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇanti, suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇaṃ gāthaṃ udānaṃ itivuttakaṃ jātaṃ abbhutadhammaṃ vedallaṃ; te taṃ dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇitvā tesāṃ dhammānaṃ paññāya atthaṃ na upaparikkhanti, tesāṃ te dhammā paññāya atthaṃ anuparikkhataṃ na nijjhānaṃ khamanti. Te upārambhānisamsā c'eva dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇanti itivādappamokkhā nisamsā ca, yassa c'atthāya dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇanti

tañc'assa atthaṃ nānubhonti, tesaṃ te dhammā duggahītā
dīgharattam ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti, taṃ kissa hetu:
duggahītattā bhikkhave dhammānaṃ.

After this the Buddha compares the danger of grasping dhamma wrongly to the danger of grasping a water-snake at the wrong end, and then immediately introduces the parable of the raft. In this context the raft parable can only be taken as a further illustration of the danger of grasping dhamma wrongly. It is those like Ariṭṭha, I suggest, who are depicted in the raft parable as the man who carries the raft along on his head or shoulder instead of putting it to its proper use. In other words, the Buddha is objecting to the misuse of dhamma rather than assigning to it a merely provisional validity. It may be noted that Nāgārjuna gives a similar warning in Chapter 24 of the Madhyamika-kārikā; a wrong grasp of the doctrine of Śūnyatā, he cautions, is like picking up a snake at the wrong end. Here again it is the misuse of the teaching which is objected to rather than the body of the teaching itself.

So far so good, but what did the Buddha mean here by dhammā? Beyond this point there are two possible interpretations of the parable: one is that of the commentary and the other is my own. Neither suggests that the abandoning of dhammā has anything to do with the transcendence of ethics.

The commentary takes the putting aside of adhammā to mean the abandonment of attitudes such as those of Ariṭṭha, whom it mentions by name. And it takes the abandonment of dhammā to

mean the excessive attachment to meditative experience.⁹ This suffers from two drawbacks: i) in the sutta itself Ariṭṭha is criticised for his attitude to dhamma and nothing is said about him with respect to adhamma; ii) there is no particular reason to connect dhammā here with meditative experience.

The alternative interpretation of dhammā and adhammā I wish to suggest has the merit of being closer to the text. In the sutta the Buddha gives dhamma a particular meaning and identifies it with the piṭakas. In fact the mastery of dhamma is explained as the mastery of the Canon, the divisions of which are listed at length. The specific usage of the term dhamma in this context is noted elsewhere by Buddhaghosa [Asl:38]. The plural forms at the end (dhammā/adhammā), I suggest, merely broaden out the implications of the parable into a general condemnation of wrongful attitudes to good things (dhammā) of all kinds.

What is being criticised here specifically, then, is the empty, mechanical knowledge of scripture displayed by Ariṭṭha, and when the Buddha speaks of going beyond dhammā it is to urge the monks to go beyond the vacuous pharisaical learning of men like Ariṭṭha into the fulness of religious praxis. The going beyond of dhammā, then, means primarily the going beyond of scriptural knowledge and rote learning. Instead of carrying it around as a useless adjunct like a raft out of water one should test the scriptural teachings (dhamma) against one's own experience and reflect with discrimination (paññāya) upon the meaning. More generally in

the parable, the Buddha is warning against a narrow fixation upon the external form of good things at the expense of a personal lived experience of their worth.

It matters little which of the above interpretations is thought the more convincing. The important point is that the Raft Parable should not be read as implying that the values embodied in the Eightfold Path with its scheme of morality, meditation and wisdom are to be transcended or rejected. In short the Raft Parable provides no justification for the view that ethics is to be left behind.

The first half of this chapter has consisted of a critique of views which regard enlightenment as transcendent of ethical values. The second part of the chapter is more constructive and sets out to show how ethical or kammic values are compatible with the soteriological goal of nibbāna.

II THE KAMMIC AND THE NIBBĀNIC REVISITED

(i) Introduction

The central claim of the discontinuity thesis is that kamma and nibbāna are incompatible, antagonistic, and antithetical. The sociological, historical and doctrinal evidence adduced in support of this claim has been examined, criticised and rejected. The first half of the chapter has been devoted to the rebuttal of a false view; the second consists of an attempt to provide a more satisfactory account of the relationship between kamma and nibbāna which does no violence to the position of Canonical Buddhism.

The relationship of kamma to nibbāna is the relationship of ethics to soteriology and I suggest that far from being incompatible there is an integral and inalienable relationship between moral goodness and enlightenment. I will demonstrate the nature of this relationship through an examination of the two key terms of moral (kammic) commendation - kusala and puñña - and show how they relate to each other and to nibbāna. To anticipate I will provide a brief account of the functional interdependence of these two terms.

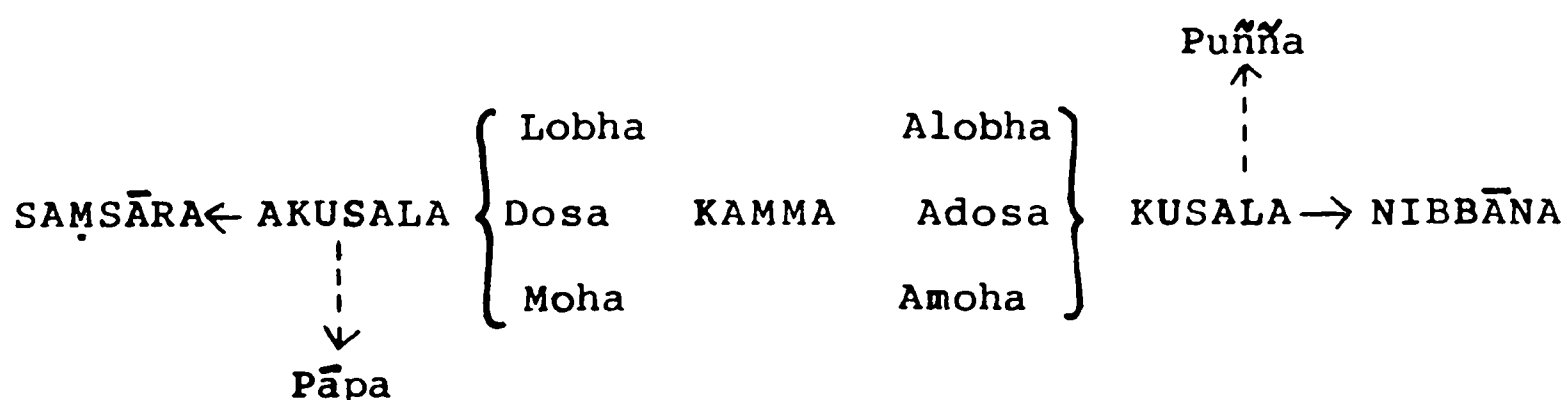
Kamma is a value-free description of a class of actions which are of soteriological importance. All kammic actions stand in a relationship to the summum bonum and the moral status of

this relationship is defined by the terms kusala and akusala. Kammic acts (these may be physical or mental) which are kusala are in harmony with nibbānic values. Kammic actions are cumulative and transformative and their performance either extends or reduces the scope of the actor's participation in nibbānic goods. Acts which are morally good or bad (kusala/akusala) may also have non-moral consequences which themselves may be evaluated in terms of non-moral criteria such as material benefits, happiness, pleasure, etc. These non-moral secondary consequences of kammic acts are described as puñña (if desirable) and pāpa (if undesirable). I describe these as 'secondary' consequences since the primary effect of a moral act is the transformation of the moral status of the agent viz-a-viz the source of final value (i.e. nibbāna).

There is no discontinuity between kusala and nibbāna; nibbāna does not begin where kusala ends nor is kusala in opposition to nibbāna. On the contrary, kusala is used predicatively with specific reference to nibbānic values. In Pali literature the use of the term kusala in a moral context, whether as adjective or substantive, always denotes approval with reference to the criterion of the summum bonum.¹⁰ In brief, whatever is in accordance with nibbāna is kusala and whatever is opposed to it is akusala.

The sphere of nibbāna is the sphere of the virtues and the sphere of samsāra is the sphere of the vices. The three Cardinal Virtues are the kusalamūlāni and the three Cardinal

Vices are the akusalamūlāni. Nibbāna itself is defined with reference to these as the end of greed, hatred and delusion [S.38.1]. Good kamma (puñña) is generated through the kusalamūlāni and bad kamma through the akusalamūlāni. Prescinding from the views of King and Spiro, I wish to suggest that Nibbāna is reached precisely via the performance of kusala actions which entrain puñña, as the following diagram shows:-



Here, moral action (kamma) which is virtuous (kusala) directly promotes participation in Nibbānic goods while simultaneously engendering puñña. Moral action of a vicious or evil (akusala) nature, however, leads directly to Samsāric imperfection or disvalue and is accompanied by pāpa. If King and Spiro were correct, we would expect to find the Buddha warning monks against kusala and puñña since these would lead away from nirvāna. In fact the evidence is to the contrary and we find the Buddha speaking in positive terms of both kusala and puñña. He urges monks to abandon what is akusala and cultivate what is kusala:

'Monks, you should abandon what is evil (akusala). It can be done. I would not say you should do it if it could not be done. [...] If abandoning evil conduced to loss and sorrow I would not say 'abandon evil'. But since it conduces to profit and happiness, I therefore say 'abandon evil'. Monks, you should cultivate what is good (kusala). It can be

done. I would not tell you to do it if it could not be done. [...] If cultivating the good conduced to loss and sorrow I would not say 'cultivate the good'. But since it conduces to profit and happiness, I therefore say 'cultivate the good'.

Akusalam bhikkhave pajahatha. Sakkā bhikkhave akusalam pajahitum. No ce taṃ bhikkhave sakkā abhavissa akusalam pajahitum nāhaṃ evaṃ vadeyyaṃ akusalam bhikkhave pajahathā ti [...] Akusalañ ce h'idam bhikkhave pahīnaṃ ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattēyya nāhaṃ evaṃ vadeyyaṃ 'akusalam bhikkhave pajahathā' ti. Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave akusalam pahīnaṃ hitāya sukhāya saṃvattati tasmāhaṃ evaṃ vadāmi 'akusalam bhikkhave pajahathā' ti.

Kusalam bhikkhave bhāvētha [etc...] [A.i.58]

The Buddha also states that the kusalamūlāni eradicate the akusalamūlāni and lead to nibbāna. In the person who cultivates the kusalamūlāni:

'... the evil demeritorious states born of greed, hatred and delusion are abandoned, cut down at the root and made like a palm-tree stump, unable to grow again or arise in the future. In this world he lives undisturbed, free from trouble and strife and attains nibbāna in this life.'

Evarūpassa bhikkhave puggalassa lobhajā [... dosajā, ... mohajā] pāpakā akusalā dhammā pahīnā ucchinnaṃ mūlā tālāvatthukatā anabhāvakatā āyatiṃ anuppādadhammā diṭṭh'eva dhamme sukhaṃ viharati avighātaṃ anupāyāsaṃ aparilāhaṃ diṭṭh'eva dhamme parinibbāyati. [A.i.204]

And again, the Buddha tells the monks not to suspend what is kusala but to increase it:

'Monks, I do not recommend a suspension of things which are kusala, much less a reduction. I favour an increase in things which are kusala and not a suspension or a decrease.'

Thitim p'ahaṃ bhikkhave na vaṇṇayāmi kusalesu dhammesu pageva pārihāniṃ; vuddhiñca kho 'haṃ bhikkhave vaṇṇayāmi kusalesu dhammesu no thitim no hāniṃ [A.v.96].

Note that the Buddha is addressing monks and not laymen, which indicates quite clearly that what is kusala is not to be eschewed by the nibbāna-seeker. And indeed neither is puñña as we see from the following:

'Monks, do not fear puñña, it is another name for happiness. That which is puñña is pleasant, enjoyable, lovely, delightful.'

Mā bhikkhave puññānaṃ bhāyittha; sukhassetaṃ bhikkhave adbhivacanāṃ, itthassa kantassa piyassa manāpassa, yad idaṃ puññāni. [It.14-15]

Having established that neither kusala nor puñña are hostile to nibbāna let us consider the meaning of these two terms further, each in turn, and also their role in Buddhist ethics viz-a-viz the final good.

(ii) Kusala

Kusala is not opposed to nibbāna; it is opposed to what is akusala or kilesa. The etymologies of kusala which Buddhaghosa provides indicate that kusala is opposed to what is contrary to nibbāna, i.e. evil and vice:

'But to come to word definitions: kusalas are so called in that they cause evil things to tremble [ku+ √sal- Comm], to shake, to be disturbed, to be destroyed. Or, kusa are those (vices) which lie in a person in a base form [ku+ √sī]. And kusalas are so called because they lop off, cut off (kusa+ √lū) what are known as immoralities (akusalas). Or, knowledge is called kusa [ku+ √so] because of the reduction or eradication of contemptible things, and kusala [kusa+ √lā] is so called because things should be taken, grasped, set in motion by that kusa. Or just as the kusa grass cuts a part of the hand with both edges, so also certain things cut off the vices in two portions, both in their natural manifestation and in their latent potentiality. Therefore kusalas are so called because they cut off what is base like the kusa grass.'

Vacanattho pan'ettha kucchite pāpadhamme salayanti calayanti kappenti viddhamsenti ti kusalā. Kucchitena vā ākārena sayanti ti kusā. Te akusalasaṅkhāte kuse lunanti chindanti ti kusalā. Kucchitānaṃ vā sānato tanukaraṇato osānakaraṇato ñānaṃ kusaṃ nāma. Tena kusena lātabbā ti kusalā gahetabbā pavattetabbā ti attho. Yathā vā kusā ubhayabhāgagataṃ hatthappadesaṃ lunanti evaṃ ime ti pi uppannānuppannabhāvena ubhayabhāgagataṃ saṅkilesapakkhaṃ lunanti tasmā kusā viya lunanti ti pi kusalā. [Asl:39, PTS tr.].

Kusala describes those qualities or states which are intrinsically related to nibbāna. In the Rathavinītasutta, as noted earlier, the Buddha describes how good moral conduct (kusalāni sīlāni) leads gradually to the highest state. Not only sīla is described as kusala but all qualities which are nibbānically orientated. In a well-researched article on the meaning of kusala and puñña Premasiri says of kusala:

'The kusala states are sometimes enumerated as the four bases of mindfulness (cattāro satipatthānā), the four modes of right endeavour (cattāro sammappādhānā), the four bases of psychic power (cattāro iddhipādā), the five faculties (pañcīndriyāni), the five powers (pañcabalāni), the seven factors of enlightenment (sattabojjhaṅgā) and the eightfold path (ariyo-atthaṅgiko-maggo). In the same context it is said that when a monk, at the eradication of defilements enters and abides in the freedom of mind and freedom through wisdom in this very existence, having realised it by his own super knowledge, that state is the highest of kusala states [1976:67f].

Here the state of Arhatship is described as kusala. The Buddha too is described as one endowed with kusala. Ānanda says of him 'The Tathāgata [...] is one who has discarded all states that are akusala and is possessed of states that are kusala' (sabbākusalaḍḍhammapahīno [...] tathāgato kusalaḍḍhamma samannāgato ti) [M.ii.116]. The Buddha was considered as one who had discarded numerous akusala qualities and cultivated kusala ones (aneke pāpake akusale dhamme pahīne [...] aneke ca kusale dhamme bhāvanāya pāripūrikate) [Ud.66]. There is no sense in which kusala qualities are jettisoned prior to enlightenment - quite the contrary, for it is in nibbāna that they reach their full perfection. Kusala qualities are to be cultivated and perfected, not cultivated and abandoned. Premasiri summarises as follows:

'Kusala is generally referred to as a quality that should be cultivated. It is said that the cultivation of kusala conduces to happiness and welfare. The Buddha is referred to as one who has cultivated that which ought to be cultivated and eliminated that which ought to be eliminated, which may be understood amongst other things as a reference to his cultivation of kusala and elimination of akusala' [1976:71].

Kusala qualities partake of nibbāna, and their cultivation transforms an ordinary man (puthujjana) into an Arhat. Such qualities both reflect and promote the final good - they are virtues, and this is the best translation for dhammā kusalā. Kusala as a substantive is best rendered as 'virtue'. The virtues are those qualities which, when finally perfected, are constitutive of the final good, and when kusala is used substantively of the summum bonum the most appropriate English equivalent is 'the good' or 'goodness'. Thus the Buddha declares that an Arhat is 'endowed with virtue' (sampannakusalam), 'is of the highest virtue' (paramakusalam), and has 'attained the highest perfection' (uttamapattipattam) [M.ii.25] The cultivation of virtue promotes the final good through the eradication of moral and intellectual vice in the form of lobha, dosa and moha. Nibbānic ends can only be furthered by specific qualities or traits which are intrinsically good (virtuous). By means of virtuous qualities such as faith (saddhā), shame (hiri), remorse (ottappa), energy (virīya) and understanding (paññā), what is wrongful is renounced (akusalam pajahāti) and the good is cultivated (kusalam bhāveti) [A.iv.353].¹¹

The cultivation of virtue is accompanied by pleasant results, and in the commentaries on the Suttas, kusala is often

defined as 'productive of happy result' (sukha-vipāka).¹² The essence (rasa) of virtue is the destruction of vice, and through the destruction of vice pleasant consequences (sukhavipāka) are experienced. I shall argue below that these pleasant consequences are what is designated by the term 'puñña'.

The relationship between kuśala and nirvāṇa is nicely illustrated by Vasubandhu using health (ārogya) as a metaphor for virtue and its culmination in nirvāṇa [Kośa:1V.8b-9a]. Under the umbrella of kuśala Vasubandhu distinguishes first of all the goal of nirvāṇa itself, followed by the cardinal virtues, virtuous dispositions of mind, and virtuous actions. These four categories are explained as follows:

- 1) Nirvāṇa : the supreme good or absolute goodness (paramārthatas). It is the end of all suffering and is likened to the condition of perfect health (ārogya).
- 2) The Virtues : dispositions which are intrinsically (svabhāvatas) good and promote the state of final perfection. These are the kuśala-mahābhūmika-dharmas and are compared to a curative herb (auśadha).
- 3) Attitudes or states of mind (caitta) which become good through association with the virtues (samprayogatas tad yuk-tam). These are compared to a drink mixed with a curative herb.
- 4) Actions performed as a result of the virtues. These are compared to the milk of a cow which has consumed a drink mixed with a curative herb.

In 1) above nirvāṇa is described as absolutely good (śubhaḥ moksah paramatah), and referred to as a kuśaladharmā. The Theravādin Abhidhamma, however, defined nibbāna as neither kusala nor akusala but avyākata. Thus we find the Kathāvatthu [19.6] taking a negative line on the question whether or not nibbāna can be described as good (nibbānadhātu kusalā ti?). The Andhakas claimed that nibbāna could be described as good (kusalam) because it was not bad (anavajja). The Theravādin replies that nibbāna is beyond all predication because it cannot be said to possess any of the factors we would normally describe as good such as faith (saddhā), energy (virīya) and mindfulness (sati) etc. The disagreement here can be resolved by distinguishing between the two kinds of nibbāna as mentioned previously. The use of the term nibbānadhātu suggests that the Theravāda are thinking of anupādisesa-nibbāna. The virtues of faith and energy etc. cannot be predicated of such a state but only of a person.

I think that enough has now been said to establish that kusala and nibbāna are in no way discontinuous, and that kusala conforms to the western notion of virtue. Something remains to be said of puñña, and to this we now turn.

(iii) Puñña

Premasiri is quite right to point out that kusala and puñña are related but not synonymous. He writes: 'There is reason

to believe that in the Canonical period kusala signified something different from puñña although there are instances in which there is overlapping of the senses' [1976:67]. We suggest that he is mistaken, however, in his view that kusala and puñña refer to different classes of actions with different sets of consequences. He states:

'... it becomes clear that acts of puñña were conceived in early Buddhism as deeds of positive merit, which bring about, as their consequences, enjoyment of a sensuous kind, but not generally of a spiritual kind. Kusala on the other hand emphasizes the non-sensuous, spiritual bliss, which results from it, and culminates in the eradication of the defilements of rāga (lust), dosa (hate) and moha (delusion). Hence the term that is invariably used in specifying the good actions which lead to the spiritual bliss of nibbāna is kusala, whereas the term more frequently used for specifying the good actions which lead to sensuous enjoyment and happiness in samsāra is puñña' [1976:69].

Premasiri does not, however, explain by virtue of what these two classes of actions are distinct and how they come to have such different consequences. It is difficult to see where such an explanation could begin, since both kusala and puñña can only be specified in relation to the kusalamūlāni. How can actions stemming from the same source result in such different sets of consequences? And how can 'deeds of positive merit' fail to be virtuous (kusala)?. If they are not inspired by the Cardinal Virtues then they cannot be meritorious. Neither Premasiri, nor Katz who follows him in this view, produce any textual evidence to show that kusala and puñña were opposed in this way, and on a point of such soteriological significance we would expect copious citations from the suttas and commentaries. Had this distinction existed surely the Buddha would have been at pains to point

it out lest his followers condemn themselves to samsāra in the belief that they were striving for nibbāna.

Instead we submit that puñña and kusala do not describe two kinds of actions. They emphasise different aspects of one and the same action. Premasiri himself comes close to admitting this:

'That the use of kusala and puñña in the Nikāyas is sometimes overlapping is a fact that may be admitted. That a deed which was considered to be puñña was also considered to be kusala and vice versa is also admissible on the evidence of the Pali Nikāyas. For this reason there are instances in which puñña and kusala are used in the Nikāyas as if they were synonyms' [1976:72].

If the two terms overlap to this extent it is most unlikely that they refer to separate classes of actions. On the contrary, the reason for the overlap is that every virtuous action is both kusala and puñña.

The meaning of kusala has already been made clear: kusala and akusala describe the moral status of actions and dispositions viz-a-viz the summum bonum. Puñña, on the other hand, describes the experiential consequences of moral activity suffered by the agent. Puñña refers to the felt consequences of an increase or decrease in virtue on the part of the moral actor. Since nibbāna is the end of suffering the participation in nibbānic goodness will be accompanied by a reduction in suffering (or an increase in happiness). Indeed, happiness and the accumulation of puñña are equated (sukho puññassa uccayo) [Dh.118]. The accumulation of vice, on the other hand, will lead to an increase in suffering.

What has sown confusion here is the fact that while kusala may be predicated of an Arhat, puñña may not. The explanation for this may be along the following lines. An Arhat is perfect in virtue and for him the experiential consequences of virtue cannot fluctuate. As he has maximised his ethical potential there can be no increase or decrease in his virtue or in his happiness. He is completely good, and happiness, according to Buddhism, is tied to goodness. Since his goodness can neither increase nor decrease neither can his happiness and hence neither can his puñña. Puñña is kusala-dependent, and when kusala is perfect and complete, puñña, as an experiential indicator of moral progress, is redundant. Puñña is a function of progress in kusala; since an Arhat no longer progresses in kusala it is meaningless to speak of him as producing puñña. There will, of course, still be secondary consequences to his virtue in that he will enjoy the love and respect of many people, etc. The point is that the quantum of these consequences cannot be increased or decreased as they can for a non-Arhat. The puñña-pāpa continuum is therefore meaningful for the non-Arhat but meaningless for the Arhat.

The Arhat has gone beyond the stage when it would be meaningful to speak of an increase or decrease in his happiness: he has gone beyond the possibility of puñña and pāpa (puññañca pāpañca bāhetvā). The actions of an Arhat are avyākata since they are no longer morally transformative; he has participated to the fulness of his capacity in the supreme good; he has done what needed to be done and there is nothing further for him to achieve. His actions display moral excellence since the sphere of nibbāna

is also the sphere of kusala; the sphere of puñña, however, is now left behind.

The sphere of puñña is also the sphere of rebirth, and prior to enlightenment the experiential consequences of moral actions are suffered through the course of a series of lives. The continuum of life extends through death and the hedonic content of the new arising is spoken of in terms of puñña [e.g.S.i.18; Dh.18]. All kusala/puñña actions, i.e. all moral deeds, have consequences for the agent both in the present life and in future lives. The Buddha severely criticised the akiriyavāḍins who denied this. Let us look briefly at what these consequences might be. We may take sīla as our example although the consequences of dāna are similar [A.iii.39]. The five benefits of sīla which have already been listed in Chapter One are specified as follows:

1. A large fortune produced by working diligently.
2. A good reputation.
3. Entering confidently and unconfused into any assembly.
4. An unconfused death.
5. A happy rebirth in heaven.

We may note at once that all of these are secondary contingent consequences of moral actions and as such come under the rubric of puñña. The primary effect of sīla is deontic in that through sīla one participates in what is good and right. This is true of all Buddhist virtues and is signified by their designation as kusala. As regards the contingent non-moral consequences of ethical action listed

above it will be noted that apart from the final one there is nothing particularly Buddhist about them. The same consequences might well be expected by a contemporary Greek who cultivated the classical virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude.

The benefit of a good rebirth is likewise contingent upon moral status. It is noteworthy that at the moment of death there is said to occur a vision (kammanimitta) of the significant moral actions which will be determinative in respect of the forthcoming rebirth, and an intimation of the realm in which rebirth will occur (gatinimitta). It should not be thought, pace King and Spiro, that sīla produces kamma which entails rebirth and that therefore the object is to cease from sīla. Rather, rebirth occurs since perfection has not been achieved - rebirth is the opportunity to strive for perfection. The effect of sīla in modifying the condition of rebirth is a contingent consequence of morality - its primary effect is to deepen one's participation in nibbānic values. Thus our moral choices determine what we are as well as the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

In Kantian terms the relationship between kusala and puñña is the relationship between the bonum supremum and the bonum consummatum. For Kant the concept of the Highest Good (summum bonum) embraces two components in a synthetic relationship. First there is moral perfection or virtue as the supreme end (bonum supremum) or unconditional condition which is subject (instrumental) to no other. To this may be added the totality

of non-moral goods (summed up as 'happiness') into a whole known as the bonum consummatum or complete good.¹³ Kant's view, stated in its simplest terms, is that it would be irrational if virtue were not conjoined with happiness, with the latter experienced in proportion to the former. In Buddhism the mechanism which ensures this conjunction is karma, while for Kant it was left in the hands of God. He writes:

'For to be in need of happiness and also worthy of it yet not to partake of it could not be in accordance with the complete volition of an omnipotent rational being, if we assume such only for the sake of argument. Inasmuch as virtue and happiness together constitute the highest good for one person, and happiness in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes that of a possible world, the highest good means the whole, the perfect good, wherein virtue is always the supreme good, being the condition having no condition superior to it, while happiness, though something always pleasant to him who possesses it, is not of itself absolutely good in every respect but always presupposes conduct in accordance with the moral law and its condition'.¹⁴

Applying Kant's distinction in the present context, the bonum supremum is virtue (kusala) and the bonum consummatum the conjunction of virtue with happiness (kusala plus puñña).

(iv) Kamma

Let us now summarise our views in respect of kamma. Kamma means action in the sense of 'religious' action, i.e. action which is soteriologically potent. Such action can either promote or hinder liberation. Kamma describes one's accumulated potential in this action with respect to the final goal. At one point King, taking a lead from Mrs. Rhys

Dauids, comes close to recognising this when he writes: 'In this context to gain merit means to become increasingly more worthy, to gain more and more spiritual capacity which will enable one to achieve sainthood in the end.' [1964:55] He speaks of good kamma as 'the quantitative enlargement of the self', by which he means 'the long process of character-formation which, according to Buddhism, has preceded the appearance of the saint or Buddha, or for that matter, even the more-than-average good man.' [1964:60] 'This facet', he continues a few pages later, 'clearly modifies the crassness of the merit doctrine in the direction of a strengthening of the concept of cumulative worth, or intrinsic goodness, as its essential meaning.' [1964:63] Yet King cannot free himself from the notion that kamma is hostile to liberation and falls back inevitably upon the 'scaffold theory' of kamma. [p.67]

If kamma does describe a cumulative progress towards moral perfection, as I believe it does, it would explain why the Buddha is said to be endowed with all the virtues and perfections instead of being a moral blank. This is because he has not after all transcended the sphere of 'kammatic' Buddhism; he has attained the highest possible degree of excellence and is saturated with virtues and good qualities. His perfection is extolled in ever more elaborate terms by the Mahāyāna. There is a continuum of development of which he marks the summit; it is in this sense that he is lokuttara - not beyond the world but the best in the world.

Kamma in Buddhism is not a form of sympathetic magic by which the universe rewards moral action with material wealth. It is not an occult power but an aspect of Dependent-Origination; stated simply it is the postulate or principle that moral actions have consequences (kamma-niyama). The generation and experience of kammic acts and their primary consequences which are internal to the agent all take place within the five khandhas. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this may be described in terms of the eradication of saṅkhāras. There is in addition a subset of secondary external consequences entrained by moral acts which are quantifiable in hedonistic terms (puñña/pāpa). When the individual santāna is completely purified in Arhatship, moral actions no longer act to eliminate vice and hence there is no corresponding increase in happiness and therefore no puñña is produced by the actions of an Arhat.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I have attempted two things: first to set out and criticise the theory articulated by King and Spiro (and held by many others) that ethical action is incompatible with the goal of nibbāna; and second, to provide a more satisfactory account of the relationship between ethics (sīla) and the goal of final human perfection (nibbāna). My critique of King and Spiro proceeded largely by pointing to the internal inconsistency of the theory and the unsatisfactory nature of the data adduced in support of it. I concluded that Spiro's arguments from sociological, historical and doctrinal evidence was unsound and to be rejected.

In restating the nature of the kamma-nibbāna relationship I focussed upon the meaning of the key ethical terms kusala and puñña. I established that kusala was internally related to nibbāna and promoted rather than opposed its attainment. Since puñña is a product of kusala it follows that puñña cannot be an obstacle to enlightenment as the discontinuity

thesis maintains. I offered clarification of the meanings of kusala and puñña in accordance with Canonical and commentarial usage.

Before turning to the Mahāyāna in the next chapter it may be helpful to provide a summary of the main conclusions reached so far. In the discussion up to this point I have attempted to clarify the relationships between:

(i) morality (sīla) and insight (paññā) on the one hand, and the Supreme Good (nibbāna) on the other. The evidence from Chapter One, mainly from the SKV, establishes that morality and insight are both integral components of the soteriological goal.

(ii) sīla and paññā: in Chapter Two it was argued that ethical excellence (sīla) is the perfection of the affective potential of human nature and intellectual excellence (paññā) is the perfection of the cognitive side.

(iii) sīla and nibbāna: in Chapter Three I argued that ethical perfection is attained through the cultivation of moral virtue (kusala) and that through the moral virtues one participates in the excellence of nibbāna. Allied to progress in moral virtue are the contingent consequences described as

puñña.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Cf. Holt [1981:67ff].
2. Saddhatissa [1970:120]; Katz [1982:181-5] citing Rhys Davids et al.
3. PTS Dictionary 'Nibbāna'. Emphasis in original.
4. loc. cit
5. Those who do include Horner [1936:47]; Holt [1981:83f.]; Ling [1982:92f]; Cruise [1983:162]; Kalupahana [1976:134].
6. Cf. Gudmunsen [1971:312]; Premasiri [1976:70f].
7. Cf. Sn.21; S.iv.179-181; Collins [1982:306n.13]. Various texts on the theme of 'crossing over' have been compiled by Coomaraswamy and Horner [1982:180-186]. On the theme of rivers and oceans cf. pp.186-192. On water symbolism Katz [1982:41-46]. On river imagery Collins [1982:247-261]
8. Cf. A.v.254f; v.257f, where the same items and their contraries are defined as dhamma and adhamma respectively: thus one proceeds from adhamma to dhamma.
9. Papañcasūdanī 11.109: "Dhammā pi vo pahātabbā": ti ettha 'dhammā' ti samathavipassanā'.
10. E.g. A.v.66; Ud.66; M.i.115; A.v. 1f.
11. Other virtuous qualities and their opposites listed at A.v.86f as the cause of good and bad actions are: alobho, adoso, amoho, yonisomanasikāro. All virtuous qualities are permutations of the three Cardinal Virtues.
12. A Table showing the commentarial definitions of kusala may be found in the Introduction to U.Narada's translation of the Patthāna [PTS edn.].
13. Critique of Practical Reason 11.11.i 110-114.

14. Loc.cit 110f.

CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter we are concerned with developments in Mahāyāna śīla and we will approach these through a consideration of the Mahāyāna's own assessment of its superiority to the Hīnayāna in this respect. This task will occupy us in section (11) and will involve an examination of the innovative ethical categorisations introduced by the Mahāyāna which distinguish it from the Small Vehicle: here we consider both the normative ethics of the Great Vehicle and the apparently transmoral doctrine of Upāya. Section (1) will examine the value-structure of the Mahāyāna in terms of the ideals embodied in the six Perfections (pāramitās). It will become clear that there was no Copernican revolution in Buddhist ethics with the advent of the Mahāyāna and that its innovations in this field are best understood as a supplement to the morality of its predecessor rather than a rejection of it. It is fair, however, to speak of a 'paradigm shift' by which the Mahāyāna recalibrated the value-structure of the Small Vehicle.

In the Mahāyāna, ethics (śīla) is classified as one of the six Perfections (pāramitās) and we consider it first of all under this aspect.

(1) The Perfections

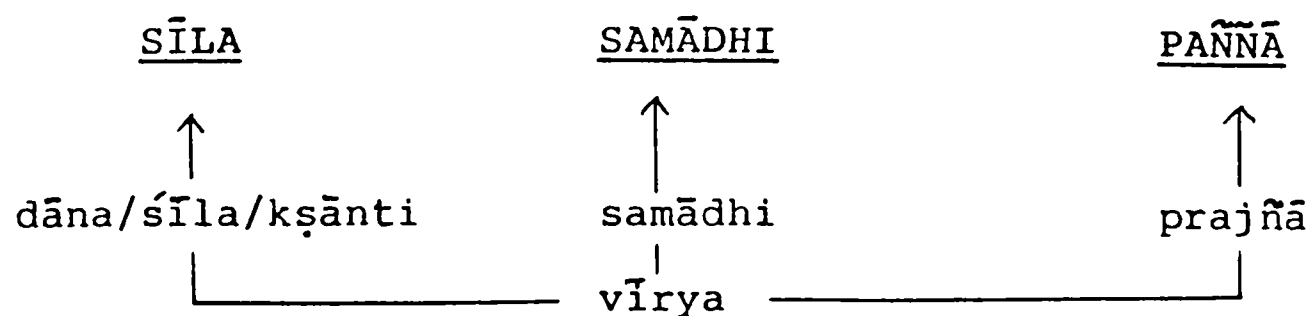
In Mahāyāna sources the virtues are known as Perfections (pāramitās). The six Perfections bear some resemblance to the five Indriyas of the Pali Canon consisting of Faith (saddhā), Energy (virīya), Mindfulness (sati), Meditation (samādhi) and Insight (paññā). It will be noted that sīla does not occur as one of the indriyas although it is found in the list of ten pāramīs in the Jātakas; these are said to comprise the qualities that make a Buddha (Buddha-kāraka-dhammā).¹ There are six fundamental or Cardinal Virtues although the list is sometimes extended to ten. The list of ten is as follows:

1. Generosity (dāna)
2. Morality (śīla)
3. Patience (ksānti)
4. Energy (vīrya)
5. Meditation (samādhi)
6. Insight (prajñā)
7. Skilful Means (upāya-kausālya)
8. Vow (pranidhāna)
9. Strength (bala)
10. Knowledge (jñāna)

The first six are of greater importance than the final four and are frequently discussed at length while the others are merely mentioned².

The Mahāyāna scheme of the six Perfections may be related to the scheme of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā described in Chapter One. This relationship is explained in the commentary to the MSA where it is stated that the first three pāramitās

correspond to adhiśīla, the fifth to adhicitta, and the sixth to adhiprajñā, while the fourth (vīrya) is shared in common by all three divisions³. The equivalence between the six Perfections and the tikkhandha of sīla/samādhi/paññā may be seen in the following diagram:



As in the Small Vehicle, final perfection is conceived of as bilateral, and a distinction is made between the moral perfections and the perfection of insight or knowledge. We may note the change in terminology introduced by the Mahāyāna: whereas the Small Vehicle defines its basic values as paññā and sīla the Mahāyāna refers to these as prajñā and upāya or prajñā and karuṇā. The terminological change reflects a new emphasis on the function of moral virtue as a dynamic other-regarding quality. As before, Mahāyāna sources are conscious of the importance of both of these components as constituents of the final good:

'For pure Bodhisattvas, their mother (mātr) is the perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā), their father (pitṛ) is skilfulness in means (upāyakauśalya): the Leaders of the world (nāyaka) are born of such parents.' [VKNS Vll.6.1.]⁴

So essential is this interdependence that in the absence of either element the result is bondage rather than liberation.

This is clearly stated at VKNS IV.16 where four possible combinations of the two elements are set out:

- 1) 'Wisdom not acquired through skilful means (upāyānupātta-prajñā) is bondage (bandhana).
- 2) On the contrary, wisdom acquired through skilful means (upāyopātta-prajñā) is deliverance.
- 3) Skilful means not acquired through wisdom (prajñānupāttopāya) are bondage.
- 4) On the contrary, skilful means acquired through wisdom (prajñopāttopāya) are deliverance.'

The four possibilities are then enlarged upon:

1) 'When a Bodhisattva subdues himself (ātmānam niyamati) by the practice of emptiness (śūnyatā), signlessness (animitta) and wishlessness (apranihita), but abstains from adorning his body with the primary and secondary physical marks (lakṣaṇānuvyañjana), from adorning his Buddha-field (buddha-kṣeīrā-ālamkāra) and from helping beings ripen (sattva-pāripācana), this is wisdom not acquired through skilful means and it is bondage.

2) When a Bodhisattva subdues his mind (svacittam niyamati) by the practice of emptiness, signlessness and wishlessness and, at the same time, adorns his body with the primary and secondary marks, he adorns his Buddha-field and helps beings ripen, this is wisdom acquired through skilful means and it is deliverance.

3) When a Bodhisattva settles (avatiṣṭhati) into false views (dṛṣṭi), the invasion of the passions' (kleśaparyutthāna), the residual tendencies (anuśaya), affection (anunaya) and aversion (pratigha), but does not transfer to perfect enlightenment the good roots that he has cultivated, these are skilful means not acquired through wisdom and it is bondage.

4) When a Bodhisattva rejects (jahāti) false views, the invasion of the passions, residual tendencies, affection and aversion, and transfers to perfect enlightenment the good roots he has cultivated without producing pride (garva), these are skilful means acquired through wisdom and it is deliverance.' [VKNS IV.16f]

In 1) a bodhisattva turns his back on beings and seeks his own liberation in the manner of the Śrāvakas. Even though he

knows the doctrine of śūnyatā he fails to understand the sameness (samatā) of all beings existentially as a result of affective inhibition. His development is unbalanced and his search for an individual enlightenment is doomed to failure. In 2) this error is not made and the wisdom the bodhisattva has gained is put at the service of all beings through his use of skilful means.

In 3) a bodhisattva is caught up in the emotional confusion of samsāra and labours in vain because his actions are not guided by insight.

In 4) a bodhisattva is not hampered in his activity by delusion and is able to direct his actions appropriately and efficiently towards supreme enlightenment.

Since two of the above four possibilities constitute deliverance (numbers 2 and 4) it seems that one may begin from either wisdom or means to arrive at the perfection of both. If, however, there is any imbalance between the two and one is stultified the result is bondage and not liberation. sGam-po-pa explains why neither prajñā nor upāya are adequate by themselves:

'Why then, if this awareness [prajñā] is enough, should beneficial expediency [upāya] as expressed by liberality and the other perfections be necessary? The answer is that awareness [prajñā] alone is not enough [...] Any bodhisattva who resorts to the one without the other falls into a one-sided Nirvāṇa, into the desired peace and quietism of the Śrāvakas, and is, as it were, bound to this Nirvāṇa.'

And vice-versa:

'If we resort to beneficial expediency [upāya] without discriminating awareness [prajñā], we do not go beyond the level and the path of unintelligent ordinary beings but remain bound by the chains of samsāra.' [Jewel 1970:203]

The simile is given of a man walking: prajñā is the eyes and upāya is the feet, and no progress is possible unless the two work in harmony. The same image is found in the Aṣṭa:

'Just as, Kausika, people born blind [...] cannot, without a leader, go along a path and get to a village, town or city; just so, Giving, Morality, Patience, Vigour and Trance cannot by themselves be called 'perfections', for without the perfection of wisdom they are as if born blind.' [tr.Conze 1975:136]

The Prajñāpāramitā literature naturally seeks to emphasise the importance of prajñā, but also points out the dangers of excess in this respect. According to the Prajñā-pāramitā-upadeśa-sūtra:

'If one practises only prajñā and not the other five dharmas, good qualities (guṇa) will be lacking (...). Whoever follows prajñā alone falls into false views (mithyādr̥ṣṭi)' [Quoted by Poussin VMTS p.623]

Without the first five perfections (upāya) there cannot be complete enlightenment but only the limited enlightenment of the Śrāvakas. The M.Av describes how morality is practised in three different ways by the followers of each of the three vehicles, and states that only when it is accompanied by great compassion (mahākaruṇā), skill-in-means (upāyakaūśalya), and the non-abandonment of all beings does it produce the perfect purity of the bodhisattva-stage. For followers of the Śrāvaka- and Pratyekabuddha-yānas, however, morality is merely the cause of personal happiness and an auspicious rebirth, and does not benefit others [2.7].

For the Mahāyāna śīla is at one and the same time a source of purification and happiness for the practitioner and an

example and benefit to others. This feature is brought out in the Dharma-prabhāva section of the Bo.bhū which lists the consequences of each of the perfections. According to this [p.72] śīla has a fourfold advantage:

- i) the bodhisattva abandons immorality (dauhśīlyam prajahāti)
- ii) he ripens other beings by his equanimity and power of attraction (samānārthatayā ca samgraha-vastunā sattvān paripācayati)
- iii) he offers security to all beings by not obstructing them (sarva-sattvānām ca sarva-prakārair avihethanatayā abhayam anuprayacchati)
- iv) he obtains a heavenly rebirth after death (kāyasya bhedāt sugatau svargaloke deveśūpapadyate).

At the same time other sources confine themselves in a more Hīnayānic spirit to listing the purely personal advantages of śīla. The MSA [XVI.19] lists six qualities of śīla:

- 1) It has for its end a state of peace (śamabhāvānta)
- 2) It produces good rebirth and stability of mind (sugati-sthiti-dāyaka)
- 3) It is a foundation for all virtues (sarvagunānām pratiṣṭhā)
- 4) It is calm (śānta) through pacifying the defilements (kleśa-paridāha-śāntyā)
- 5) It is without fear (nirbhīta)
- 6) It is associated with the production of merit (punya-sambhāra-samyuta)

The function, advantages and benefits of śīla are described throughout the Mahāyāna literature either as benefitting oneself or oneself and others.⁵ In its attitude to morality the Mahāyāna demonstrates both change and continuity with respect to the Small Vehicle. This will become apparent in

the course of this chapter and particularly in the following section, where we examine the Mahāyāna classifications of śīla.

(11) Classifications of Mahāyāna Morality

Our attention for the rest of this chapter will be directed to the ways in which the Mahāyāna distinguishes its own morality from that of the Small Vehicle. Signs of dissatisfaction with the rigidity of the latter are already in evidence among the Mahāsaṃghikas, who maintained the freedom of a sotāpanna to commit any offence save the five ānantariya [Bareau 1955:67]. The Gokulikas also felt that the vinaya rules were inappropriate to the conduct of a bodhisattva [Dutt 1970:73]. The M.Saṃgr provides a convenient summary of the superiority of Mahāyāna morality to that of the Hīnayāna. According to this the morality of the Mahāyāna can be summed up (samāsataḥ) as superior in four ways:

1. In its divisions (prabheda-viśeṣa)
2. In its communal and non-communal rules (sādhāraṇa-asādhāraṇa-śikṣā-viśeṣa)
3. In breadth (vaipulya-viśeṣa)
4. In depth (gāmbhīrya-viśeṣa)

This fourfold classification will provide a convenient basis for our discussion of Mahāyāna morality, and each point will be dealt with in turn. We will explore the content of each category through a variety of sources, although the content of point 1 (prabheda-viśeṣa) will be supplied entirely by reference to the Bo.bhū, and will then be compared briefly with rival Mahāyāna and Theravāda disciplinary codes. Each of the divisions will be considered in some detail with the

exception of the third since this is merely a general statement of the overall superiority of Mahāyāna ethics. In brief, point 1 relates to an innovative threefold classification of śīla, and point 2 to the degree of latitude in the infringement of moral norms allowed to a bodhisattva. Point 4 embraces the fundamental and radical innovation of the notion of skilful means (upāya-kauśalya) as a category of trans-moral action. A summary of the four points of superiority may be seen in Table 1 (over).

1. Superiority in Divisions
(prabheda-viśeṣa)

- (i) Temperance (samvara-śīla)
- (ii) Pursuit of the Good (kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla)
- (iii) Altruism (sattva-artha-kriyā-śīla)

2. Superiority in Communal and Non-communal Rules
(sādhāraṇa-asādhāraṇa-śikṣā-viśeṣa)

- (i) Serious Offences (prakṛti-sāvadya)
- (ii) Minor Offences (pratikṣepaṇa-sāvadya)

3. Superiority in Breadth
(vaipulya-viśeṣa)

- (i) Multiple and Extensive Rules
- (ii) Gain of Immense Merit
- (iii) Disposition to procure welfare and happiness of all beings
- (iv) Establishment of Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment

4. Superiority in Depth
(gāmbhīrya-viśeṣa)

- (i) The use of Skilful Means (upāya-kausālya)

TABLE 1

The Classifications of Mahāyāna Morality in terms of its
Superiority to the Hīnayāna (according to the M.Saṃgr)

(i) Superiority in Divisions

This is the most important of the four 'superiorities' and will be dealt with at greatest length since it is the foundation for the other three. According to the M.Samgr, as noted above, the morality of the Mahāyāna is distinguished by virtue of its comprehensive classifications and scope (prabheda-viśeṣa). The whole scheme of Mahāyāna ethics is encapsulated within this classification within which three facets or aspects may be distinguished:

- (a) morality as temperance or restraint
(saṃvara-śīla)
- (b) morality as pursuit of the good
(kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla)
- (c) morality as altruism or supererogation
(sattva-artha-kriyā-śīla)

We learn from the M.Samgr [Vl.2] that the first is the support (niśraya) for the other two. The second is the support for the qualities of a Buddha (Buddhadharmasamudāgama), and the third is the support for the maturation of beings (sattva-paripācana). The superiority of the Mahāyāna in this respect, as the commentary explains, lies in the fact that the Śrāvakas possess only the first of these three divisions. Accordingly, they are ignorant of the important third division and do not practise morality for the benefit of other beings.

This threefold classification is widely accepted by Mahāyāna sources⁶, but the fullest and most detailed exposition of it

is given by the Bo.bhū. In general, as pointed out by N.Dutt, the moral rules of the Mahāyāna are not conveniently grouped together in a Vinaya after the fashion of the Small Vehicle but are to be found in a variety of sources. 'Thus', he writes, 'we clearly see that the Mahāyānists depended upon the rules scattered in the Mahāyāna texts and did not possess a code of the Vinaya rules' [1930:292]. And the Hōbōgirin comments:

'The discipline of the Bodhisattvas never achieved the canonical uniformity which the Discipline of the Hearers had in the Small Vehicle: swayed by diverse tendencies it constantly oscillated between them.'⁷

There are, however, certain texts which deal more specifically with moral conduct than others. Dutt continues:

'The only Mahāyānic works accessible to us that can be called a code of disciplinary rules are the Chinese Brahmajāla Sūtra and the two works of Śāntideva, viz Śikṣāsamuccaya and Bodhicaryāvatāra.'

Rather surprisingly Dutt omits all reference to the Bodhisattvabhūmi, which embodies a more systematic code of disciplinary rules than either of the two works of Śāntideva. Indeed, the Śīla-paṭala of the Bo.bhū, occupying 52 pages in Wogihara's edition, is by far the most important locus for information on Mahāyāna śīla. The text in fact describes itself as a 'bodhisattva-piṭaka' [157.15] and it provides a comprehensive if in places somewhat radical statement of Mahāyāna ethics. It can, with some justification, be regarded as one of the earliest and most influential texts on Mahāyāna ethics and discipline.⁸ First of all let us look at the explanation which the text gives of the threefold classification of Mahāyāna śīla; following this we may consider its significance as a bodhisattva-piṭaka.

(a) Morality as Temperance (samvara-śīla)

In the explanation of the first category (samvara-śīla) [141.1-144.1], it is said that a bodhisattva established therein abandons the world even if he possesses universal dominion (cakravarti-rājyam). He looks upon such dominion as if it were a piece of grass or ordure (amedhya). Moreover, his renunciation is undertaken out of purity of resolve (āśayaviśuddhatā) and not, as with some inferior persons (nihīna-puruṣa), out of the desire to earn their livelihood as renunciates. Nor is his motive the enjoyment of those pleasures which will accrue from the practice of samvara-śīla, and he looks upon all pleasures as they really are, namely as the entrance to an abyss of great and manifold terrors. Apart from the future pleasures which may arise from his good conduct, the bodhisattva takes no delight in present ones such as wealth and honour. He looks upon such things with true discrimination as if they were vomited-up food (vāntāśanam iva). Turning away from such worldly matters he delights in solitude.

The bodhisattva is strict in his observance of the training-precepts (śikṣāpada) and does not tolerate evil speech or the slightest evil thought. When his mind is distracted by behaviour of that sort he experiences intense remorse (tīvram vipratīśāram) and sees the danger (of it) (ādīnava-darśanam). In future cases, when evil words and thoughts have barely had time to arise he recalls that vision

of wretchedness and renounces those evil acts and thoughts. By constant exercise of renunciation (pratisamharana-abhyāsata) he begins to take pleasure in not performing evil actions and in opposing them. By following all the śikṣāpadas of a bodhisattva he becomes restrained with the immeasurable (aprameya) and inconceivable (acintya) restraint of body and speech.

So much in relation to himself. In relation to others the bodhisattva established in samvara-śīla does not seek out their faults (dosa) and inner weaknesses (antara-skhalita). He has no malicious or hostile thoughts in the presence of violent (raudra) beings. Instead, on the basis of great compassion, the bodhisattva experiences thoughts of sympathy and the desire to be of service. He has no thoughts of physical violence, angry scolding (ākrośa-roṣa) or rebuking (paribhāṣana).

When a bodhisattva is established in samvara-śīla he becomes endowed with the fivefold faculty of non-heedlessness (apramāda) by which he makes amends for offences (āpattiṃ) committed in the past and resolves not to repeat them. In summary it is said that he conceals his good points and reveals his sins; he is satisfied with little, patient in suffering, of unwearied nature, not arrogant (anuddhata), not fickle (acapala) and of calm deportment (praśānteryā-patha). When equipped with ten factors summarised from the discussion he is well-restrained (susamvrta-śīlī). The ten factors are:

1. Disregard for past pleasures (atītesu-kāmesu-nirapeksatā)
2. Not delighting in future pleasures (anāgatesu-kāmesu-anabhinandatā)
3. Delight in living in solitude (praviveka-vāsābhirati)
4. Purity of speech and thought (vāg-vitarka-pariśodhanatā)
5. Non-degradation of the self (ātmanah-aparibhavanatā)
6. Gentleness (sauratya)
7. Patience (ksānti)
8. Heedfulness (apramāda)
9. Purity of conduct (ācāra-viśuddhi)
10. Purity of livelihood (jīva-viśuddhi)

(b) **Morality as the Pursuit of the Good** (kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla)

This is defined as : 'Whatever good (kuśalam) a bodhisattva accumulates (ācinoti) by body or speech towards the great awakening (mahabodhāya) after having taken up the morality of restraint' [139.1-3]. A bodhisattva who has established his morality through the practice of saṃvara-śīla bases himself upon it and makes efforts in learning (śrute), contemplation (cintāyām), in calming meditation (śamatha) and in insight-meditation (vipaśyanā). Apart from meditation there are numerous ways in which the bodhisattva accumulates what is good in this respect. He treats and serves his preceptor respectfully and attends the sick with compassion. As regards society at large he congratulates any well-said thing and pleases others when he speaks. He forgives others every transgression, always makes the proper resolutions (samyak-praṇidhāna) and pays respect to the three jewels. He is zealous and always resolved towards what is good (kuśala-pakṣe).

He is vigilant (apramāda) in body and speech and guards the

śikṣāpadas by mindfulness (smṛti), conscientiousness (samprajanya) and conduct. He guards the doors of the senses, knows moderation in eating, stays awake in the early and later parts of the night, serves virtuous persons (satpuruṣa-sevī) and relies on his spiritual friends (kalyāṇa-mitra-samniśritah). He looks out for his own faults and rectifies them by confessing his transgressions (atyaya). In short, the effect of kuśala-dharma-saṁgrāhaka-śīla is the accumulation, preservation and increase of good qualities (dharmas) of the kind outlined above.

The bodhisattva who conducts himself in this way does not consider bodily pleasures and takes no delight in immorality and the kleśas and upakleśas such as anger and hatred. He is said to know five things as they really are: (i) the advantage of the result of good (kuśala-phala-anuśamsa); (ii) the cause of good (kuśala-hetu); (iii) the cause and result of good (kuśala-hetu-phala); (iv) error and non-error (viparyāsa __ aviparyāsa) ; (v) the obstacles to the acquisition of what is good (kuśala-saṁgrahāya ca antarāya). By basing his efforts on these five factors and relying on the Pāramitās the bodhisattva quickly acquires what is good (kṣipram eva kuśala-saṁgrāho bhavati).

(c) **Morality as Altruism (sattva-artha-kriyā-śīla)**

This third and most important category goes by two names, being alternatively referred to as 'the morality which shows favour to beings' (sattvānugrāhakaṁ śīlam). Both appellations

convey quite clearly the function of this category, which is subdivided into 11 sections or varieties (ākāra) to be acquired one by one.

1) Taking part in the various beneficial activities of beings (sattva-kṛtyeṣu arthopasamhiteṣu vicitreṣu sahāyī-bhāvaḥ). This covers a multitude of activities, such as accompanying beings along the road (adhva-gamanāgamane), thinking and reflecting on what is to be done, and sharing in meritorious actions and misfortunes.

2) Taking care of the sick. As well as physical disabilities psychological disorders are also to be taken into account. The bodhisattva leads the blind and communicates to the deaf by sign-language (hasta-samvācīkayā). He carries along those without limbs. For those less seriously afflicted he removes the torment of lustful desires (kāma-cchanda³) and the other vices. He gives aid to travellers by offering them a seat and massaging their limbs (aṅga-prapīdanena).

3) Appropriate teachings (nyāya-upadeśa) in secular and sacred matters (laukika-lokottareṣu artheṣu). Here the bodhisattva instructs beings in a suitable way so that they will abandon evil conduct. He tries to instil faith and right views into those who have fallen by the wayside so that they may eventually transcend all suffering.

4) Being grateful for past services and undertaking appropriate service in return. This involves remembrance of those who have previously rendered service by treating such persons courteously. He offers help even when it is not requested, dispels the sorrow of evil and provides support.

5) Protecting beings from the diverse causes of fear. The

bodhisattva makes himself the protector (āraṃsaka) of beings against such manifold perils as wild animals, whirlpools, kings, thieves, opponents and inhuman demons.

6) Dispelling the grief in troubles (vyasana) of a domestic nature involving possessions (bhoga) and relatives (jñāti).

7) Providing the means of subsistence (upakarana) to those who are without them.

8) Attracting a following (gaṇa-parikarṣaṇa) through the morality of attraction (parigrāha-śīlena). The bodhisattva gathers a flock around him and provides his followers with the equipment of the religious life, namely a robe, an almsbowl, a bed and medicines for the sick. He also provides them with religious teachings.

9) The morality of being in sympathy with beings (cittānuvartana-śīla). Being in sympathy with beings the bodhisattva knows their thoughts and natures. This enables him to behave appropriately in the presence of difficult beings. He greets and addresses others even if they do not speak to him. He does not become angry with others and has no desire to reproach them, although he may censure them out of his compassion for them. He does not mock or ridicule others. In general, he constantly considers the condition and state of mind of others by being in sympathy with them.

10) The morality of collecting good qualities (bhūta-guṇa-samharana-śīla). Here a bodhisattva gladdens others by discoursing with them on the virtues of morality (śīla), faith (śraddhā), renunciation (tyāga) and wisdom (prajñā). He also rebukes (avasādayati) beings who transgress but with a mind that is affectionate and unfailing in concern. He acts

from sympathy (anukampā) and for the good (hita) of beings.

11) The use of magic powers (rddhi-bala) for the propagation of the faith (buddhaśāsana-avatārāya). The motives of the bodhisattva here are to shock (uttrāsayitu-kāmaḥ) and convert (āvarjayitu-kāmaḥ) beings. To do this he makes visible the evil destinies (apāyān) of beings of evil conduct, revealing the horrors of the many different hells. As a result of this the spectators desist from their evil ways. In addition he conjures up (abhiniirmimīya) a great bodhisattva such as Vajrapāṇi or a huge and powerful demon (yakṣa) in order to discipline irreverent people in the assembly. He also brings them under control through a display of magic powers such as creating many forms of himself and passing through solid objects like walls and mountains.

By performing miracles such as these he is able to win over, gratify and gladden his audience. The onlookers in turn develop those virtues which they previously lacked and enter into the fulness of morality (śīlasampadi).

It is clear from the Bo.bhū that in the Mahāyāna śīla has three functions or aspects: (a) temperance, continence, restraint and self-control (saṃvara); (b) a subjective personal moral perfection linked to intellectual cultivation in the quest for enlightenment; (c) an objective recipient-orientated dimension which embraces the needs of others. It is principally the addition of the third factor which raises the Mahāyāna moral edifice over the head of its predecessor and allows it to claim superiority in scope (prabheda-

viśesa).

One result of this shift in the centre of gravity in Buddhist ethics was the drawing up of a new Rule or code of conduct for bodhisattvas. The Bo.bhū sets out a code consisting of 52 rules (śikṣāpadas) in the form of a 'bodhisattva-piṭaka' which is arranged in four sections as follows:-

A. 4 PĀRĀJAYIKA-STHĀNĪYĀ-DHARMĀ

Prohibited

1. Self-vaunting (ātmodkarsanā) and reviling others (parapamsanā) by one who is eager for gain and worldly honours' (lābha-satkāra).
2. Not sharing possessions (dharma) and not distributing one's goods (āmiṣa) because of selfishness (mātsaryāt).
3. Reacting angrily and striking others.
4. Abusing the bodhisattva-piṭaka (i.e. the present text) and establishing false doctrines.

B.

Prohibited

1. Failure to perform some daily act of reverence towards the three jewels.
2. Toleration of the discontent (asamtusti) produced by the desire for wealth and honour (lābha-satkāra).
3. Disrespect towards a senior monk
4. Refusing an invitation to a home or to a monastery.
5. Rejecting valuable offerings such as gold, silver and jewels.
6. Refusing to teach the dharma to those who request it.
7. Inciting immoral beings to evil.
8. Observing the pratiksepana-sāvadya of the Śrāvakas in the face of the conflicting needs of others. The three pratiksepana-sāvadya are:
 - i) desiring little (alpārthatā)
 - ii) being free from responsibilities (alpakṛtyatā)
 - iii) being free from cares (alpotsuka-vihārātā).

C.

The following are permitted:

1. (a) Taking the life of someone about to commit an act entailing immediate retribution (ānantarya-karma) in order to prevent them suffering the evil consequences of that act.
(b) Causing a cruel ruler to fall from his position of authority
2. (a) Repossessing property taken from the Samgha or a stūpa
(b) causing monks who abuse their positions of authority to lose their rank.
3. Having sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman in order to prevent her producing thoughts of hostility if her advances are rejected.
4. Telling a lie in order to save the lives of beings or to save them from bondage and mutilation.
5. Separating beings from evil friends and bad company.
6. Using harsh speech to discourage beings from evil.
7. Indulging in singing, dancing and idle chatter to convert beings who are attracted by these things.

D.

Prohibited

1. Having recourse to the 5 false means of livelihood for a monk, namely:
 - i) obtaining alms by hypocrisy (kuhanā)
 - ii) boasting of religious qualities (lapanā)
 - iii) hinting at something desired as a donation (naimittikatā)
 - iv) getting something by means of threats (naispesikatā)
 - v) getting a gift by referring to a similar gift received from others (lābhena lābham niścikīrsutā).
2. Being excitable (avyupaśāntā), laughing, sporting and making a row (saṃkilikilāyate) in the company of others.
3. Teaching that a bodhisattva should not strive for nirvāṇa and should not be frightened by the kleśas and upakleśas.
4. Paying no heed to well-founded words of rebuke (apaśabda).
5. Failing to serve the interests of other beings in order to avoid unpleasantness.
6. Returning abuse with abuse, anger with anger, blows with blows, or quarrels with quarrels.
7. Failing to make amends to others after transgressing against them.
8. Refusing an offer of appeasement by others.
9. Nursing a grudge (krodhāśaya) against others.
10. Gathering a following with the desire to be served and to obtain material benefit.
11. Sleeping too much.

12. Being excitable (samrakta-citta) and spending time in groups.
13. Failing to seek proper instruction in mental discipline.
14. Failing to counteract lustful desires (kāma-cchandas)
15. Being excessively devoted to trance.
16. Claiming that a bodhisattva should not listen to the teachings of the Śrāvakayāna.
17. Not exerting oneself in the bodhisattva-pitaka and instead exerting oneself in the Śrāvakayāna or in the teachings of the heretics (tīrthika-sāstresu).
18. Being content and pleased in following the teachings of the heretics.
19. Abusing the bodhisattva-pitaka
20. Exalting oneself and criticising others in public.
21. Failing to attend the settling of a discussion (sāmkathya-viniścaya) relating to the dharma.
22. Ridiculing or injuring a preacher of the dharma (dharma-bhāṇaka)
23. Failing to act as a companion to beings in their activities.
24. Failing to nurse a being who is sick.
25. Failing to teach right conduct to beings engaged in wrongful conduct.
26. Not being mindful of what is done for one (akrtajña)
27. Failing to counteract the sorrow of beings due to domestic calamities (jñāti-bhoga-vyasana)
28. Failing to provide the necessities of life to those who request them.
29. Failing to teach and admonish an assembly after establishing one and failing to beg for the equipment of a monk (pariṣkāra).
30. Failing to consider the needs of others.
31. Failing to extol the virtues and good qualities of others and not applauding things which are well said.
32. Failing to censure, punish or expel those who have transgressed.
33. Failing to use magical powers to astonish and convert beings.

This marks the end of the list of śikṣāpadas. The final 11 above are items also included under the heading of Sattva-artha-kriyā-śīla. The breakdown of the list of śikṣāpadas, in which only the first category is given a title, is as follows:

- A. 4 Pārājayika-sthānīyā-dharmā
- B. 8
- C. 7
- D. 33

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The Śīlapaṭala of the Bo.bhū presents itself as the alternative code of conduct for a bodhisattva in contrast to the Vinaya and Pātimokkha of the Śrāvakayāna. We will consider the degree of overlap briefly below and more fully in the following sections. The single most striking feature in the whole chapter is the group of seven injunctions (group C above) which explicitly authorise the breaking of the precepts in certain circumstances.⁹ The bodhisattva is said to commit these offences 'by way of skill-in-means' (upāya-kausālena), and the whole notion of premeditated transgression by a bodhisattva is closely tied up with the notion of upāya. This interrelation will be considered more fully in section (iv) below.

For the moment let us return to the text of the Bo.bhū and compare it with its counterpart in the Small Vehicle, namely the Pātimokkha. In the first place the number and division of the rules are different. The Pātimokkha of the Theravāda contains 227 rules divided up into eight sections whereas in the Bo.bhū the list is much shorter, and the only category common to both is the four Pārājikā or Pārājayika-sthānīyā-

dharmā. This is the category which contains the most serious offences for the Theravāda. Let us place the two groups side by side and see how they compare:

PĀTIMOKKHA

BODHISATTVABHŪMI

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. sexual relations | 1a. self-vaunting |
| 2. taking what is not given | 2a. not sharing one's possessions |
| 3. Taking human life | 3a. Causing injury |
| 4. Claiming superhuman powers | 4a. Abusing the <u>bodhisattva-pitaka</u> or causing schisms. |

Obviously item 1a must be different or else it would contradict the later authorisation of sexual intercourse in certain circumstances (C.3). Item 2a is a kind of mirror-image of 2 in that holding on to one's own possessions deprives others of them just as much as removing them from another's possession. 3a and 3 are almost identical, but again taking life is authorised in the Bo.bhū. The fourth items both relate to practices which are likely to cause disturbances in a monastic community.

The remaining 48 rules of the Bodhisattva-pitaka bear only the most superficial resemblance to the other 223 rules of the Pātimokkha. The long list of rules relating to robes, deportment and etiquette (the 75 Sekhiyā dhammā) which occur in the latter are omitted. Another noteworthy difference between the two codes is the provision for exoneration in the Bo.bhū. Three categories of seriousness are distinguished

with allowance made for extenuating circumstances. There are five possibilities in all:

(1) The breaking of a śikṣāpada with no extenuating circumstances. This results in a 'serious offence' (kliṣṭa āpatti).

(2) If the offence is due to idleness or sloth (ālasya-kausīdya) the offender is guilty of a 'non-serious offence' (akliṣṭa āpatti).

(3) There is no offence (anāpatti) for one who is sick (glāna) or whose balance of mind is disturbed (ksipta-citta).

(4) There is no offence if the bodhisattva performed the prohibited act specifically to subdue and discipline beings and to remove them from what is bad and establish them in what is good.

(5) There is no offence if one is obeying a decision of the Saṅgha.

In the Pātimokkha there are three general exonerating conditions, namely if the offence was committed (i) unintentionally (asañcicca); (ii) in circumstances of diminished responsibility (unmattaka); or (iii) by a first-doer (ādikammika) [e.g. Vin .3.78]

It should not be thought that the Bodhisattva-piṭaka was adopted as a normative code of religious conduct in Mahāyāna countries. On the contrary; in Tibet the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya was followed and in China the Brahmajālasūtra,¹⁰ both of which insist upon strict compliance with traditional disciplinary norms. In China the 'Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣa' (Yu

Chia Chieh Pen) enjoyed considerable prestige up to the time of the T'ang dynasty when it was eclipsed by the popularity of the Brahmajālasūtra (Fan Wan Ching) which acknowledges more explicitly the virtue of filial piety. It must also be borne in mind that only the latest of the four Chinese translations (that of the T'ang dynasty) includes the category of permitted offences. The ordinances of the Brahmajālasūtra are summarised in Table 11, and a concordance of its provisions and those of the Bo.bhū will be found in Table 111.

In this section we have seen in what respects the Mahāyāna considers its ethical horizons to be wider than those of the Small Vehicle. We have also looked at a new code of conduct drawn up on the basis of its altruistic inspirations. In the following section we will consider how the Mahāyāna considers itself superior to the the Hīnayāna in respect of rules and observances which both adhere to.

TABLE II

The Rules of Discipline of the Brahmajālasūtra

The Ten Prātimokṣas

1. Taking or failing to protect life
2. Stealing
3. Sexual relations
4. Lying
5. Commerce in alcohol
6. Speaking about the offences of laymen, monks or nuns
7. Self-vaunting and denigrating others
8. Avarice
9. Showing aversion and refusing apologies
10. Speaking ill of the Triratna

The 48 Secondary Offences

11. Failing to salute and greet a co-religionist
12. Taking alcohol
13. Eating meat
14. Eating garlic and onions
15. Failing to exhort a sinner to repentance
16. Failing to attend to the needs of a visiting teacher and failing to ask for the Dharma
17. Not attending a recitation of the Dharma
18. Rejecting the sūtras and vinaya of the Mahāyāna and turning instead to inferior and heretical ones
19. Not taking care of the sick
20. Possessing weapons
21. Acting as a messenger in affairs of state or military affairs
22. Dealing in slaves and other prohibited trades
23. Calumny
24. Arson
25. Instructing heretics
26. Unmethodical teaching of the Dharma
27. Misuse of one's influence with those in authority
28. Teaching without understanding
29. Quarrelling or gossiping
30. Failure to protect living beings
31. Returning aversion with aversion or blows with blows
32. Failure to ask for instruction out of laziness or pride
33. Failure to give teaching out of laziness or pride
34. Devoting oneself to false teachings while the true teaching of the Mahāyāna is available
35. Failure to carry out monastic duties by one in a position of authority
36. Failure to offer hospitality to visiting monks
37. Acceptance of invitations by individual monks rather than by the whole Samgha

38. Acceptance of invitations out of turn
39. Wrong livelihood, such as divination
40. Leading the lay community into wrongful action
41. Neglecting to protect and guide those who do wrong
42. Trading in weapons or appropriating property
43. Watching battles, listening to music, and playing games of chance
44. Not being mindful of the rules of discipline and not holding fast to the Mahāyāna
45. Not making vows to perform good deeds
46. Failing to vow not to break the precepts
47.
 - i) Not carrying the 18 items of equipment when travelling
 - ii) Not reciting the 58 rules on Uposatha days
 - iii) Travelling at prohibited times of the year
48. Not observing the monastic hierarchy calculated according to length of time in the Order
49. Not applying oneself to the good of others, especially in times of difficulty
50. Showing preference or discrimination in the admission of novices
51. Giving wrong teachings out of a desire for gain or honour
52. Preaching to non-believers or heretics for gain
53. Having a desire to violate the rules of the Order
54. Failing to make copies of the sūtras and vinaya
55. Failing to convert beings
56. Preaching in an incorrect manner
57. The passing of restrictive laws by the secular authorities against the interests of the Samgha
58. Speaking against the Dharma

TABLE III

**Concordance of Offences between the Brahmajālasūtra and the
Bodhisattvabhūmi**

<u>BRAHMAJĀLASŪTRA</u>	<u>REGULATION</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>BODHISATTVABHŪMI</u>
1. Taking life	1	C1a	Taking life (ALLOWED)
2. Stealing	2	C2a	Repossessing property (ALLOWED)
3. Sexual Relations	3	C3	Sexual Relations (ALLOWED)
5. Self-vaunting	7	A1/D20	Self-vaunting
6. Avarice	8	A2	Not sharing
7. Refusing to apologise	9	D8	Refusing to appease
8. Speaking ill of the <u>triratna</u>	10	A4/ D19	Abusing the <u>Bodhisattva-Pitaka</u>
9. Failure to greet	11	B3	Failure to greet
10. Not attending to a preacher	16	D22	Ignoring a preacher
11. Not attending a recitation	17	D21	Not attending the resolution of a disputed point
12. Rejecting a <u>sūtra</u> of the Mahāyāna	18	D17	Turning to the Śrāvakayāna
13. Not nursing the sick	19	D24	Not nursing the sick
14. Quarrel & gossip	29	D2	Making a row
15. Returning aversion with aversion	31	D6	Returning abuse with abuse
16. Not requesting teaching	32	D13	Failure to seek instruction
17. Failure to teach	33	B6	Refusing to teach
18. Heeding false teachings	34	D18	Heeding the Śrāvakayāna
19. Concerning invitations	37	B4	Concerning invitations
20. Wrong livelihood	39	D1	Wrong livelihood
21. Not guiding wrongdoers	41	D25	Not guiding wrongdoers
22. Not working for the good of others	49	D22 D24 D30	Failure to be a companion and nurse to the sick
23. Not making converts	55	D33	Not making converts
24. Speaking against the <u>Dharma</u>	58	B1	Not reverencing the <u>triratna</u>
25. Leading layfolk into evil	40	B7	Leading immoral beings into evil

(ii) Communal and non-communal rules

This second kind of superiority relates to the distinction between serious offences (prakṛtisāvadya) [=PS] and minor offences (pratikṣepaṇasāvadya) [=PKS]. According to this the morality of a bodhisattva is similar to that of a Śrāvaka in one respect but different in another. The similarity is that both are forbidden to commit serious or mortal sins [PS], and the difference is that the bodhisattva is allowed to commit venial or minor sins [PKS] while the Śrāvaka is not [M.Saṃgr VI.3].

Neither of these terms occur in Pali sources¹¹ although they are known to Vasubandhu [Bhāṣya IV.29ac]. Even in Mahāyāna sources there is no clear agreement as to the degree of discretion allowed to a bodhisattva in the commission of minor transgressions, and we find various formulations of the principle allowing different degrees of laxity in different areas. The serious offences [PS] are instanced in MSU VI.3 as 'murder (prāṇātipāta), theft (adattādāna), and illicit sexual relations (kāmamithyācāra) etc. which stem from passion (rāga)'. [42b.7-16] The complete list would probably relate to the five precepts although it could also relate to the Ten Paths of Action. Two examples of minor offences are also given namely cutting the grass (trṇachedana) and venturing out in the rainy season¹².

The principle is formally laid down here that a bodhisattva is allowed to commit minor offences. But in addition to being

released from a restriction he is also charged with an additional obligation which the Śrāvaka does not bear. What is wrongful for the Śrāvaka may not be wrongful for a bodhisattva, but the converse is also true and the bodhisattva now has a duty to commit a minor offence if the interest of beings is at stake. An example is given in the commentary: if a Śrāvaka goes out in the rainy season he commits an offence, but if a bodhisattva does not go out he may be guilty of an offence if the interests of beings required him to go forth.

A summary statement on what is permissible for a bodhisattva is given in the M.Samgr:

'In short (samāsatah), bodhisattvas can perform and carry out any bodily vocal or mental act (kāyavāgmanaskarman) favourable for beings (sattvopakāra) provided it is irreproachable (niravadya). This is how the superiority relating to communal and non-communal rules is to be understood' [M.Samgr:Vl.3].

The key phrase in the above statement is 'provided it is irreproachable'. The commentaries illustrate what this means, first of all with a paraphrase:

'This (niravadya) means any act which assures the welfare (hita) and happiness (sukha) of beings without thereby arousing the passions such as greed etc. (rāgādikleśa), either in oneself or in another. All these acts a bodhisattva may perform.' [MSU on Vl.3]

And second with an example:

'It may come about that while being favourable to beings an act may not be irreproachable: for example, having illicit relations with a woman belonging to another. To exclude this kind of act the author says 'provided it is irreproachable.' [MSB on Vl.3]

As far as the M.Samgr and its commentaries are concerned,

then, PS offences relate most probably to the Ten Bad Paths of action, and PKS offences to breaches of the 'lesser and minor' precepts of the Vinaya.

The Bo.bhū discusses the conduct of a bodhisattva with reference to the PKS offences and also provides examples of PS offences. First of all it states that a bodhisattva must observe the regulations which are categorised as PKS just as rigorously as the Śrāvakas, but then goes on to allow a certain amount of leeway, as in the M.Samgr. The relevant passage is quoted below:

'A bodhisattva practises the same discipline (śikṣā) as the Śrāvakas without any difference at all with respect to the minor offences [PKS] which have been established by the Lord in the Prātimokṣa [and] in the Vinaya, [but] on the basis of thinking of others (para-cittānuraksā), for the production of faith in those without it and for the increase of faith in those who [already] believe. Why is that? Because even the Śrāvakas, who put their own interest first (ātmārtha-paramāṇ) are not without concern for the protection of others, and they train in the śikṣās for the production of faith in those without it and the increase of faith in those who believe. How much more so the bodhisattvas who are devoted to the interests of others!' [164.19-165.1]

The text then goes on to mention the exceptions where a bodhisattva is concerned:

'But a bodhisattva does not practise the same śikṣā as the Śrāvakas in relation to the minor offences [PKS] concerned with desiring little (alpārthatā), being free from responsibilities (alpakṛtyatā) and free from cares (alpotsuka-vihāratā), which have been laid down by the Lord for the Śrāvakas. Why is that? Because it is fitting (śobhate) for a Śrāvaka, who puts his own interest first and is not concerned for the interests of others, to desire little, be free from responsibilities and free from cares as far as the interest of other people is concerned. But it is not fitting for a bodhisattva, who places the interests of others above all else, to desire little, be free from responsibilities and free from cares as far as the interest of other people is concerned.' [165.2-9]

The passage goes on to illustrate this by saying that a

bodhisattva should accumulate property and distribute it to others. He should collect hundreds and thousands of robes (cīvaraka), bowls and silken coverings and if he fails to do this and remains aloof like the Śrāvakas, then he offends against the 8th śikṣāpada of the Bodhisattva-pitaka and is guilty of a serious offence (kliṣṭam-āpattim). As far as the PS offences are concerned, and of which more later, the following are listed as falling into this category:

1. Taking life
2. Taking what is not given
3. Improper sexual conduct
4. Telling lies
5. Separating friends
6. Harsh speech
7. Singing, dancing and idle talk

The Kośa [1V.34cd] classifies the fifth precept as a minor offence [PKS], suggesting that the previous four precepts are serious offences [PS]. It also draws a distinction between things which are immoral (dauḥśīlya) and things which although not immoral in themselves have been prohibited by the Buddha (buddhena pratisiddha) [1V.122bc]. The example given of the latter is eating at the wrong time (vikālabhojana), the sixth of the ten precepts, from which it would seem that Vasubandhu regards PKS offences as breaches of the minor monastic rules.

Although there is no precise formulation in our sources as to which offences fall into which of the two categories there does seem to be a measure of agreement concerning the types of offences falling into each category. The serious offences [PS] are transgressions of what we might call the 'core

morality' of Buddhism seen in the Five Precepts. The minor offences [PKS] are transgressions of the 'lesser and minor' precepts which regulate monastic life. We might say that whereas PS offences are judged to be universally morally wrong, PKS offences are local and specific transgressions of rules applying to a particular group, namely the Saṅgha.

In claiming superiority in communal and non-communal rules, the Mahāyāna is pointing to its flexibility in respect of PKS offences in contrast to what it must have regarded as excessive legalism on the part of the Small Vehicle. The shift in priorities from a personal quest for salvation to concern for the needs of others meant that in certain circumstances conflict would arise between the monastic lifestyle and the need for action in the world. The Mahāyāna allowed monks a limited degree of flexibility in these situations subject to the twofold stipulation that (i) the act should benefit others; and (ii) it should be performed from an irreproachable (niravadya) motive. Care is taken specifically to exclude from this provision acts of a grave or serious nature, and there is no suggestion that a breach of the fundamental moral precepts would be countenanced under any circumstances.

The further elaboration of the principle enunciated here is to be found in the notion of skilful means; this extends the proviso granted in respect of PKS offences to PS offences, and to this we shall turn in a moment.

(iii) Superiority in Breadth

The third kind of superiority claimed by the Mahāyāna is superiority in breadth or scope (vaipulya-viśeṣa). This is said to be fourfold:

1. Its multiple and extensive rules
(nānāpramāṇa-śikṣā-vaipulya)
2. The gain of immense merit
(apramāṇa-punya-parigraha-vaipulya)
3. The resolve to procure the welfare and happiness
of all beings (sarva-sattva-hitasukha-
kriyāśaya-parigraha-vaipulya)
4. The establishment of supreme and perfect
enlightenment (anuttara-samyaksambodhi-
niśraya-vaipulya)

As stated earlier this is merely a summary classification. The first three items may be seen as corresponding to saṃvara-śīla, kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla, and sattva-
artha-kriyā-śīla respectively, while the fourth describes their culmination in enlightenment. We may pass over this without further comment to the fourth and final distinguishing feature of Mahāyāna śīla.

(iv) Superiority in Depth

The final classification relates to the bodhisattva's skilful means (upāya-kauśalya). This is the single most important innovation of Mahāyāna ethics. Stated briefly, it authorises a bodhisattva to commit the ten kinds of evil action (daśa-akuśala-karmapatha), to gain immense merit thereby, and rapidly to attain supreme and perfect enlightenment. Furthermore, a bodhisattva may perform acts of deception and inflict suffering on beings if it leads them into discipline (vinaya). Obviously, this makes the PS versus PKS distinction redundant, since a bodhisattva is here given the authority to commit even the most serious offences. It must be borne in mind, however, that the discussion of the distinction between PS and PKS offences takes place solely under the rubric of communal and non-communal rules. By virtue of this a bodhisattva is authorised to commit minor offences. The licence to commit serious offences is only granted in this fourth section and is specifically associated with the notion of skilful means. The authority to transgress moral precepts is linked to the development of skill-in-means; if this faculty is not developed then a follower of the Mahāyāna is entitled to infringe only the minor regulations of the disciplinary code if the interest of others requires it. The Buddha himself had authorised the modification of these regulations [D.ii.154].

Mahāyāna sources allow varying degrees of latitude to a bodhisattva when performing his saving work. Yet not

infrequently, and paradoxically, these are often the same sources which elsewhere insist upon the strict observance of the precepts. Consider, for instance, BCA 1V.1:

'Thus a son of the Buddha firmly takes up the thought of enlightenment; henceforth he should strive unfailingly not to violate the precepts.'

Evam grhītvā sudṛḍham bodhicittam jinātmajah; śikṣānatikrame yatnam kuryāt nityam ātandritaḥ.

And compare this with V.84 of the same text:

'Having so understood, [a bodhisattva] should always be diligent in the interests of others. Compassionate, he should even commit a sin if he perceives this to be in the interests of others.'

Evam buddhvā parārtheṣu bhavet satatam utsthiṭaḥ; niṣiddhamapyanujñātam kṛpāloṇarthadarśinaḥ.

What is a bodhisattva to make of this conflicting advice?

Prajñākaramati's comment on the latter verse is as follows:

'Thus, having realised the highest truth, he should always be zealous in procuring the welfare and happiness of beings. And if someone should object, 'How can he avoid committing an offence (āpatti) while engaged in what is forbidden?' [the reply is that] the Lord has taught that what is forbidden may be performed by one who perceives with the eye of knowledge a special benefit for beings therein. And the teachings of the Lord bring about salvation.

But the foregoing [exemption] does not apply to everyone: only to [cases of] the exercise of compassion in its^y highest degree by one who is of a compassionate nature, who is without a selfish motive, solely concerned with the interests of others and totally dedicated to this [ideal]. In this way there is no offence for one who is engaged in the exercise of skilful means (upāya-kaśālya), who works for the interests of others with wisdom (prajñā) and compassion (karuṇā)'

Evam anuttaram jñātvā sattvānām hitasukhavidhānāya nityam ārabdha-vīryo bhavet/ pratiśiddhārthe pravṛttau katham na sāpattika iti cet/na/kva cinḥiṣiddham api sattvārtha-viśeṣam prajñācakṣuṣā paśyataḥ karaṇīyatayā anujñātam bhagavatā/ saniḥsaraṇam ca bhagavataḥ śāsanam/ taccāpi na sarvasya/ api tu kṛpāloṇ karuṇā-prakarṣappravṛttitayā tatparatantrasya parārthaikarasasya svaprayojanavimukhasya/ iti prajñākaruṇābhyām udbhūtaparārthavṛtter upāya-kuśālasya pravartamānasya nāpat-
tiḥ. [Pañjikā 138.16-139.6]

This is a key statement of the principle sanctioning a breach of the moral code in certain well-defined circumstances. For the moment I wish to consider further the way in which this 'permissive' attitude is revealed in Mahāyāna sources. I will then consider the evidence for the opposite 'hard line' position.

Other more loosely formulated expressions of the principle stated by Prajñākaramati above occur throughout the Mahāyāna. 'If he sees greater advantage for beings', says the Śikṣā [93.12], 'let him transgress the rule.' (atha tato'py adhikam sattvārtham paśyet, śikṣām nikṣipet). According to the Upāyakaśālyā-sūtra, quoting the Buddha:

'If a bodhisattva should produce a root of good in a single being and be guilty of a transgression which would send him to hell for 100,000 kalpas, then he should commit that offence and bear the pain of hell and not forsake the good of that single being.' [Śikṣā 93.20-22]

Bodhisattvas are encouraged to engage in sexual activity:

'They purposely become courtesans in order to attract men, and after baiting them with the hook of lust establish them in the Buddha-knowledge.'

Samcintya gaṇikā bhonti puṃsām ākarṣaṇāya te; rāgāṅkuraṃ ca samlobhya buddhajñāne sthāpayanti te. [Śikṣā 173.19f]

In the Sū.Sam the bodhisattva Māragocarānuliṭṭa creates magical duplicates of himself to satisfy two-hundred goddesses in the retinue of Māra since he perceives they are ripe for salvation [MCB 13:200]. A little later the Buddha explains that it is through the bodhisattva's magical power that he is able to do this, while all the time remaining in the state of sūramgamasamādhi [MCB 13:222].

The Śikṣā links the transgression of moral norms to the possession of perfect insight (prajñā):

'Even if, Kaśyapa, a being should be involved in these ten paths of evil action, yet if he accepts the Tathāgata's teaching on causation, if he recognises that there is no such thing as a self or a being or an animating principle (jīva) or a person (puṇḍra); and if he recognises that all dharmas are unmade, unproduced, of the nature of illusion (māyā) and non-defilement and pure by nature, and if he accepts that all dharmas are fundamentally pure, then I predict no evil destiny for that being.' [Śikṣā :96 7-12]

Here it is knowledge which absolves one from blame, yet at other times the scales tip towards compassion and acts which are motivated by attachment to others are said to be blameless. Rāga is elevated to a virtue and doṣa is the only vice, as we see in the Upāliparipṛcchā-sūtra:

'If, Upāli, a bodhisattva, a great being, who is established in the Mahāyāna, should commit offences due to attachment (rāga) as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and if he should commit just one offence out of aversion (dveṣa) by the standard of the bodhisattva-vehicle [...] that offence of aversion outweighs all the others. Why is that? It is because aversion, Upāli, leads to the abandonment of beings [whereas] rāga leads to their attraction (saṃgrahāya). Therefore there is neither danger nor fear for the bodhisattva in that vice (kleśa) which leads to the attraction of beings. [...] So I say to you, Upāli, that any offence due to attachment (rāga) is no offence at all. As the excellence of one who wins over beings has already been referred to, the present instruction refers to one whose intentions are compassionate.' [Śikṣā 92 4-10]

The same passage is also quoted in the Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣa-Sūtra [Dutt 1931:283f] which indicates the popularity of the principle it enshrines. And the Śikṣā expresses the principle more concisely in a slightly later passage:

'And so in cases where there is advantage for beings, an

offence arising from attachment (rāga) is declared to be no offence' (evam/anyasmiṃ sattvārthopāye sati rāgajā āpattiḥ/anāpattiḥ/uktā.) [Śikṣā 94.9]

Here the emphasis is upon a close emotional relationship with others and there is no reference to a doctrine of absolution through prajñā.

It will be seen from these examples that the freedom allowed to a bodhisattva is enormous and a wide spectrum of activities are permitted to him, from going out in the rainy season to depriving a being of life. We have seen that the Bo.bhū authorises the latter (C.1) and the bodhisattva even derives great merit from the deed (bahu ca puṇyam prasūyate). When actions of these kinds are performed there are usually two provisos which must be satisfied: (i) that the prohibited action will conduce to the greater good of those beings directly affected by it; and (ii) that the action is performed on the basis of perfect knowledge (prajñā) or perfect compassion (karuṇā). In the case of perfect knowledge the rationale seems to be that from the point of view of ultimate truth there is no such thing as a rule or a being; and in the second case from the standpoint of relative truth the interests of others are all-important and must be furthered whatever the cost to oneself.

Yet despite this apparent relaxation of the rules there is a countervailing insistence in Mahāyāna literature upon the strict observance of the precepts. Sometimes, as noted above, both attitudes are found within the same text and a bodhisattva is encouraged both to be vigilant in preserving

the precepts at all costs and yet to break them whenever he sees an advantage in doing so. The need for vigilance in the precepts is explained by the BCA: it is not that the bodhisattva himself will perish but that his lack of exertion in keeping to the rules will cause him to fail the others whom he has vowed to save:

'And this is why any failing by the bodhisattva is extremely serious: by his failing he places the welfare of all beings in jeopardy.

Bodhisattvasya tenaivam sarvāpattir garīyasī, yasmād āpadyamāno'sau sarva_sattvārthahānikṛt [1V.8].

By virtue of his vow the bodhisattva has a responsibility towards other beings and the worst thing he can do is fail in his responsibility towards them. The fact of his own transgression is only of incidental importance: the really serious matter is the consequence and repercussions of his failing upon others. The duty of a bodhisattva is to all beings, so the seriousness of his failing is multiplied accordingly. This is emphasised in verse 10:

'One is doomed by destroying even the welfare of a single being: what, then, [of doing the same] to all those beings who dwell in the immensity of space?'

Ekasyāpi hi sattvasya hitam hatvā hato bhavet; aśeṣākāśaparyantavāsinām kimu dehinām.

Such is the reasoning which leads a bodhisattva to avoid scrupulously even the most minor transgressions - namely that there is no such thing as a minor transgression when the context of his field of activity is seen as infinite. To avoid potentially catastrophic consequences a bodhisattva must be ever vigilant in the perfection of morality.

Moreover, a bodhisattva cannot himself attain enlightenment by merely developing bodhicitta, but must also practise the bodhisattva-saṃvaras and śikṣās laid down by the Buddha [BCA:91ff]. Nor should a bodhisattva dissuade others from the observance of the Prātimokṣa claiming that simply to read the Mahāyāna sūtras is sufficient [Śikṣā:38.5-8; BCA:146f].

The BJS insists upon the scrupulous observance of all its injunctions. If any of the the Prātimokṣas are transgressed the consequences are severe: all good qualities are lost along with the ten stages of perfection (bhūmi), and rebirth will occur in one of the three inferior realms where the offender will not hear of the triratna for two or three kalpas. The Prātimokṣas are not to be transgressed even to the extent of a grain of dust [p.39].

Other statements of the hard-line position occur in various Mahāyāna sources. The Ratnāvalī advises: 'For your own sake always speak the truth, even if it should cause your death or ruin your kingdom; do not speak in any other way.' [v.274] This sentiment is echoed by sGam-po-pa who counsels us 'to keep to the truth and never willingly tell a lie not even for the sake of our life.' [Jewel:145]

In some aspects the Rule of the Mahāyāna was even more severe than that of the Hīnayāna. Meat eating, for instance, only frowned upon by the latter, was prohibited outright by the former. The Laṅkā argues strongly in favour of vegetarianism, regarding it as a way of life more suitable for a bodhisattva

[244ff].¹³ In other aspects the discipline of the monks of the Mahāyāna was no less rigorous than that of their Hīnayāna brethren. A comment of I Tsing's, who was greatly interested in matters of Vinaya, reveals how seriously conformity to monastic discipline was taken in China:

'The homeless mendicants should strictly confine themselves to the rules of the Vinaya. If they are not guilty of transgressing them they are acting in conformity with the sūtra. If there be any transgression of the precepts their obedience is at fault. As priests, they should not even destroy one stalk of grass, though the temple be covered with it. They should not even steal a grain of rice, though they be starving in a lonely field. [Record:195]

According to I. Tsing the Mahāyāna had no Vinaya of its own and shared that of the Hīnayāna. It seems there was considerable interest in the study of the Vinaya in China, perhaps even too much if we are to give credence to his lament:

'In China the schools of the Vinayadharas are also prejudiced, and lecturers and commentators have produced too many remarks on the subject [...]. Consequently one's aspiration (after the knowledge of the Vinaya) is baffled at the beginning, and one's attention flags after attending to but one lecture. Even men of the highest talent can only succeed in the study after becoming grey-haired, while men of medium or little ability cannot accomplish their work even when their hair has turned perfectly white.' [ibid:15f]

So far we have seen that the Mahāyāna on the one hand accords the precepts only a token and provisional status, but on the other displays an almost obsessive rule-worship which equals or exceeds the legalism it condemns in the Hīnayāna. What is to be made of its puzzling and paradoxical statements and injunctions? The sanctioning of transgressions is closely bound up with the complex notion of 'skilful means' (upāya-

kaśālyā), and to unravel the complex notion of upāya it will be helpful to distinguish two principal meanings of the term. First of all, as we saw when discussing the Perfections, upāya stands for the cultivation of moral qualities as encompassed in the first five Perfections. In this sense upāya and prajñā go together very much like sīla and paññā, and upāya and sīla cover roughly the same ground. Upāya here refers to normative ethics, and we may refer to this as upāya₁.

The second sense of upāya, which we may call upāya₂, is not the possession of the common man, but is the property of those who are already perfect in ethics and insight; it is the upāya of bodhisattvas of the seventh stage (upāya-kaśālyā-bhūmi) and beyond, whose powers and perfections are supernatural. Upāya₂ is the province of the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas (Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas) and it is only they who have the knowledge and power to use it. It is by virtue of upāya₂ that bodhisattvas transgress the precepts from motives of compassion and are said to do no wrong.

The two aspects of upāya distinguished above govern firstly a bodhisattva's own personal development and perfection and secondly his relationship to others as a harbinger of salvation. The Bo.bhū distinguishes two aspects of upāya along similar lines;¹⁴ these are internal (adhyātma) and external (bahirdhā), and each has six divisions as follows:

INTERNAL

1. Directed towards the acquisition of all Buddha-dharmas
2. Compassionate concern for all beings
3. Perfect knowledge of all conditioned things
4. Desire for that knowledge which is unexcelled enlightenment
5. An undefiled passage through samsāra
6. Zeal in the desire for the Buddha-knowledge

EXTERNAL

1. From the small good roots of beings a bodhisattva produces great results
2. He causes immense good roots with little effort
3. He removes obstacles which keep beings away from the Buddha's teachings
4. He makes those who are only halfway cross over
5. He ripens those who have already crossed
6. He delivers those who are already ripened.

According to this scheme a bodhisattva first of all perfects himself and then radiates his perfection towards others. Part of his perfection is from the start a concern for others, yet he is able to display this more fully and effectively once he has achieved perfection himself. According to the MSA the value of the Perfections is twofold: firstly to purify the performer and secondly to ripen other beings by attracting them to the faith [XVl.13]. After a bodhisattva has perfected his moral conduct he continues to practise it not out of a desire for merit but to instruct other beings. The MPPS puts it as follows:

'But he does not aspire for any fruit from his morality, which he could enjoy in Samsāra, and it is only for the purpose of protecting and maturing beings that he courses in the perfection of morality' [tr.Conze p.535].

While a bodhisattva is engaged in the process of self-cultivation through the pāramitās he is concerned only with upāya₁, and only after he has achieved the perfection of wisdom and means does the possibility of upāya₂ arise. Upāya₁ is concerned with normative ethics but upāya₂ is not.

As far as upāya₁ is concerned, we have seen that the Mahāyāna allows bodhisattvas-in-training a slight degree of latitude in respect of PKS offences. This does not amount to a slackening in discipline and there is even evidence that the Mahāyāna became stricter in its discipline than the Hīnayāna. Upāya₁ does not enjoin laxity in moral practice but rather the greater recognition of the needs and interests of others. One's moral practice is now for the benefit of oneself and others by means of example. Through its emphasis on karuṇā the Mahāyāna gave full recognition to the value of ethical perfection, making it explicit that ethics and insight were of equal importance for a bodhisattva. Upāya₁, then, constitutes the acceptance by the Mahāyāna of the binary nature of final perfection which it felt the Hīnayāna had failed to recognise or emphasise sufficiently.

Turning to upāya₂, we submit that this is the provenance of the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas and does not concern normative ethical conduct. The great bodhisattvas are

embodiments of supreme value, and in their compassion-inspired antinomian conduct we see a symbolic statement of the importance attached by the Mahāyāna to concern for others. In the doctrine of upāya₂ this is elevated to the status of a supreme principle which overrides all other considerations. In order to make clear that upāya₂ is not a doctrine for universal consumption or application, its practice is linked to the advanced stage of the seventh bhūmi. By the seventh bhūmi, bodhisattvas are perfect in the two divisions of the first six Perfections, namely ethics and insight. In a sense the final four Perfections are a recapitulation of the first six, since once again we see the bodhisattva demonstrating ethical perfection (upāya) in conjunction with perfect knowledge (jñāna). We may go so far as to aggregate stages seven (upāya), eight (prañidhāna) and nine (bala) to the sphere of ethics and contrast these with the tenth stage which concerns knowledge (jñāna). Thus the binary division within the first six perfections is imaged within the additional group of the latter four.

After reaching the dual perfection implicit in the first six Perfections the bodhisattva has reached the upper limits of human perfectibility. In Pāramitās seven to ten he stands upon the threshold of the transcendent, and at this point the Great Bodhisattvas symbolise the supreme ideals of Wisdom (prajñā) and Compassion (karuṇā). We see both these values epitomised in the two great Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna tradition: Mañjuśrī as perfect wisdom and Avalokiteśvara as perfect compassion. Most commonly in the Mahāyāna, Wisdom and

Compassion are invoked together, but at other times henotheistically with the result that either one or the other is lauded as the supreme good. In this respect Dayal detects a shift with the passage of time:

'In the early Mahāyāna, Wisdom and Mercy are regarded as equally important [...] In fact, Wisdom is considered to be somewhat more important than Mercy [...] The glorification of Wisdom reaches its climax in the Madhyamika school of philosophy [...] But the later Mahāyāna emphasises Mercy more than Wisdom [...] As the ideal gains ground, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara increases in importance till he becomes the supreme and unique bodhisattva. The Mahāyāna slowly passes from the ascendancy of Mañjuśrī to the reign of Avalokiteśvara [...] Karunā (mercy, pity, love, compassion) and its personified symbol, Avalokiteśvara, are all-in-all. This is the last word and the consummation of the Mahāyāna.' [1932:44ff]

In the doctrine of upāya₂ we see the scales tip in favour of karunā, which now operates without the checks and balances of rationally derived ethical principles which it would be the task of prajñā to elaborate. Prajñā, in fact, is pressed into the service of karunā through the identification of its content with sūnyatā, the emptiness of all phenomena. Given the universal absence of inherent existence postulated by the emptiness teachings of the Mahāyāna there is nothing to impede the activity of karunā, which is now allowed to exert itself without restriction. Upāya₂ then, is the outcome of the blending of karunā with a particular interpretation of the content of prajñā.

The doctrine of upāya₂ is a fusion of ethics and metaphysics. In terms of ethics the Mahāyāna wishes to emphasise the importance of karunā. In terms of metaphysics it wishes to draw attention to emptiness as the true mode of being of

phenomena. While the former emphasises moral values the latter, paradoxically, undermines them. The justification for the employment of upāya thus proceeds along the lines that the precepts cannot be broken since there is no such thing (ultimately) as a precept. This is the tack taken by Vimalakīrti in his encounter with Upāli [VKNS III.31-7] and it is a paradox which the Perfection of Wisdom literature and the Mahāyāna sūtras delight in exploiting. The doctrine of upāya₂ is an exploration of the perplexing relationship between ethics and metaphysics, or the spheres of relative and ultimate truth; symbolically the relationship is hypostatized in the paradoxical nature and activity of the Great Bodhisattvas who on the one hand have intuited the profound truth of the emptiness of all dharmas, yet on the other continue to display supreme moral concern for all beings.

But is the upāya₂-inspired behaviour of the moral heroes of the Mahāyāna to be taken as a model for imitation in everyday life? As I have interpreted the doctrine above it does not have direct normative implications of this kind, and my grounds for this belief are as follows:¹⁵

i) In Mahāyāna literature upāya₂ is invariably the province of the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas alone. Their actions are located in the domain of myth and symbol [Pye 1978:Ch.4], which alerts us to the fact that it is not to be taken as applicable in normal circumstances. It is never employed by the common man in a normative context.

ii) There is no evidence that upāya₂ was adopted as a basic

principle of ethics in Mahāyāna countries, and there is clear evidence that in the Far East at least it was not [Pye 1978:Ch.8]. That certain exceptional deeds in history were justified by appeal to the principle seems to be the exception rather than the rule. [5.(iii) infra]

iii) The Mahāyāna, as we have seen, continued to be rigorous in its observance of the basic precepts. There is no evidence that the basic principles of ethics were sacrificed to the situational demands of upāya. In many cases the Mahāyāna is stricter rather than laxer in its observances.

iv) The section of the Bodhisattva-piṭaka, which explicitly authorises breaking the precepts (section C), or dispensations like it, do not appear to have been incorporated into the disciplinary codes of Mahāyāna countries.

In sum, the upāya of the Great Bodhisattvas underlines the importance of ethics in human perfection. It is an overstatement of its importance as a reaction to the undervaluation of ethics by the Small Vehicle. The Mahāyāna emphasises the importance of concern for others to correct the imbalance between sīla and paññā which had occurred within the Small Vehicle and to restore the equilibrium in terms of prajñā and upāya.

SUMMARY

We may summarise the Mahāyāna ethical developments as follows:

1. The Mahāyāna was critical of the failure of the Small Vehicle to recognise the importance of ethics in soteriology.
2. It redressed this deficiency by emphasising that ethical perfection (upāya) involving concern for others (karuṇā) was of equal importance to insight (prajñā).
3. The Mahāyāna formulated an expanded tripartite conception of ethics embracing: a) self-restraint (saṃvara); (b) the pursuit of the good (kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla); and (c) concern for the welfare of others (sattva-artha-kriyā-śīla).
4. It allowed a degree of flexibility such that minor variations in monastic practice were permissible in circumstances where the needs of others demanded it.
5. The continued ascendancy of ethics and its relation to metaphysics were explored symbolically in the figures of the Great Bodhisattvas and their antinomian conduct (upāya₂). Such conduct is to be taken as metaphorical rather than practically didactic.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the theme of change and continuity in the soteriological role of ethics in the Great Vehicle. We have seen that the Mahāyāna describes itself as ethically superior to the Hīnayāna in four ways and we have explored each of these in turn. We now have sufficient data on śīla from sources internal to the tradition to support the thesis concerning the soteriological role of ethics outlined so far. In the following chapters we assess our findings in the light of Western theories of ethics in an attempt to characterise the overall structure of the Buddhist ethical system.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. On these 10 Perfections see B.C.Law [1934-5.1.p.689]; Vism 1X.124.
2. For further listings see: Su.Sam:26-38; VKNS 1.3; MSA Ch.16.v.14; VMTS pp.620-638 (tr.Poussin). On the Pāramitās in general see Dayal [1932:Ch.V]
3. MSA:100.11ff. The same division is followed by sGam-po-pa [Jewel 1970:148]
4. Sometimes the 'Thought of Enlightenment' (bodhicitta) is included as a third factor e.g. M.Av 1.1. According to M.Av 1.2 compassion (karuṇā) is the seed of Buddhahood since it provides the motivation to gain enlightenment for the benefit of others.
5. Cf. Jewel pp.149,170f; Laṅk 119 3-5; Suhrll v.11; Aṣṭa p.71; M.Saṃgr iv.7; Śīlaparikathā v.11.
6. MSA tr. Lévi p.190f.v37; BPMS tr. Dutt [1931:269]; Hōbōgirin 'Bosatsukai' (listing many Chinese sources); Dayal 1978:196 n.203; M.Saṃgr VI.2-6; 1V.9.
7. 'Bosatsukai' p.142.
8. Four translations of this 'Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣa', as it became known, were made into Chinese, of which Hsuan-Tsang's T'ang version, the P'u Sa Chieh Pen (also known as the Yu Chia Chieh Pen) seems closest to the present text. The other three versions omit the exoneration in respect of serious offences discussed infra. See EB 'Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣa'.
9. Cf. Śikṣā 168
10. T.1484 translated by Kumārajīva in 406. According to the Hōbōgirin this 'has remained in China the most popular work on the Discipline of the Large Vehicle down to the present day.' ['Bosatsukai' p. 146].
11. The phrase 'pakatam pāpam' occurs in Pali [PTC III.1.p.3] in the sense of a 'wicked deed' with no special technical meaning. It refers to such actions as stealing, showing disrespect to a thūpa, etc.
12. It will be recalled from Chapter One that damage to plants and vegetation is prohibited by the Pātimokkha, e.g. Pācittiya 11 and Sekhiya 74.
13. See Śikṣā 144.14; 131.13; Poussin [1929:63f]; Ruegg [1980:234-41]; Kapleau [1983:passim].

14. Bo.bhū 261-272. The divisions are enumerated incorrectly by Lamotte [VKNS p.19n.68].

15. In the following chapter [V.(iii)] I consider the alternative possibility.

CHAPTER FIVE

'The ultimate end [...] is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain [...] secured to all mankind [...] and [...] to the whole sentient creation.'

J.S.Mill

'I teach only suffering and the end of suffering'

The Buddha

'Woe to those who creep through the serpent-windings of Utilitarianism.'

Immanuel Kant

I now wish to place the scheme of Buddhist ethics described thus far in the context of Western ethical theory and see if a useful analogue may be found to further our understanding of the Buddhist ethical enterprise. There is a need for caution in imposing the classifications of one religious system on another, as David Snellgrove has pointed out [1956]. Michael Pye also warns that 'there is admittedly a problem about the correlation of Mahāyānist ethics and western approaches to ethics' [1978:14]. Neither of these writers makes any attempt to offer a theoretical interpretation of Buddhist ethics, and while there is undoubtedly a need for caution we must at some point make a tentative venture into the field. At the present time, as pointed out in the Introduction, there is little in the way of existing research to rely on and our conclusions will of necessity be provisional. Nevertheless, the progress of

future research will be considerably assisted if we are able to elucidate a general pattern, scheme or framework within which Buddhist ethics may be located. In his 1978 sketch of Mahāyāna ethics Hindery speculated as to what its general ethos might be:

'There are enough references to precepts, virtues, and moral models to suggest that MB [= Mahāyāna Buddhism] involves a moral perspective not merely as a worldview, but directly as a system. In either case ongoing research may uncover the phenomenon that MB morality contains no precepts and values which cannot be found in alternate or even stronger forms in other major ethical traditions. On the other hand, it may more profoundly realise that a new moral gestalt or ethos ensouls this ethics with a unique and still unappreciated dynamic, one symbolised by bodhisattvas, who go on living for others and surrender not to death, and by savior Buddhas with extended hands' [1978:248].

In this Chapter and the next we explore these possibilities, and consider two Western models which bear at least a prima facie relationship to Buddhism, namely Utilitarianism and Aristotelianism. In this Chapter I discuss the resemblances between Buddhism and Utilitarianism, and in the next Chapter the resemblances between Buddhism and Aristotelian ethics. The present Chapter is arranged as follows: first (i) I will summarise the main features of utilitarian ethical theory and then (ii) assess its similarities with Buddhist ethics. Finally (iii) I will consider a specific Western ethical model - Situation Ethics - a utilitarian hybrid based on agapistic principles which may be thought to resemble certain features of Mahāyāna ethics.

(1) Utilitarian Theories of Ethics

Stated in its simplest form a Utilitarian theory of ethics is one in which 'the good is defined independently from the right, and then the right is defined as that which maximises the good' [Rawls 1980:24]. The content of the good is derived from intuition or common sense and is regarded as a utility to be increased. This utility may be variously defined, e.g. as pleasure (most commonly), wealth, or as various other forms of satisfaction left undefined ('preference utilitarianism'). The right act, then, is that act which of all available alternatives will maximise the good as previously specified, that is to say, the act which will produce the greatest happiness (or other good) for those affected by its consequences.

There are many varieties of utilitarian ethical theory, but I will concentrate here on the classical formulation of the doctrine as developed by Bentham and Mill. After describing the main features of this paradigm we will be in a position to assess the correspondence between it and Buddhist ethics. All variations of the classical doctrine are in any event marked by their common acceptance of the 'Principle of Utility'. Let us begin by considering the definition of this principle given by Bentham in An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation:

'The principle of utility is the foundation of the present work: it will be proper therefore at the outset to give an explicit and determinative account of what is meant by it. By the principle of utility is meant that principle which

approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatsoever; and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government' [11f].

As a social reformer it was with 'measures of government' that Bentham was primarily concerned, and his version of utilitarianism played an important role in the political culture of Britain in the first half of the 19th century.¹ As MacIntyre points out, the philosophy can be applied most successfully to institutions such as prisons and hospitals where it is possible to have a rough idea of how many people's lot will be bettered or worsened by particular measures [1967:237]. Yet at the same time, Bentham believed that public policy could only be shaped and implemented effectively if it took account of the facts of human nature as testified to by the psychological constitution of individual human beings. The most important feature of this constitution he took to be the fact that men are motivated to do whatever they do by their desires, and that these desires are for the experience and increase of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. He begins his Magnum Opus with the following magisterial statement:

'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it' [11].

The consequences of actions are therefore valued to the extent that they terminate in sensations of pleasure, or conversely, inhibit the experience of pain. Such is the utility to be promoted, and Bentham made this clear in his exemplification of a utility:

'By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered' [12].

As stated above, then, 'ought' and 'right' are defined with reference to the 'good' [13 (S.10)]. If one asks 'Why should I seek to maximise the good?' the answer is that human nature is so constituted that this is inevitably what people do anyway: utilitarianism simply acknowledges this as the basic factor in human motivation.

It is the simplification or reduction of the complexities of ethics to a simple factual basis which gives utilitarianism its initial appeal. Matters of value become simple matters of fact. Judging the rightness of competing courses of action is an exercise in calculation, a cost-benefit analysis in the coinage of pleasure and pain. Pleasures and pains may come from a variety of sources, and Bentham lists 14 sources of pleasure and 12 sources of pain². Against this check-list must be considered such factors as the intensity and length of the sensation which is experienced or anticipated. To assist in this calculation Bentham elaborated a 'felicific calculus' [1970:Ch.4] according to which pleasures and pains

may be measured and quantified: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity and remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent (the last applies when more than one individual will be affected by the consequences).

The principle of utility, Bentham argued, provides a secure foundation for morals and legislation: it demystifies moral judgements and provides an empirical standard for objective scrutiny in matters of right and wrong. It is, moreover, of universal application, since human nature is similarly constituted the world over. Although morality and law vary between cultures they should in principle conform to one standard alone, namely that of utility. If they do not they stand in need of correction. The principle of utility is inviolate. 'Systems which attempt to question it,' writes Bentham, deal in sound instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light.' [11]

Utilitarians are concerned only in respect of consequences (hence utilitarianism is a 'consequentialist' theory of ethics); and the felicific calculus is simply a device for quantifying consequences of actions in terms of pleasure. For Bentham pleasure was an homogenous category which allowed for no differentiation or grading in respect of different kinds of pleasure. Opponents were quick to point out that on this basis the pleasure of the opera is no better than the pleasure of an animal in the farmyard - hence Carlyle's curt dismissal of utilitarianism as 'pig philosophy'. Bentham himself was unmoved by this: 'Prejudice apart', he wrote,

'the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of pushpin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either.'³

Bentham's psychology, derived from Hartley, was of the crude mechanical and associationist kind and drew much criticism. The task of refining the psychological foundation of utilitarianism and fending off its critics passed along with Bentham's mantle to J.S.Mill.

Mill attempted to overcome the defects inherent in Bentham's unitary notion of 'pleasure' (Bentham provided 58 synonyms for this) by making a distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' forms of pleasure [1957:8f]. The higher forms, such as the study of philosophy, are to be preferred to the lower forms such as the pleasures of 'wine, women and song'. Mill sought to introduce the notion of a continuum of pleasures with the higher outweighing the lower: 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied' [1957:9]. As is often pointed out, however, once Mill introduces this distinction he has begun to introduce non-utilitarian values. What can be greater than pleasure for a utilitarian other than more pleasure? If appeal must be made to other values, such as aesthetic quality, to account for human motivation, then the ideal of a single standard to which human drives are reducible is an illusion. Mill suggests that factors such as pride, liberty, power, excitement and dignity may make a human being unwilling to settle for pleasure alone - all of

which ex hypothesi should not be more desirable alternatives. As Alan Ryan notes: 'To say that Socrates prefers his way of life, even if he is constantly dissatisfied, is to say that he thinks it better, not that he thinks it more pleasant' [1974:111]. If something may be better irrespective of hedonistic associations it must be acknowledged that pleasure and pain are not the final arbiters of human values.

Yet such a claim is precisely the attraction of utilitarianism, that it simplifies conflicting moral systems by converting their divergent values into the tidy currency of pleasure. If it cannot do this then it fails to be comprehensive and must give up its claim to be grounded in a universal feature of human nature.⁴ To escape from this dilemma Mill falls back on the notion of certain qualities or actions, such as those which are dignified, noble or courageous, as being indirect means for maximising general, as opposed to individual, welfare. Actions which are normally praised on non-utilitarian grounds, such as self-sacrifice, are explained as being useful in general to society at large. In this way Mill is able to claim that utilitarianism is altruistic: one's own good counts for no more than anyone else's, and so the aim of utilitarian ethics is the good of all and not merely the happiness of the agent.

In Utilitarianism Mill is at pains to stress the unselfish character of his ethical system. First of all he restates Bentham's principle of utility as the 'Greatest Happiness

Principle' as follows:

'According to the Greatest Happiness Principle [...] the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality' [1957:11].

Notice that Mill, perhaps more conscious of the definitional problems associated with pleasure than Bentham, has subtly reversed the priority in the latter's statement of the principle by placing the exemption from pain before the increase in enjoyments. He goes on in the above passage to derive the principles of ethics from the Greatest Happiness Principle in the way Bentham had done:

'This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation' [loc.cit].

Notice also that Mill refers to 'rules and precepts' whereas Bentham spoke only of actions (I will return to discuss the significance of this distinction later). We might also note the characteristic Buddhist sentiment in the final clause with the reference to 'the whole sentient creation'. A knowledge of Indian religious ideas may have come to Mill through his father, James, who amongst his other talents was an historian of India. James Mill spent eleven years writing the History of British India and was appointed examiner in the East India Company.⁵ The younger Mill became an assistant in his father's office at India House at the age of

seventeen.

At several points in Utilitarianism Mill castigates those who would use utilitarian principles to pursue their own self-interest: "As little is there an inherent necessity that any human being should be a selfish egotist, devoid of every feeling or care but those which centre in his own miserable individuality" [p.13]. 'The utilitarian morality,' he writes, does recognise in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others.' [p.15] It does not only recognise this power but seeks to encourage it:

'... the happiness which forms the Utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility' [16].

In expecting impartiality between the satisfaction of one's own needs and those of others Mill is denying the first principle of utilitarianism, namely the self-interest axiom. If men are so constituted that they seek only their own pleasure, how can they also be disposed to sacrifice their own satisfaction to that of others? If it is suggested that one should serve the interests of others in the expectation of receiving reciprocal benefit then the result is a contract theory of morality adrift *from* the psychological moorings of utilitarianism.

I will return to the problems of utilitarianism later with specific reference to Buddhism. For the present I wish to

focus upon the distinctions between the forms of the doctrine put forward by Bentham and Mill which in the course of time have developed into Act Utilitarianism [AU] and Rule Utilitarianism [RU] respectively. I will briefly outline these two forms of the theory together with a third member of the utilitarian family, Negative Utilitarianism [NU], since it is these three forms of the theory which bear the most resemblance to Buddhism. After this I shall pass over to consider to what extent Buddhism may be related to these or cognate schema.

(a) ACT UTILITARIANISM

AU is the form of utilitarianism advocated by Bentham. According to this principle, what is right can be decided by a direct appeal to the principle of utility. One must seek to establish the amount of non-moral good (e.g. pleasure) to be generated by a specific individual performing a specific action in a specific situation. AU does not seek to lay down general guidelines for similar situations - each situation must be treated as unique and be given an independent evaluation of its consequences. Both direct and indirect consequences must be taken into account, the latter including an assessment of the likely influences of the act upon others. Modern advocates of the theory include J.J.C. Smart and (in a modified form) Joseph Fletcher. Smart summaries AU as follows:

'Roughly speaking, act-utilitarianism is the view that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends only on the total goodness or badness of its consequences i.e. on the effect of

the action on the welfare of all human beings (or perhaps all sentient beings)'[1973:4].

Hodgson offers the following definition of the AU principle:

'An act is right if and only if it would have best consequences, that is, consequences at least as good as those of any alternative act open to the agent' [1967:1].

And David Lyons characterises AU in the following way:

'Roughly speaking, [...] Act-Utilitarianism is the theory that one should always perform acts the effects of which would be at least as good as those of any alternative. These are right actions; all others are wrong. It is one's duty, or over-all obligation, to perform right acts only; and thus if one act has the best consequences, that act is the thing to be done.' [1970:9].

There is thus no disagreement as to the basic principle of AU among supporters (Smart) and opponents (Hodgson, Lyons) of the doctrine. Let us now attempt to define RU.

(b) RULE UTILITARIANISM

The beginnings of RU may be found in the work of Mill. As we have seen, he speaks of the utility of rules rather than acts, and emphasises the importance of rules in regulating conduct rather than focussing upon independent decisions in individual situations. In order to know what to do we should appeal to a rule rather than continually recalculate the consequences of certain types of actions. The rules themselves, however, will be arrived at on the basis of utilitarian considerations: rules must be chosen because they are conducive to the general greater good and for no other reason. When they cease to be effective in this way they must

be modified or replaced. The principle of utility is still the ultimate standard but is now appealed to at the level of rules rather than at the level of individual acts. RU is defined by Smart, Hodgson and Lyons as follows:

Smart: 'Rule-utilitarianism is the view that the rightness or wrongness of an action is to be judged by the goodness and badness of the consequences of a rule that everyone should perform the action in like circumstances.' [1973:9]

Hodgson: 'According to the ethical systems which come under the name rule-utilitarianism, an act is right if it is in accordance with a rule the following of which has, or would have, good (or the best) consequences.' [1967:5]

Lyons: 'By rule-utilitarianism I shall mean that kind of theory according to which the rightness or wrongness of particular acts can (or must) be determined by reference to a set of rules having some utilitarian defence, justification, or derivation.' [1970:11]

Once again there is agreement on the basic principle. Let us now characterise a final form of utilitarianism relevant to our enquiry, NU.

(c) NEGATIVE UTILITARIANISM

Earlier we noticed a subtle shift in Mill's statement of the principle of utility away from that of Bentham by placing exemption from pain before the increase of pleasure in his definition of the 'Greatest Happiness Principle.' All forms of utilitarianism recognise that pleasure and pain are correlatives. Bentham's 'two sovereign masters' are pain and pleasure (in that order) and his statement of the principle of utility embraces the prevention of 'mischief, pain, evil, and unhappiness'[1970:12]. Mill states that every supporter of the principle of utility 'from Epicurus to Bentham' has

understood it to apply to 'pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain' [1957:5]. He defines the 'ultimate end' as 'an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments.' [1957:11]

Smart, taking his cue from Popper, describes the doctrine of NU as holding 'that we should concern ourselves with the minimum of suffering rather than with the maximisation of happiness' [1973:29]. Popper himself enumerates NU as the second of the three most important principles of humanitarianism and equalitarian ethics [1962:i.235 n6]. It is:

'The recognition that all moral urgency has its basis in the urgency of suffering or pain. I suggest, for this reason, to replace the utilitarian formula 'Aim at the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number', or briefly, 'maximise happiness', by the formula 'The least amount of avoidable suffering for all', or briefly, 'minimise suffering'.

Smart points out that Popper's utilitarianism here is inconsistent with his other two principles, namely toleration and the opposition of tyranny, which he appears to hold on non-utilitarian or deontic grounds. And as noted above, the general formulation of the principle of utility already enshrines the ideal of decreasing suffering as well as augmenting pleasure. In seeking to 'replace' the standard formula with his new one Popper merely narrows down the original by ruling out the injunction to maximise happiness. It is also unclear what is meant by 'suffering'. If it means 'pain', which seems to be Popper's intention, then he can be understood as calling for a new emphasis in our ethical priorities. This would involve tackling the basic and obvious

instances of human suffering before turning our attention to improving the lot of those who are not in such manifest dire straits. If it is to include mental pain, dissatisfaction and discontent the matter becomes more complex. Would there be a duty, for instance, to minimise the suffering of someone who was merely envious of the good fortune of others? Actual physical suffering does indeed have a prior claim on our moral sensibilities, as may be seen from the response to national disaster appeals. 'In my opinion,' says Popper, '[...] human suffering makes a direct moral appeal, namely, the appeal for help, while there is no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway.' [1962:i.284 n2]

Again, it is easier to agree on what is a case of physical suffering than it is to agree on which particular aspect of happiness should be maximised. It is this clear and simple awareness of the good to be brought about that gives NU its appeal. Drawing an analogy between ethics and natural science Popper argues that it is simpler to formulate objectives negatively: 'It adds to clarity in the field of ethics if we formulate our demand negatively, i.e. if we demand the elimination of suffering rather than the promotion of happiness. Similarly, it is helpful to formulate the task of scientific method as the elimination of false theories (from the various theories tentatively proffered) rather than the attainment of established truths' [1962:i.285 n2]. As H.B.Acton points out, however, while the moral claim of

suffering may be more urgent, it is not necessarily more important than our obligation to those who are not in immediate distress [1963:94].

In restating the principle of utility Popper is then, I think, encouraging us to concentrate our minds on the clear and indisputable facts of suffering and tackle the most urgent and practical problems first. This advice is similar to that given by the Buddha and I now turn to a consideration of the ethical form of the Buddha's teaching in the light of the utilitarian theories outlined above.

(ii) BUDDHISM AND UTILITARIANISM

There is an obvious similarity between the objectives of NU and Buddhist soteriology in that both aim at the reduction of suffering. In fact Buddhism goes somewhat further and seeks an end of suffering altogether. Popper's call for the 'elimination' of suffering must be seen as a call for the minimisation of suffering since it would otherwise lead to undesirable consequences. For instance, as Ninian Smart has argued, it would be the duty of a powerful ruler on NU grounds to destroy the human race if this could be done painlessly, thus eradicating suffering once and for all [1958:542f]. Again, in the absence of a theory of rebirth, suicide would be a commendable choice. Indeed, according to MacIntyre, one of the earliest exponents of NU, Hegesias, had to be prevented from teaching at Alexandria due to the number of suicides among his audience [1967:101f]. Nevertheless, both Buddhism and NU are committed at least to the reduction of suffering.

The notion of suffering in Buddhism includes mental and physical suffering, which are encapsulated in the term dukkha. The goal of diminishing dukkha is common to all forms of Buddhism, and the Buddha himself made 'suffering and the end of suffering' the primary focus of his teaching. According to the Ratnāvalī, pleasure and pain are in any event correlative:

'Just as a lessening of pain
Is fancied to be real pleasure
So a suppression of pleasure
Is also fancied to be pain'

[v.362 tr. Hopkins 1975].

The whole of the Buddhist universe, in fact, can be conceived of as strung out across a hedonistic continuum ranging from the lowest hell through the heavens to nibbāna, at which point suffering ceases forever. Movement within this continuum is regulated by kamma.

Kamma as commonly understood (i.e. as distinct from the account of it given in Chapter Three) is the principle that a moral antecedent will have a hedonistic consequence. That is to say, that a moral or immoral act (or volition) will have a result which can be quantified in terms of pleasure and pain experienced by the actor. Kamma is therefore a primary mechanism for the reduction of suffering. Not all suffering, however, is due to kamma, and the Buddha also recognised the possibility of purely adventitious misfortune.

On the understanding of kamma outlined above there is a clear similarity between Buddhist ethics and consequentialist theories such as utilitarianism which grade moral action in terms of the non-moral utility subsequently produced. A further similarity might be seen between the Buddhist precepts (listed in Chapter One) and the forms of RU. On this basis the precepts would be respected because of their utility in maximising desirable consequences (i.e.

diminishing dukkha). At first blush, therefore, we may be tempted to categorise Buddhism as a system of NRU. I believe this would be a mistake for reasons I shall now outline.

1. Unlike utilitarian theories Buddhism does not define the right independently from the good. There exists a clear conceptual relationship between the two, and what is right cannot be defined except by reference to what is good. Nibbāna is the good, and rightness is predicated of acts, intentions, etc. to the extent which they participate in nibbānic goodness. The right and the good in Buddhism are inseparably intertwined. If an action does not display nibbānic qualities then it cannot be right in terms of Buddhist ethics whatever other consequences it might have. We have already seen this demonstrated in the relationship between kusala and nibbāna. An action is judged to be kusala to the extent that it is harmonious with nibbānic values, and not to the extent that its consequences display or produce these qualities. In Buddhism there is no ex post facto conferral of rightness upon actions as there is in utilitarianism. An action is right or wrong from the moment of its inception - its nature is fixed by reference to nibbānic values and it cannot subsequently change its status. Wrong (akusala) acts cannot turn out 'in the event' to have been right by virtue of their proximate or remote effects; nor can right (kusala) acts turn out to have been wrong in view of their consequences. For a utilitarian theory of ethics, however, both of these are real possibilities since rightness and goodness are separately defined. One of the

peculiar features of utilitarianism is that it has no preference between acts which are conventionally regarded as good and evil so long as they achieve the same end.

In Buddhist ethics it is what precedes an act not what follows it that determines its rightness. An act is right if it is virtuous, i.e. performed on the basis of liberality (arāga), benevolence (ādosa) and understanding (amoha). It is the preceding motivation (cetanā) which determines the moral quality of an act and not its consequences. In Buddhism acts have bad consequences because they are bad acts - they are not bad acts because they have bad consequences, as a utilitarian would maintain⁶.

2. If kamma is understood in the way outlined above, that is, as the principle that a moral cause will produce only a non-moral effect (i.e. as merely puñña), then moral goodness will have no intrinsic soteriological value. On this reading kamma partakes of the nature of samsāra and is therefore, as King and Spiro point out, hostile to nibbāna. At best it could play a subsidiary role in selecting a suitable locus for rebirth at which point another scale of values would come into play revolving around paññā. Ethics would be irrelevant to enlightenment, at best a preliminary to samādhi and paññā and of instrumental value only. The arguments of the preceding chapters have, I think, established that this is an unsatisfactory model of Buddhist soteriology.

3. If the means-end model of kamma is accepted, since the

hedonistic results of kamma are experienced uniquely by the individual who initiates the moral action, Buddhism must be regarded as a form of ethical egoism. This holds that an individual's one and only basic obligation is to procure for himself the greatest amount of good. The Buddhist moral injunctions would therefore be guidelines as to the most efficient way of generating merit for oneself, since the hedonistic results of kamma are experienced uniquely by the individual who initiates the moral action. Such a situation would be especially paradoxical in the case of Buddhism: on the one hand ethical egoism advocates prudentialism as the essence of the moral life, while on the other Buddhism regards the exclusive pursuit of self-interest as the root of all suffering. Even if merit were gained in the service of others, the fact that others were served would be irrelevant. It would just be a feature of the natural order that certain kinds of activity produced merit.

The above interpretation would also give rise to a philosophical difficulty in connection with the moral status of the doctrine of kamma. Assuming that the basic moral imperative for Buddhists is to minimise suffering for oneself or for oneself and others [A.11.95], and that only acts (or intentions) of a certain kind will bring this about by means of an obscure but inflexible metaphysical law, then there seems to be no scope for an independent moral evaluation of the proffered norms. In fact the moral element is quite removed. It would just be a peculiar fact about the world that certain kinds of activity produced merit, just as it is

the case with other laws of nature that, for example, heavy objects fall to the ground. In this context moral rules would have the same status as other prudential rules like 'Always remove the radiator cap slowly'. The rules describing kammic consequences would merely presuppose a more obscure metaphysical connection; they would simply be a curious feature of the universe that the Buddha stumbled across and used to his advantage.

The problem here is analogous to the one faced by medieval Christianity in determining whether acts were good because God commanded them or whether God commanded certain acts because they were good.⁷ How could one know, for instance, if in following God's Commandments one was merely obeying the laws of a tyrant? Perhaps God's Commandments ought to be rejected as the arbitrary fiat of a divine despot, despite the threat of eternal suffering being inflicted in retribution. To obey the Commandments merely out of fear and the hope of personal reward cannot be a morally adequate reason for regarding them as just and right.

Similarly, if the precepts or guidelines fashioned according to the workings of the law of kamma are observed in the hope of personal benefit or gain such a motive, although entirely rational in a prudential sense, is hardly an adequate foundation for a system of ethics. In these circumstances the Buddhist precepts would rest on a non-moral foundation: while they might provide effective guidelines towards prosperity and personal satisfaction, Buddhism as a religion could make

no claim to embody a moral teaching.

Yet it seems clear that Buddhism regards certain acts as bad for reasons other than the fact that they have bad consequences. Let us perform a thought-experiment and postulate that the law of kamma has changed, and that evil consequences no longer inevitably follow a breach of the precepts, e.g. an act of murder. Assuming that no evil consequences of any kind followed such an act, Buddhism would be forced to abolish the First Precept on RU grounds. It is quite conceivable, on utilitarian principles, that the taking of innocent life could in many circumstances be the 'right' act - e.g. taking one life to save ten. But is it conceivable, in the context of Buddhism, that murder is only wrong because of an accident of nature? And if, in fact, evildoers flourished, would evil be commended as the best policy to follow?

The answer to the above questions must be in the negative. Buddhist moral standards are not geared to sensations of pleasure and pain or material prosperity. Buddhism has a concept of moral goodness which is independent of all hedonistic kammic associations, and this standard is embodied in the Buddha himself. He is the embodiment of perfect virtue and has eradicated all vice. If moral goodness could be predicated only in terms of kammic consequences we could not characterise the Buddha as morally good since his actions are avyākata. But we have seen that time and time again he describes himself in terms of moral perfection. Utilitarian

systems do not recognise moral goodness and have no concept of intrinsic moral worth. If Buddhism is utilitarian then Buddhahood could not be a moral ideal.

Let us bear in mind here the distinction made between kusala and puñña in Chapter Three. Kammic actions do indeed have hedonistic consequences but this is not where their moral value resides. Let me give three examples to illustrate how puñña may be related to but not identical with moral value. First we may draw an analogy between puñña and praise and blame. Imagine that someone performs a virtuous action and as a result of this is praised by and earns the respect of many people. What was it that made the act virtuous: the praise which followed it or the intrinsic value of the act itself? For a utilitarian it is the praise but for a deontologist and a Buddhist it is the intrinsic (kusala) worth of the act itself. Approbation is pleasant - this is puñña or the secondary consequence of the action; but approbation is not the criterion of moral goodness - this is to be established on independent grounds. Praise and blame and good and bad kamma follow along as a consequence of moral and immoral actions but they do not act retrospectively to legitimate or condemn the moral quality of the action which engendered them.

A second example might be the relationship between crime and punishment. A man commits murder and is sentenced to life imprisonment. Is it the sentence which makes murder a crime or is murder a crime because it is thought to be wrong

legally and morally on other grounds? Clearly the sentence is retributive (and perhaps also deterrent), and is not determinative in respect of what is illegal.

To give a final example an analogy might be drawn between kamma and the concept of grace in the Christian tradition. In one form of the doctrine (the Augustinian), doing good leads to an increase in grace in the form of an empowerment to overcome moral evil. Although God bestows his grace as a consequence of morally good actions it is not the receipt of grace which makes the actions morally good. There is an essential relationship between goodness and grace, just as there is between goodness and merit (puñña), but neither grace nor merit determine moral goodness. The moral status of actions is determined not by the consequences which follow but by the intention which precedes.

4. Kamma is only one consequence of ethical action. We may refer to it as an internal consequence since it affects only the individual who performs the action. Human actions, and particularly moral actions, however, are not performed in a vacuum, and there are also consequences in the world at large which we may refer to as external consequences. Assuming that Buddhism is utilitarian, which sets of consequences are to count in our calculations?

For the moment let us assume that it is the first set only. On this understanding Buddhism becomes a form of ethical egoism, and moral action becomes a means to further the

private interests of the individual. This leads to the paradox that other-directed dispositions such as compassion (karuṇā) benevolence (mettā) and sympathetic joy (muditā) are cultivated for selfish purposes. The practice of the Brahma-Vihāras would present a formidable psychological double-bind since one could only wish others well to the extent that one's interests were thereby furthered. The four 'illimitables' would be severely limited in such circumstances.

Let us consider now that both sets of circumstances are to count: the internal set being karmically guaranteed and the external set to be assessed as best one is able. In these circumstances one acts wherever possible in a manner which will benefit both oneself and others. On the application of utilitarian principles difficulties will arise here both in respect of quantification and in terms of conflict between the two sets of consequences. Quantification is difficult since, failing the power of the divine eye (dibba-cakkhu), the workings of kamma remain obscure and difficult to fathom. It is, accordingly, very difficult to know what the kammic consequences of any action will be. Let us assume, however, a situation in which telling a deliberate lie will result in a good deal of 'environmental' happiness and involve only a minor amount of suffering for the actor (and perhaps very little or none at all if he has a good stock of merit). Since greater overall happiness would be produced by telling the lie it would, for a Buddhist Act Utilitarian [BAU], be the

right course of action. But would a Buddhist countenance the overturning of the precepts on a regular basis in such a fashion, and where is the Buddha's advice that we should do so?

While a BAU would face the above dilemma, a Buddhist Rule Utilitarian [BRU] would attempt to evade it by arguing that the precepts were instituted by the Buddha specifically because, in general, best consequences are achieved by following them. Given the complex functioning of kamma it is always best to follow the rules laid down by someone who understands such things better. But in making this move there is a price to be paid, namely the abandonment of any claim to personal authenticity and moral vindication. The Buddha's 'Commandments' are now followed like those of the despotic Christian God without any expectation that one will understand the principles which support them or be in a position to assent to them this side of enlightenment. Until such time the question is closed and the possibility of authentic moral action is withdrawn.

5. For utilitarians motive is irrelevant whereas for Buddhists it is crucial. For utilitarians a good motive may be defined as one which produces an increase in the specified utility. This may occur through the medium of actions or not - a motive which produces a happy state of mind may be a good motive for a utilitarian even if it is a criminal motive. In utilitarian systems motive cannot be evaluated apart from its consequences. There cannot, therefore, be any such thing as a

good or bad motive until its consequences have been quantified.

Utilitarians do, however, evaluate agents and motives analogically, and Smart explains how these descriptions are to be understood:

'A good agent is one who acts more nearly in a generally optimific way than does the average one. A bad agent is one who acts in a less optimific way than the average. A good motive is one which generally results in beneficent actions, and a bad motive is one which generally ends in maleficent actions.' [1973:48]

[continued over]

Mill specifically rejects the view that the rightness of an action depends upon the motive from which it is done⁸. He distinguishes, as does the law, between motive and intent. Motive is 'That which moves or prompts a person to a particular course of action, or is seen by him as the ultimate purpose or end he seeks to achieve by that action.' It is to be distinguished from intent, which is 'the more immediate foreseen end to which he directs his acts.'⁹ Yet for Mill neither intent nor motive have intrinsic moral worth, which contrasts sharply with the Buddha's insistence upon the morally determinative status of cetanā. A utilitarian may accept that certain motives, such as benevolence and generosity, do tend to further the production of happiness in society. This, however, is merely a fortuitous conjunction, and there is no necessary connection between the two. For utilitarians, then, there are no intrinsically good motives, while for Buddhism arāga, adosa and amoha are intrinsically good motives irrespective of the question of consequences.

I suggested earlier that of the three kinds of utilitarianism outlined above, Buddhism bore a prima facie resemblance to NRU. I adopted this as a working hypothesis which I now take to have been discredited. This conclusion applies to the substantive morality of the Buddhist tradition as a whole. However, there is one aspect of Mahāyāna morality we have considered which seems to be congenial to an analysis along AU lines, namely the doctrine of upāya, and I shall return to this at the end of the chapter.

In the above discussion I have argued that Buddhism cannot be characterised adequately either in terms of utilitarian theories of obligation or in terms of utilitarian theories of value. Thus neither the maximising obligation nor the notion of a utility maximised are the central concerns of Buddhist ethics. In reaching this conclusion we have considered three forms of utilitarianism: AU, RU, and NU. Of these three AU is the purest form of the utilitarian principle and there are good arguments that the other two (and further variants) can be collapsed into the first.¹⁰ RU is basically a time-saving form of AU and NU is effectively included in the principle of utility by both Bentham and Mill. However, no form of utilitarianism can adequately characterise Buddhist ethics since it is not founded upon a maximising principle.

In respect of value theory Buddhism has little in common with utilitarianism since it is not basically concerned with the generation and experience of states of affairs. Indeed, the constant regeneration of experience is precisely what Buddhism seeks to avoid. Even pleasurable states are, in Bradley's words, 'merely a perishing series of moments'; they are transient, superficial and ultimately valueless. For utilitarianism when one series of pleasurable states terminates another should be generated as quickly as possible; for Buddhism this grasping at what is impermanent is the root cause of suffering.

Bernard Williams makes the point that its commitment to the pursuit of states of affairs is one of the basic weaknesses

of consequentialism. It is a devaluation of human meaning and human worth. If the goal of human life was merely the experience of pleasurable states who would not plug into the philosophers' experience machine at once?¹¹ Williams criticises utilitarianism for its failure to take seriously the value of human integrity and to overlook this in its headstrong pursuit of goods [1973:82;99-103]. Utilitarianism regards moral feeling as merely a quotient in a calculus, and this leads to emotional alienation and a loss of personal integrity. Williams writes:

'Because our moral relation to the world is partly given by such feelings, and by a sense of what we can or cannot 'live with', to come to regard those feelings from a purely utilitarian point of view, that is to say, as happenings outside one's moral self, is to lose a sense of one's moral identity; to lose, in the most literal way, one's integrity.' [1973:103f]

To conceive of moral value in terms of states of affairs is to trivialise it and ultimately deny it. It is to make it superficial, but in Buddhism moral value is not like this - it is dynamic and transformational. It is a cumulative process involving the recognition of and transformation of moral sentiment rather than its alienation, and is not merely cashed in as karma-vipāka. E.H.Johnston recognised this many years ago:

Karman is thus a more vital conception in earlier Buddhism than it was reduced to later; it is not merely vipāka, the recompense in a future existence of the good and evil deeds committed in past existences, as held by the Vaibhāṣikas, but it is the creator of the individual's moral character from the religious standpoint.' [1937:37]

It is hardly conceivable that Buddhism should locate

intrinsic value in karma-vipāka: as a transient series of states it is the epitome of anicca. Nor does it need a Buddhist to realise the ultimate disvalue of such pleasurable sensations; in an essay which must stand as the decisive refutation of hedonistic utilitarianism Bradley writes:

'Pleasure and pain are feelings, and they are nothing but feelings. [...] This means that they exist in me only as long as I feel them, and only as I feel them, that beyond this they have no reference to anything else, no validity, and no meaning whatever. They are 'subjective' because they neither have, nor pretend to, reality beyond this or that subject. They are as they are felt to be, but they tell us nothing. In one word, they have no content: they are as states of us, but they have nothing for us.' [1927:94]

The kind of states described above are ephemeral, whereas the moral life in Buddhism finds teleological fulfilment in nibbāna. For Buddhists the virtues are of value because they are not an infinitely perishing series of states: on the contrary, their cultivation is part of a continuing cumulative development. It is, moreover, a series with a definite telos, as it must be if morality is to be meaningful in human life. No series of states as envisaged by utilitarianism can meet this requirement. Bradley again:

'The practical end, if it is to be a practical goal and standard, must present itself to us as some definite unity, some concrete whole that we can realise in our acts, and carry out in our life. And pleasure (as pain) we find to be nothing but a name which stands for a series of this, that, and the other feelings, which are not except in the moment or moments that they are felt, which have as a series neither limitation of number, beginning nor end, nor in themselves any reference at all, any of them, beyond themselves [...] And it is clear at once that this is not what is required for a practical end.' [1927:95]

The characterisation of Buddhist ethics as utilitarian is unsatisfactory for the reasons outlined above. Buddhist

ethics can only be correctly understood when seen as inextricably linked to the practical end of all Buddhist endeavour. In the following chapter we turn to an ethical system which gives due weight to teleology - Aristotelianism. It is here, I believe, that the best hope lies of making intelligible the structure of the Buddhist ethical programme. Before taking leave of utilitarianism there is one aspect of Mahāyāna morality to which we must return - the doctrine of upāya.

(iii) Skilful Means and Situation Ethics

In many ways the Mahāyāna concept of 'skilful means' (upāya-kaśālya) seems susceptible to analysis along AU lines since rules are frequently disregarded if the subsequent benefit for beings is thought to warrant it. In particular, with its increasing emphasis upon karuṇā the Mahāyāna ethos comes to resemble the Christian ethic of agapism. This is founded upon the injunction to love god and one's neighbour [Matt.22: 37-40] which is given precedence over all other obligations. Agapism may take many forms, but it is commonly coupled with a maximising obligation along utilitarian lines to promote the well-being of one's fellow man. Such, in essence, is the system of Situation Ethics [SE] espoused by Joseph Fletcher - a form of act-agapism in which each ethical decision must be assessed afresh in the situation or context in which it arises with the goal of maximising the wellbeing of one's neighbour. It seems, in terms of structure at least, that there is a similarity here with the ethical implications of the doctrine of upāya.

As described in chapter 4 upāya has two forms, a normative and a non-normative one. The normative one is that which is taken by Buddhists as a model for imitation and implementation, and which involves the personal cultivation of the first five Perfections. The non-normative version of the doctrine is the upāya displayed by the Great Bodhisattvas which involves them in forms of antinomian conduct and which, I have suggested, is best interpreted according to

metaphysical and not ethical principles. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a tension within the Mahāyāna and a tendency for its ethics to be dominated increasingly by the single value of karuṇā. Āryaśūra and Śāntideva eulogise karuṇā and exalt it above all other virtues. Śāntideva quotes the Dharmasaṅgīti-sūtra to the effect that a bodhisattva needs only karuṇā to gain all the attributes of Buddhahood:

'The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Great Being, said this to the Lord. 'A bodhisattva, Lord, should not practise too many things. One virtue (dharma) alone, Lord, should be faithfully served and fully perfected by him, in which all the virtues of a Buddha are encompassed. And what is that? - it is great compassion (mahākaruṇā). It is through Great Compassion, O Lord, that all the Buddha-qualities are encompassed for bodhisattvas.' [Śikṣā 151:14-18]

On the translation of karuṇā Dayal has this to say:

'It should be rendered into English by such words as 'love', 'pity', 'mercy', 'compassion', and all their synonyms, or approximate synonyms put together. No one word can convey an adequate idea of what karuṇā means. It is mentioned in an enormous number of passages in all the principal treatises. It is perhaps the word that occurs most frequently in Mahāyāna literature.' [1932:178]

As more and more emphasis is placed upon the welfare of others as the sole end, the means employed to achieve it are questioned less and less. One of the results of this is that upāya₂ begins to be taken as normative (let us call this upāya₃). Thus the benefits arising from the death of gLang-dar-ma are regarded by many Tibetans as sufficient justification for his assassination.¹² This tension within the Mahāyāna is still being worked out today, and in a recent publication Geshe Kelsang Gyatso hints at a view of Mahāyāna ethics not too dissimilar from the Situation Ethics of Joseph Fletcher [1980:132-4; 146-50]. Let us set out Fletcher's system in

more detail and then consider the similarities and differences between it and the upāya doctrine.

Fletcher accepts that SE is 'a radical departure from the conventional wisdom and prevailing climate of opinion' [1966:13] but sees it as a rediscovery of the essential Christian values which have been overlaid by centuries of casuistry. SE claims that in practice, in any situation demanding ethical choice, the right decision cannot always be ordained beforehand in a code of laws or deduced from those laws; nor can it be reached by coming to the situation empty-handed with no principles at all. The correct orientation for ethical decision, argues Fletcher, should be taken with reference to the single principle of love. He writes:

'Christian situation ethics has only one norm or principle or law (call it what you will) that is binding and unexceptionable, always good and right regardless of the circumstances. That is 'love' - the agape of the summary commandment to love God and the neighbor' [1966:30].

This is the 'First Proposition' of SE: 'Only one thing is intrinsically good; namely, love: nothing else at all' [1966:57].

This is not to say that the traditional moral guidelines are never satisfactory - in fact it might turn out that they are followed most of the time - but only that if there is conflict between them and the demands of love in the situation the latter must prevail. Traditional moral principles therefore become rules of thumb for ethical decision-making.

Fletcher is opposed to any kind of ethical system-building but we must be clear about exactly what he objects to in this practice. Although he fastens mainly onto the impracticality of applying pre-cast rules equitably he also denies, as a utilitarian, the intrinsic validity of the rules themselves. He writes: 'The situationist never says, 'Almsgiving is a good thing. Period!' but only 'Almsgiving is a good thing if ...' [1966:26]. Thus when SE ignores a rule against stealing it does not only allow stealing but also regards it as correct, right and desirable.

Fletcher distinguishes between what he calls an ontological, intrinsic ethic (the view that what is good is enshrined in the rules) and an existential, extrinsic one (the view that what is right depends on the situation). SE clearly belongs in the second category. 'We are to tell the truth,' writes Fletcher, 'for loves sake, not for its own sake. If love vetoes the truth, so be it. Right and wrong, good and bad, are things that happen to what we say and do, whether they are veracious or not, depending how much love is served in the situation' [1966:65].

It is clear that love occupies the central place in SE and it is important to qualify this rather nebulous term. It is used in SE as the equivalent of agape, which in turn is defined as 'goodwill at work in partnership with reason'. It is to be distinguished sharply from romantic love (eros) and love in friendship (philia) which have narrower objectives. While these two are emotional agape is a disposition of the will

and an attitude of mind [1966:79]. Agape is non-reciprocal. It is one-way but not uni-directional and its target is not restricted to one group. It even extends to enemies. In short it is an altruistic other-directed disposition which seeks no reciprocation.

The most obvious point of contact between SE and AU is in their rejection of action-guiding principles and norms. Each and every ethical decision is to be reviewed afresh in the light of its projected consequences. In view of this an opponent might claim that SE demands 'more critical intelligence, more factual information, and more self-starting commitment to righteousness than most people can bring to bear' [1966:81]. To this the reply is that we must rely on our own faculties more than before and make greater efforts to find out the facts before acting. As Fletcher puts it: 'Situation ethics puts a high premium on our knowing what's what when we act' [1966:84].

Knowledge, therefore, is the essential counterpart of love. As Paul Ramsey puts it, love must 'figure the angles'; prudence must be relied on to find 'absolute love's relative course'. Each decision-making situation is unique, and the solution needs to be found from within the context of that situation once it has been examined and correctly understood. For the act to be right, one's assessment of the circumstances and the consequences of the action must be correct: if the desired goal is achieved (the maximum distribution of love) the act was right; if it is not

achieved, the act was wrong. 'Our situation ethics', writes Fletcher, 'frankly joins forces with Mill' [1966:115]. The Principle of Utility is modified from 'the greatest good of the greatest number', to 'the greatest agape of the greatest number.' Love's aims are the increase of love itself in the world, and courses of action are selected on the basis of an 'agapeic calculus' modelled on Bentham's 'hedonistic calculus.

To conclude this summary we may recapitulate the main points. SE takes as its central principal that only one thing, love or agape, is intrinsically good. Love is to be linked with reason to determine the right course of action in any situation. The right act is defined as that which furthers the increase of love beyond any of the alternatives, even at the expense of infringing moral norms. According to Fletcher SE is founded upon six Propositions, as follows:

- (1) Only one 'thing' is intrinsically good; namely love: nothing else at all.
- (2) The ruling norm of Christian decision is love: nothing else.
- (3) Love and justice are the same, for justice is love distributed, nothing else.
- (4) Love wills the neighbour's good whether we like him or not.
- (5) Only the end justifies the means; nothing else.
- (6) Love's decisions are made situationally, not prescriptively.

I think it is fair to say that a case could be made out

according to which the upāya doctrine, if read as referring to normative ethics (upāya₃), could be regarded as structurally similar to SE. Like the latter it would be 'a radical departure from the conventional wisdom and prevailing climate of opinion', but would doubtless regard itself as a rediscovery of the basic ideal of compassion displayed by the Buddha but overlaid by centuries of religious conservatism. Upāya₃ breaks free of the code of laws passed on through tradition and approaches the situation of ethical decision not empty-handed but armed with a revised scale of values in which compassion (karuṇā) is predominant. The bodhisattva who is motivated by karuṇā will seek the well-being of his fellow creatures at all times and in all situations. He will, furthermore, choose that course of action which has best consequences irrespective of moral norms which might obstruct it. It is, of course, assumed that the act will promote the wellbeing of others, and this is where prajñā plays its part in 'figuring the angles'. In SE love finds its metaphysical justification in the nature of god, but no such equivalent resource is claimed in the case of karuṇā: it may, however, be possible to find such a ground in the absolutist metaphysics of the Mahāyāna.

Instances of consequentialist validation along SE lines are not hard to find in Mahāyāna literature. Normally these consequences are thought to be beneficial insofar as they involve the maturation (paripācana) or spiritual development of beings.¹³ Let us look briefly at a couple of examples from the Lotus Sūtra. In the parable of the burning house in

chapter 3 the old man tries to trick his sons into coming out of the burning house by promising them various kinds of toy carts which he knows they desire. On coming out there are no carts to be found, but the old man later gives them carts superior to the ones he promised. The question is then asked whether the old man was guilty of a falsehood, and Śāriputra defends him saying he was not, and adding that what is important is not the truth or falsity of the means but the quality of the original intention of the old man which was 'I will get my children to escape by a skilful means'.¹⁴ The principle at work here is made explicit at the end of the chapter: 'There is no falsehood in preaching three vehicles to attract all living creatures, and afterwards saving by the great vehicle only.'¹⁵

Again in the Lotus, a physician tricks his sons into taking medicine which is good for them.¹⁶ The question is then asked if in so doing he was guilty of a falsehood, upon which the Buddha declares: 'I also am like this. Since I became a Buddha [...] for the sake of all the living I have declared by my power of skilful means that I must enter nirvāṇa, and yet no-one can rightly say that I have perpetrated a falsehood.'¹⁷

Further examples of moral legerdemain are to be found in this Sūtra and elsewhere.¹⁸ What these instances reveal is the introduction of a new pattern of ethical validation in which prajñā is made subservient to karuṇā. What counts now is not objective truth or falsity - such as the truth-value of

statements which it would normally be the task of prajñā to determine - but that one's actions be motivated by compassionate concern for other beings. Thus the Buddha can claim that in the use of upāya he has not acted falsely since what is to count as true or false has now been redefined in terms of the aims of compassion. In the conceptual scheme of upāya the logic of truth and falsehood is made subordinate to the higher value of karuṇā: what saves beings is true, what fails to save them is false.

As stated in Chapter Five, the use of upāya is normally the prerogative of the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas. The prerequisite for its employment is a lofty and elevated stage of perfection measured in terms of advanced progress in the Perfections (pāramitās). Unlike SE, upāya₂ is not intended for universal consumption. It may be the case, nonetheless, that the SE principle of upāya₃ was invoked for normative justification. To establish whether or not such justification was and is invoked would require a study of historical sources coupled with anthropological research into present-day behaviour, attitudes and mores in the culture concerned, a project which lies beyond our present scope.

At this point we may summarise the principal attitudes adopted by the Mahāyāna with respect to the precepts:

- 1) Absolutism: all of the precepts are absolute moral rules and are not to be infringed under any circumstances.
- 2) Modified Absolutism: the core precepts are absolute moral rules but the 'lesser and minor' precepts are prima facie obligations which may be varied in the light of competing

moral claims. This is the distinction between prakṛti- and pratikṣepana-sāvadya offences.

3) Situational (Upāya₃): the upāya of the Great Bodhisattvas is to be taken as a model for imitation and a paradigm for ethical choice. We may characterise this alternatively as Agapistic Act-Utilitarianism [AAU].

One final point concerning the equivalence of SE and upāya needs to be made. For Fletcher a loving motivation and a successful outcome provide absolute moral justification - it is by reference to these two criteria that we determine the rightness of actions. We see in the passages cited from the Lotus Sūtra above that a similar position is found within the Mahāyāna: a lie which benefits others is not a lie. At other times, however, motivation on the basis of karuṇā and beneficial consequences for one's fellow man do not provide absolute justification since the bodhisattva is left to suffer the negative karmic consequences of his actions [e.g. Śikṣā 93.20-22]. This indicates that certain acts were felt to be intrinsically wrong despite their beneficial outcome, or else why should there be retribution? If so, the implication is that there is a further criterion of rightness which escapes the considerations of motivation and consequences. In view of this it may be better to see, in these antinomian exploits, the Mahāyāna underlining the importance of altruism and supererogation while still reserving a deontological basis for its moral validation. Some acts, therefore, remain intrinsically wrong regardless of the quality of motivation or the ensuing benefits.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Harris [1980:38].

2. [1970:Ch.5.2.] The 14 pleasures are of sense, wealth, skill, amity, a good name, power, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, association and relief. The 12 pains are of privation, the senses, awkwardness, enmity, an ill name, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, and association.

3. Collected Works ii.253 (Bowring's edition).

4. Smart [1973:14-25] attempts to minimise the disagreement between Bentham and Mill on this point by focussing on the 'infecundity' of the lower forms of pleasure (i.e. since Bentham would in any event regard Mill's 'lower pleasures' as 'infecund' they are in fact in agreement.) This is unconvincing in view of Bentham's specification that 'the amount of pleasure being equal' etc. (supra.)

5. Ryan [1974:7].

6. The issues here are related to the debate between Bastow [1969] and Gudmunsen [1972] on the relationship between the 'Way' and the 'Goal'. This is not conducted in the context of utilitarian ethical theory but may be illuminated by these considerations. The argument of this thesis supports Bastow and opposes the view of Gudmunsen that 'Ethics gets in the Way'.

7. Cf. Plato Euthyphro; Nielsen [1973:Ch.1].

8. Cf. the discussion in Ryan [1974:113].

9. The Oxford Companion to Law by David Walker [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980]; 'intention'; 'motive'.

10. See Lyons [1970].

11. On Smart's electrode-operator argument [1973:18ff] cf. Finnis' discussion of Nozick's experience machine [1983:11.3].

12. It is interesting to recall that specific exoneration is given by the Bo.bhū in connection with sedition [C.1b].

13. On patterns of validation in the Theravāda see Little & Twiss [1978:236-247].

14. Pye [1978:37f].

15. Pye [1978:39].

16. This parable occurs in chapter 15 of the Sanskrit version

and in chapter 16 of Kumārajīva's translation.

17. Pye [1978:57].

18. Pye [1978:passim]; Dayal [1932:248ff].

19. Śikṣā tr. 163; Jewel 122.

CHAPTER SIX

'For Aristotle only the wise are virtuous and only the virtuous wise'

Anthony Kenny [1979:80]

'For often we think about things in India . . . '

Aristotle [MM:1899.21]

In spite of their different social and cultural contexts there are many formal parallels between the ideal of human perfection conceived by the Buddha and that envisaged by Aristotle. Both regard human nature as a complex of intellectual and emotional factors and consider that the final good for man lies in the full development of human potential in both these dimensions. For both, again, this is a gradual, cumulative process. The state of perfection finally reached - nibbāna for Buddhism and eudaimonia for Aristotle - is characterised by happiness and is the final goal of human striving. The comparison with Buddhism, however, applies only to the state of kilesa-parinibbāna; in Aristotelian ethics there is no condition comparable to the state of khandha-parinibbāna. Our concern is therefore limited now, as before, to perfection in this life.

Such perfection is the telos of all human striving and while there are inevitable cultural differences in its characterisation in India and Greece there is a broad measure

of agreement in respect of its formal content. Essentially it consists in man fulfilling his function as man through the development of his potentiality in accordance with a specific conception of a goal or end. The similarity is an abstract conceptual one; the form in which this perfection manifests itself will be culture-dependent and the qualities or perfections attached to this ideal may be various and dissimilar.

As well as a shared concept of an ideal end they also have in common a programme for its realisation involving the furtherance of human potential through the medium of certain practices known as virtues. The virtues fall into two major categories corresponding to the two complementary dimensions of the human psyche, namely the intellect and the emotions. The concept of a virtue has been admirably analysed by Alasdair MacIntyre [1981:passim]. In simple terms a virtue is a quality which facilitates the achievement of an end. In connection with Aristotle MacIntyre writes: 'The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve eudaimonia and the lack of which will frustrate his movement towards that telos.' [1981:139]

But the virtues are not simply instrumental means to an end which transcends them. What is distinctive about the virtues is that they participate in and constitute the end. As MacIntyre says:

'But the exercise of the virtues is not in this sense a means to the end of the good for man. For what constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the

exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life. We thus cannot characterise the good for man adequately without already having made reference to the virtues.' [1981:140]

I have argued that in Buddhism morality is not merely a means to an end. The Buddha displayed this clearly in the exercise of the moral virtues after his enlightenment - they were indeed a necessary and central part of his life. All Buddhist virtues are derived from the three root or cardinal virtues of generosity (alobha), benevolence (adosa), and understanding (amoha), and the final good for man is specified precisely in terms of the elimination of their corresponding vices [S.38.1]. It is because of this internal relationship between virtue and the summum bonum that the Aristotelian and, as I will argue, Buddhist ethical schemes, are teleological rather than consequentialist.

The main body of Aristotelian ethical theory is to be found in three treatises: the Nicomachean Ethics [NE]; the Eudemian Ethics [EE]; and the Magna Moralia [MM]. The order of composition seems to have been in the reverse of the order in which I have listed them, with the NE constituting Aristotle's mature reflections on ethics. The MM is probably a summary or report, not in his own hand, of Aristotle's earliest lectures on ethics, while the EE is a genuine work of Aristotle's preceding the composition of the NE. There are three chapters common to both the EE and the NE and it seems likely that these chapters (V-VII of the NE and IV-VI of the EE) were originally written for the EE.¹ Also

important for an understanding of Aristotle's ethical theory and its relation to his psychology is his treatise on the nature of the soul, the De Anima.

The points of contact between Buddhist and Aristotelian ethics which I wish to develop are as follows:

(i) **The Goal :** I will argue that eudaimonia and nibbāna are functionally and conceptually related in that both constitute the final goal, end and summum bonum of human striving. It is not suggested that they are experientially identical or have the same metaphysical or soteriological consequences (e.g. the end of rebirth). For Aristotle the goal of human perfection has no transcendental implications: it is a perfection to be manifested in this world alone and specifically in the social context of the polis. After the death of Plato in 384 Aristotle moved rapidly away from the notion of a transcendent reality enshrined in the doctrine of the Forms, and his concern with ethics is empirical and pragmatic. Ethics, for Aristotle, is a subdivision of the architectonic science of politics, and his quest overall is for meaning and fulfilment in the concrete social and political situation in which the individual finds himself located. We shall find, therefore, no point of contact between Aristotelian ethics and the transcendent dimension of nibbāna.

(ii) **Anthropology :** The goal or terminus of human perfection described as eudaimonia, or (kilesa-parinibbāna), is conceived of as embracing a bilateral perfection. The

parameters of the goal are determined by the facts of human nature and its potential for development. I will briefly set out Aristotle's psychology, his doctrine of the soul, and compare this with Buddhist anthropology. I will conclude that both espouse a binary theory of human nature and human good. Having considered the nature of the goal and the relevant facts about human nature we will also comment upon the method by which human nature is to be transformed so as to approach its telos. The transformation is made through the medium of the virtues, and I will consider the nature of the relationship between the virtues and the goal. After dealing with points (i) and (ii) above I will focus in (iii) on a single point of contact between the two systems, namely their conception of moral choice and its operation.

The faculty of moral choice for Aristotle is prohairesis and for Buddhism it is cetanā: for both it is the pivot around which virtue and vice revolve. I hope to demonstrate the conceptual similarities in respect of the operation of this faculty in each case and thereby to establish a point of contact between Aristotelian and Buddhist ethics. The exploration of further specific points of contact will be a task for future research. Finally, in (iv), I will conclude the chapter with a few general remarks about the role of desire and the affective faculties in Buddhist soteriology.

In sum, in this chapter I will outline similarities in respect of the goal or end, the starting point, and the means of passing from the latter to the former. I am not suggesting

that we will find anything approaching complete agreement between the Buddha and Aristotle on these points, although there are many similarities and interesting points of contact. It does appear, however, that Aristotelianism provides a useful Western analogue which will be of use in elucidating the foundations and conceptual structure of Buddhist ethics.

(i) Eudaimonia

Aristotle's starting point is the goal-directed nature of human activity. All deliberate human action, he observes [NE1.1], aims at some goal or end. Some of these goals are ends in themselves while others are means to still higher ends. Men are not always clear about what their higher ends are and sometimes act in a confused and contradictory manner. The mature and responsible man, however, (to whom Aristotle addresses his lectures [NE1.3 1095a.1]), will seek to clarify his values and arrive at some conception of where his happiness, fulfilment, wellbeing, and flourishing lie. It is this final long-term end of flourishing which is constitutive of Aristotle's notion of eudaimonia, and it is this end which gives meaning and direction to individual lives.²

This final or second-order end need not be unitary and may embrace a range or cluster of primary or first-order ends. These first-order ends, however, will be selected on the basis of their conformity with the second-order end and will be pursued to the extent that they form a harmonious combination with other first-order ends. Eudaimonia as a second-order end, therefore, provides an orderly framework for the pursuit and attainment of subordinate or first-order objectives. In other words, one will select and participate in objectives according to and to the extent that such objectives are conducive to one's overall long-term flourishing or eudaimonia. Aristotle puts it as follows:

'If, then, there is some end of the things we do which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at be more likely to hit upon what is right?' [NE 1.2 1094a18-25]

Aristotle goes on to characterise further this good achievable by action: it must be final (teleion), self-sufficient (autarkes), that is to say which 'when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing' [NE 1097 b14-15]; again it must be 'most desirable of all things, without being counted as one good thing among others' [NE 1097b16-17]. In short, as Cooper puts it, the final human good will have the following three characteristics: (i) it is desired for its own sake; (ii) everything else that is desired is desired for the sake of it; (iii) it is never chosen for the sake of anything else [1975:92].

Eudaimonia, as a second-order end, must not be confused with the notion of a dominant end. As an example of the latter, a man who identifies his final good exclusively as the wielding of power may aim to become wealthy, cultivate the friendship of influential people, take up a career in politics and marry into the aristocracy. All of these things will be for him first-order ends since they are chosen to increase his power (the dominant end). This does not, of course, prevent him enjoying them in themselves, and not until these things frustrate the dominant end will they be

perceived as disvalues. Yet it is clear that they may do exactly that: things which are generally recognised as basic human goods, such as friendship and affection, may all too easily stand in the way of power. The person who desires power may find it can only be purchased at the expense of subverting truth, honour and friendship. And if power is truly a dominant end for him he will not hesitate to sacrifice these things. Such a conception is essentially utilitarian. Since a dominant end may conflict with and exclude other goods such a notion cannot adequately characterise eudaimonia. Eudaimonia (and Nibbāna) are inclusive of other goods rather than opposed to them. Many people, however, organise their lives around a dominant end and fail to take into account the pejorative effect this may have on their overall wellbeing or flourishing.

To lack even a dominant end is the mark of a confused person: faced with a plurality of competing appetites and goals among his first-order ends he will be without a criterion for choice and be pulled in different directions. Thus, says Aristotle:

'everyone who is able to live according to his own choosing sets up some goal (tina skopon) for the good life - honour, or reputation, or riches, or intellectual cultivation - by looking to which he will perform all his actions (since not to organise one's life with a view to some end is a sign of great stupidity)' [EE1.2 1214b4-14 tr. Cooper]

To have one's actions geared towards a dominant end, then, would be a step in the right direction. But geared towards which end? Aristotle mentions four possibilities above: honour, reputation, wealth, and intellectual cultivation.

Must one be selected at the expense of the others, and if so, on what basis is the evaluation to be made? Again, could any of these things alone constitute the complete good for man which Aristotle conceives eudaimonia to be? It seems not, since any of these concrete goods could be supplemented by the addition of another. Would it not be better, for example, for a millionaire to be wise as well as rich? Eudaimonia, then, cannot be defined as a single dominant end after the manner of utilitarianism. This is how Aristotle puts it:

'The self-sufficient we now define as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing; and such we think eudaimonia to be; and further we think it most desirable of all things, without being counted as one good thing among others - if it were so counted it would clearly be made more desirable by the addition of even the least of goods; for that which is added becomes an excess of goods, and of goods the greater is always more desirable. Eudaimonia, then, is something final and self-sufficient, and is the end of action.' [NE 1097b 13-22]

'Aristotle explicitly recognizes', says Cooper with reference to this passage, 'that flourishing must be conceived of as including a number of good things rather than as dominated by a single end.' [1975:99]

Let me summarise Aristotle's line of thought so far. Human action is goal directed; men pursue many and varied goals, but let us imagine there is one goal which constitutes the final good for man. What will this goal be like? It will not involve the random pursuit of multiple goods (a plurality of first-order ends), nor even one particular good amongst others (a dominant end). Rather it will include a number of good things (yet to be defined) in harmonious combination: this is how we are to understand eudaimonia or human

flourishing.

I believe that the formal characterisation of eudaimonia provided by Aristotle can be applied to nibbāna³. Aristotle has to argue for his characterisation of eudaimonia whereas the Buddhist tradition provides a ready-made and (formally) unambiguous characterisation of nibbāna. Whatever else nibbāna is, it is indisputably the summum bonum of Buddhism and may be characterised, like eudaimonia in the way described above: (i) it is desired for its own sake; (ii) everything else that is desired is desired for the sake of it; (iii) it is never chosen for the sake of anything else. This formal equivalence of eudaimonia and nibbāna seems unexceptionable, and in fact involves little more than the conceptual unpacking of the notion of an inclusive final goal.

So far I have discussed only the formal structure of eudaimonia as a second-order end and said nothing about its content, since this information must await a consideration of Aristotle's anthropology in the following section. Since an account of the Buddhist conception of the final goal as consisting of sīla and paññā has already been provided we may take this opportunity to illustrate why nibbāna can only be understood as a second-order end and not in terms of the dominant-end model.

A common view of Buddhist soteriology makes dominant a single end, namely knowledge or insight (paññā). This is an idea which I have constantly challenged in this thesis on the

grounds that it does not adequately embrace the fulness of human perfection which constitutes nibbāna. The conception of nibbāna has suffered from an intellectualistic interpretation which has led to it being identified with a purely cognitive condition.⁴ This is an impoverishment of its true meaning.

It is the failure to acknowledge the ethical dimension of nibbāna that lends plausibility to the utilitarian characterisation of Buddhist ethics. In the discussion of utilitarianism in the previous chapter I considered whether Buddhism was utilitarian with specific reference to the relationship between moral action (kamma) and its non-moral hedonistic consequences (kamma-vipāka). This is the most obvious sense in which Buddhism might be thought of as espousing a maximising policy, namely with respect to physical pleasure or material gain. I gave grounds for objecting to this interpretation in particular and to the characterisation of Buddhism as utilitarian in general. However, we may now consider in the context of eudaimonia another slightly different utilitarian conception of Buddhism in line with the interpretation of paññā as a dominant end. The proposal now is that Buddhism is utilitarian and that the value it seeks to maximise is paññā.

Let us assume, along with the intellectualist interpretation, that paññā is the final goal of Buddhism. This immediately raises the question of the role of sīla. As we have seen, Buddhism sets great store upon propriety and moral virtue, at times to an almost obsessive degree. It puts a premium upon

correct deportment, particularly in the case of monks and the emphasis seems to be upon a particular mode of being as right and proper, an end in itself rather than a means to an end. The model for imitation is the Buddha himself, as we saw in Chapter One, and at no time does he suggest through his actions or words that correct moral conduct is to be sacrificed in favour of other goals, objectives or advantages. In other words, ethical goodness is not a first-order end which may be subverted by a dominant end. A monk behaves properly because such conduct is right and good, and not as the result of a utilitarian computation of kammic consequences relative to the production of other goods. Rationalisations of conduct in terms of kammic expectations carry little conviction.

There is, of course, nothing inconsistent in the suggestion that although paññā is the supreme goal (the dominant end), other ends are acknowledged and pursued as well (first-order ends). If so these other ends must do nothing to frustrate the pursuit of paññā. Yet on this reading morality (and any other first-order end) would be secondary and subsidiary, and could make no claim upon the agent which conflicted with paññā. A dominant end functions to regulate choice, and in any conflict between morality and knowledge it would always be morality that was sacrificed. If one's stock of merit was sufficiently large there could be no objection to killing and other moral evils which (in the unlikely event) were instrumental to the acquisition of knowledge.

Again, on this reading, it is difficult to see why morality should be important at all beyond a certain limited point. Its function here would be twofold: one cosmological and the other psychological. The first function would be to provide a suitable form of rebirth, let us say as a human being; and the second would provide the necessary peace of mind for intellectual pursuits. Once these goals had been achieved there could be no incentive whatsoever to cultivate non-intellectual goods. If paññā were a dominant end, once the minimum moral investment for a suitable rebirth had been made, morality should be sacrificed to knowledge at every opportunity. No amount of moral good (since it is merely instrumental) would be important enough to forego the attainment of the smallest amount of intellectual good. Intellectual pursuits should always be given priority and since intellectual realisation is purely an individual matter one's own interests must always come first. Indeed, it may be truer to say that it was the overestimation of intellectual goods which led to the narrow self-interest of the Arhat ideal and not self-interest which led them to seek a private salvation. Yet the Buddha recognised a plurality of human social goods such as friendship (kalyāṇamittatā), which he went so far as to characterise as the whole of the religious life,⁵ and in view of this it is unlikely that he regarded social intercourse as merely a subordinate end to intellectual cultivation. Friendship has many dimensions, and to regard it as a means to an end is to deny what is most vital to it, namely the core of altruism and concern for the other's good without which it cannot survive. If the Buddha

regarded social goods as meriting the sacrifice of at least some intellectual good, as it appears he did, then paññā cannot be a dominant end.

Furthermore, generosity (dāna) and compassion (karuṇā) are psychologically impossible if engaged in on a means-end basis: in such circumstances these things become mere counterfeits of human goods. There is nothing to suggest that the Buddha commended them only with the proviso that they be abandoned in favour of intellectual advancement however small; indeed, Buddhaghosa recommends that if a choice is to be made it is sīla that should be cultivated in preference to paññā [Vism 1.136].

We may conclude, then, that the intellectualist thesis of paññā as a dominant end cannot account for the value which Buddhism places upon morality. The goal of moral perfection is not subordinate to the goal of intellectual perfection: rather both are coordinate parts of the final end.

To conclude this section we might enquire how the Aristotelian ethical system is to be classified. It is not utilitarian since it recognises a plurality of goods which cannot be traded off against a single utility. 'Eudaimonia', says Aristotle, 'is composed of certain good things [...] it is nothing else beside these, it is these' [MM 1184a26-29]. By partaking of these good things one partakes of the end, and one may be said to flourish to the extent that one participates in the basic goods constitutive of eudaimonia.

Morality is not a means to the end of happiness; rather happiness supervenes on excellent activity 'like the bloom on the cheek of youth'. Here lies the difference between Aristotle and utilitarianism, that Aristotle does not separate the right from the good whereas utilitarianism does. Cooper writes concerning Aristotle:

'For although he does hold that virtuous action is a means to eudaimonia, or human good, eudaimonia is itself not specified independently of virtuous action; on the contrary, eudaimonia is conceived of as identical with a lifetime of morally virtuous action . . . ' [1975:88]

Nor must we fall into the other extreme and classify Aristotle among the deontologists:

'It does not follow, of course, that Aristotle must be classed as a deontologist: for although he agrees with Kant in rejecting maximisation schemes of all kinds in favor of a definitely structured life, he does not think of moral constraints themselves as imposed on persons without regard for (and even despite) their own good, as Kant [...] tends to do. In Aristotle's theory, human good consists (partly) in virtuous action . . . ' [1975:88]

So how, then, should we classify Aristotle's ethics? I suggest that it is best described as teleological, if we understand this term as excluding consequentialist theories. For Aristotle there is an end or telos of human activity, namely the development of human potential, and although this goal may be only imperfectly realised its pursuit is an end in itself. By teleological, then, we should understand the continual expansion of individual capacity towards the goal of complete moral perfection. Buddhism too, is best understood as a teleological system which provides the framework for personal cultivation and accomplishment through a series of lives structured in accordance with a specific conception of human nature and its telos. I will turn now to

a consideration of other points of contact between the two systems and particularly to the starting point from which progress towards the telos is commenced.

(ii) Anthropology

In the preceding section it was argued that eudaimonia and nibbāna are not to be conceived of as identical with a single human good and must embrace a plurality of first-order ends. I will now outline the Aristotelian conception of the foundation upon which the choice of these ends will be determined by reference to Aristotle's doctrine of human nature, which he conceives of as having two principal facets.

The purpose of Aristotle's ethical enquiry is to determine the good for man (to anthropinon agathon), i.e. in what his flourishing consists. And in order to determine the good for man, says Aristotle, we must know something of the nature of man [NE 1.13]. Since man is a composite being (sunthetos ousia) his good will lie in the perfection of those elements of his nature which admit of perfectibility. Since matter is ethically neutral, human virtue is the virtue 'not of the body but of the soul' [NE 1.13]. Eudaimonia is therefore defined as an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue [NE.1.7], and an analysis of the powers of the soul will indicate the spheres in which this virtue may be achieved.

To understand how Aristotle arrives at his binary conception of human perfection we must consider his theory of the bipartite division of the soul and show how this is related to the final goal of human flourishing.

Greek notions of the soul (psyche) are no less complex and varied than their Indian counterparts. However, at the risk of overgeneralisation, we may say that a simple conception of the psyche would be as something which plants and animals possess but inanimate objects, such as rocks, do not.⁶ Man, as the highest of the animate creatures, also possesses the faculty of reason or intellectual power known as nous.

Aristotle's views on the soul changed during the course of his life, but his mature position is that of the De Anima⁷. For Aristotle the soul is the form of an animate body, it is the organisational principle which gives form to substances. Substances are compounds of form and matter, and the soul or psyche is the form of living organisms, such as the human body. Matter is the potential and soul is the form (eidos), essence (ousia), definition (logos), or actuality (energeia or entelecheia) of this potential. Just as matter and form are inextricably related, so are the soul and the body. Man is composite (sunthetos) but body and soul are aspects of the same substance. Body and soul are related non-dualistically: the soul does not stand over against the body as a separate thinking thing, and psychological phenomena are essentially psycho-physical. Aristotle explains the relationship between soul and matter by the use of a metaphor familiar to Buddhism. 'There is no need to enquire', he says in the De Anima, 'whether the soul and the body are one any more than there is to enquire whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one, or generally the matter of

anything and that of which it is the matter' [B.1.412b6-8]. However, Aristotle does suggest in the De Anima that the reasoning faculty of the soul (nous) may have an independent existence from the soul-body aggregate and be separable from it.⁸ He does not, however, specify what kind of individuality would belong to a mind thus separated.⁹

In De Anima 11 Aristotle acknowledges different degrees of sophistication of the psyche according to a hierarchy of faculties or powers. The five powers in ascending order are nutrition, appetite, sensation, locomotion, and thought. The lower the form of life the fewer of these powers it possesses: plants, for example, possess only the first while only man possesses them all. The second power, that of appetite (orexis), is the genus of which desire or lust (epithumia), passion or anger (thumos), and wish or volition (boulesis) are the species.¹⁰ The third, sensation, includes the five senses, the input from which is processed by a 'common sense', which is a faculty of nous. The power of thought in general has two applications, one theoretical and the other practical.

This rather complicated scheme of the powers of the soul collapses into a neat binary division according to which the soul has a rational part and a non-rational part [D.An.111]. We may most easily think of this in terms of the distinction between the cognitive and affective or in the simplest terms the head and the heart. This distinction is not entirely clear-cut and some powers of the soul may straddle both

sides: this is true of the power of sensation, and Aristotle also speaks of an 'imaginative' part of the soul as belonging to both sides. Before going any further let us illustrate the main terms and distinctions introduced so far in the form of a diagram [Fig.1] p 335.

Intellectual perfection, the excellence of nous, has two aspects: theoretical wisdom (sophia) and practical wisdom (phronesis). Sophia is that power of nous responsible for the 'perception of self-evident truths, such as the geometrical axioms'.¹¹ It is 'concerned only with permanent truths, which man is powerless to change.'¹² The best English equivalent for nous in this sense is 'intuition'¹³ or 'insight'. There is a close similarity between sophia and paññā, the latter being essentially concerned with the realisation of the truths of anicca, dukkha, and anattā.¹⁴

The second aspect of intellectual virtue lies in practical wisdom (phronesis). Practical wisdom is the perfection of the rational part of the mind in its capacity to select right means to good ends. The distinction between sophia and phronesis is an abstract one and they are best conceived of as different modes or operations of nous. As Finnis points out, these two functions should not be compartmentalised:

'Do not be misled by Aristotle's talk of two 'parts' of the intellect, the theoretical and the practical; or by Aristotelian and Thomist talk about 'the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect'. Despite these ways of talking, Aristotle and Aquinas were well enough aware that each of us has only one intelligence, only one capacity (power, ability ...) of understanding. So the differences between 'theoretical' and 'practical' understanding are

simply operational differences. And there are these differences between one's intellectual operations simply because there is a difference of objectives. One is thinking theoretically (i.e. 'speculatively', which need not mean conjecturally) when one is concerned primarily with discerning the truth about some topic. One is thinking practically when one is concerned primarily to discover or determine what to do, to get, to have or to be' [1983:10f].

Phronesis is a productive agent in human flourishing and is crucially involved in the cultivation of moral virtue: it proceeds by deliberation and terminates in choice. It is concerned with a particular thing to be done and the selection of means to ends. It channels the non-rational drives of the soul towards correct moral choice, and it is this pragmatic function which distinguishes it from sophia or intuition. Aristotle distinguishes between them in the following manner: the intuitive mode of nous 'is of the limiting premisses (horoi) for which no reason can be given, while practical reason is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object not of scientific knowledge but of perception' [NE VI.8 1142 a25-7].

The objects of sophia are theology (or metaphysics), mathematics, and physics [NE VI.8 1142 a17-18], while the object of phronesis is 'not knowledge but action' [NE I.3 1095 a5-6]. They deal respectively in what is necessary and what is contingent. Both, however, aim at truth: the contemplative intellect aims at truth, while the practical intellect aims at 'truth in agreement with right desire'. It must be assumed, although Aristotle does not say this in so many words, that phronesis also includes an intuitive appreciation of the goodness of ends¹⁵. Knowing an end as

good, practical wisdom calculates the means of attaining it and this process of calculation issues in the choice (prohairesis) of a course of action.

Sophia and phronesis, then, are intellectual virtues, and as such may be distinguished from the moral virtues. Allan summarises as follows:

'Sophia and phronesis are virtues of the mind; they are produced by teaching; and they consist in knowledge of true rules - accompanied, in the case of phronesis, by skill in applying such rules intuitively to given situations. [...] From these intellectual virtues, we have to distinguish the virtues of character (justice, bravery, temperance, etc) which, according to Aristotle's view, are essentially correct emotional dispositions, produced by training or habituation begun in early youth. These virtues, each in its proper sphere, consist not in knowledge of true principles, but in habits of liking and aversion' [1970:126f].

These 'habits of liking and aversion' (cf. rāga and dosa) are the twin poles of the emotional magnet and the nature of the field generated between them determines our non-cognitive potential. The structured disposition which this potential acquires is our character, and the virtues and vices are dimensions of our character. If a disposition is in accord with reason and conduces to human flourishing it is a virtue: if it is not in accord with reason and is detrimental to human flourishing it is a vice. Thus the 'character' of an individual may include both virtues and vices at the same time, and their manifestation will depend upon particular factors in the environment (situations or objects) drawing an emotional response. Moral virtue consists in making the appropriate response in different situations: this response will be in accordance with reason and in harmony with the

good for man. Vice is the failure or inability to respond in this way.

Let us now consider Aristotle's definition of ethical virtue.

It is:

'A state of character (hexis) concerned with choice (prohairesis) lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom (phronimos) would determine it' [NE 11.6 1106b36-1107a2].

Virtue is a settled disposition to choose rightly. Aristotle's further insight was that the right choice normally lies in a mean between extremes: bravery, for instance, is the mean between rashness and cowardice. There is no need for us to consider Aristotle's doctrine of the mean here and we may take him simply to be recommending the 'middle way' as the correct emotional orientation.

This is a good point at which to update our earlier diagram to take into account the subsequent discussion and illustrate Aristotle's conception of the operation of moral choice in terms of the powers of the psyche. Figure 2^(p 336)_Λ illustrates the interaction of the two parts of the soul in the sequence leading to choice (prohairesis). On the one hand the non-rational appetitive aspect (orexis) provides the stimulus to action from within the emotional spectrum of lust, anger and wish. On the other hand the rational part of the soul, through the faculty of Practical Wisdom (phronesis) evaluates the ends to be attained by action and deliberates as to the means. The whole process terminates in choice (prohairesis), and choices made in accordance with the true goal or end

(telos) of man will be conducive to human flourishing (eudaimonia).

The concept of eudaimonia with which we began this discussion has now received some colour. We are now in a position to understand the definition in the EE that 'flourishing is the activity of a complete life in accordance with complete excellence' (zoes teleias energeia kat'areten teleian) [11.1.1219 a38-9]. 'Complete excellence' means all the excellences of the psyche, or at least those which are distinctly human (powers of the nutritive faculty such as breathing are therefore excluded). Since the psyche is binary there are two categories of excellence, namely those pertaining to the mind (dianoetike) i.e. sophia and phronesis; and those pertaining to the character (ethike), such as the moral virtues of courage, temperance and generosity, etc. It should be remembered that Aristotle's discussion of the psyche and his categorisation of its powers is simply heuristic: in reality its nature does not permit of a clinical dissection and it has no 'parts'. Thus, as Allan points out [1970:127], the separation of the virtues of character from phronesis, which is a virtue of the mind, is a logical, not a real one. In fact, phronesis cannot be attained without moral virtue, and moral virtue without phronesis is blind.

The above is a brief sketch of the relation between Aristotelian psychology and Aristotelian ethics. The relationship between ethics and psychology in Buddhism is

broadly similar. For Buddhism, as for Aristotle, human nature is a compound of mental and physical elements. On the one hand there is physical form (rūpa), and on the other the four psychic (nāma) faculties of vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāna¹⁶. In terms of the psyche the basic human predicament is likewise emotional and/or intellectual deficiency epitomised by craving (taṇhā) and ignorance (avijjā). This deficiency leads to the formation of complexes (saṅkhāras) which bring about rebirth until they are dissolved. As explained in Chapter Two, the virtues dissolve saṅkhāras and the vices aggravate them. For both Buddhism and Aristotle human perfection lies in the balanced operation of the cognitive and affective aspects of the psyche, in other words in the correct operation and harmonious interpenetration of reason and emotion.

In the final analysis, and for Aristotle just as much as Buddhism, it is not possible to completely disengage the moral from the intellectual; the cognitive faculties are crucially involved in moral virtue. As seen in Chapter One, the two are 'washed around together'. In the following section I will consider in more detail how these faculties interact in the concrete situation of moral choice.

The discussion in this section has allowed us to glimpse the anatomy of the telos elaborated within the context of Aristotelian doctrine of the soul. It establishes the essential dimensions of human flourishing but says nothing

about the form this will take in specific situations. The manner in which this perfection is achieved will vary according to cultural and historical context, and the conceptions of the forms in which human flourishing manifests itself are many and varied. These forms will vary according to the selection of first-order ends and basic goods, and as these evaluations shift so too will the conception of which particular traits or qualities are to count as virtues. However, whichever ends are selected the structure of participation through the virtues remains the same. The virtues are the means to the gradual realisation of the end through the incarnation of the end in the present. Living in accordance with the end is, to borrow a phrase from Cooper, 'a progressive articulation of the end itself'. It is a project which is progressively realised through time in the transformation of personality. Whereas Aristotle allows for only one lifetime, in Buddhism this slow maturation takes place over the course of many lives - there is no 'sudden enlightenment' without prior cultivation, and liberation does not supervene, to borrow a phrase from Aristotle, 'like an adventitious charm.'

The end must lie within the parameters of human perfectibility, and to establish where these lie requires the co-operation of anthropology. Anthropology can illumine our understanding of human potential by establishing the facts about human nature. Since the final good must embrace all human potential for excellence, anthropology can help us to adumbrate the form this good will take. Thus from the

knowledge that the psyche is bipartite we can determine that neither part of the soul can be excluded arbitrarily from eudaimonia. But this is as far as anthropology, or any other factual enquiry, can take us. It may help to describe the form of the good but it cannot determine its content. To derive judgements of value from a factual description of the soul would be a form of the Naturalist Fallacy. It would make ethics depend upon theoretical rather than practical wisdom whereas the concern of ethics is not primarily with a theoretical understanding of human potential but with practical problems of moral choice and action. A purely descriptive, non-evaluative analysis of man cannot deal in the currency of human good; by itself it provides only a thin one-dimensional picture of human nature. A rounded conception of human nature and human good will require contributions from both disciplines. As Finnis puts it, 'Ethics is not deduced or inferred from metaphysics or anthropology. But a mistaken metaphysics or anthropology will block one's reflective understanding of the way in which one participates in the human goods' [1983:22].

What we learn from the fact of the soul's bipartition, therefore, is that the final good for man cannot be unilaterally exclusive. In the context of Buddhism, neither paññā nor sīla by themselves can constitute complete human flourishing. Let us now consider in more detail a specific point of contact between Aristotelian and Buddhist ethics which will help to illustrate the interaction of these two faculties.

(iii) **The Psychology of Moral Choice: Cetanā and Prohairesis**

In the preceding section we saw that Aristotle distinguishes between the cognitive and affective aspects of the psyche and subdivides the cognitive functions into theoretical and calculative applications. The binary model of reason and emotion is a useful conceptual tool, and can be used heuristically to further our understanding of Buddhist ethics by depicting the faculties of the Buddhist psyche (citta) in terms of the Aristotelian framework discussed so far. In both cases the excellence of reason is to be found in intuitive insight and the excellence of the emotions in moral perfection. Buddhism has no single term which is the equivalent of phronesis and it does not explain how correct moral decisions are arrived at in terms of its psychology with the precision we find in Aristotle and Aristotelian exegesis. Nevertheless, the material exists out of which such an explanation can be fabricated. This is essentially a task for further research but I will make a start in this section by focussing on the key ethical terms in each case, namely cetanā and prohairesis.

Figure 3 illustrates the distinctions made in Buddhist psychology, as discussed in Chapter Two, between the cognitive faculties and processes (saññā) and the affective ones (vedanā). We saw there that patterned dispositions or complexes (sankhāra) are formed from the interrelationship of the cognitive and affective powers of the psyche. The

rational powers of the mind may be thought of as having two applications: one concerns the intuition or understanding of principles or propositions (which may involve critical thought and analysis) through the faculty of paññā; and the other concerns the practical application of reason in respect of things to be done. In the Abhidhamma the latter operation involves the six secondary (pakinnaka) psychic functions (cetasikas) of vitakka, vicāra, adhimokkha, virīya, pīti and chanda.¹⁷ Practical reasoning involves deliberation, which embraces initial attention to the matter in hand (vitakka), reflection upon it (vicāra), and an intellectual decision or resolution (adhimokkha). The implementation of the resolution depends upon an impetus from the affective faculties to bring about the end envisaged through commitment (virīya), eagerness (pīti) and the desire or will to realisation (chanda). These two complementary processes are fused in cetanā, the compass-needle of moral choice which is deflected in accordance with the psychic field created around it. Assuming that one both understands what is good and also desires it, the moral course will lie towards virtue (kusala) and final perfection (nibbāna).

The outcome of the process described above is choice (cetanā). Cetanā is very much like prohairesis and stands at the crossroads of reason and emotion. Cetanā is often regarded as a purely cognitive function as the translation of it by 'intention' and 'volition' indicate. This narrowing of its meaning has been criticised by Poussin and Guenther.¹⁸ Instead, cetanā is best pictured as the matrix in which the

push and pull of the rational and emotional aspects of the psyche are funnelled in the direction of moral choice. It is a function of the total personality and not merely its cognitive operations. This might be expected in view of its identification with kamma: if cetanā was predominantly cognitive it would lack the dynamic transformative energy necessary for moral (kammic) development. Without the thrust of emotional commitment the appreciation of good ends remains static or takes the form of a vague and diffuse benevolence. In this sense meaning well or having good intentions is merely the counterfeit of moral character. 'Thus', writes Phillipa Foot, 'it seems right to attribute a kind of moral failing to some deeply discouraging and debilitating people who say, without lying, that they mean to be helpful' [1978:4]. We may note that the Kvu [Vll.4] widens the meaning of dāna to include something given as well as the intention to give. Thus dāna, and the other virtues, involve not merely the bare realisation that a practice is good, but also the instantiation of the practice. The implementation depends upon a personal commitment which involves more than purely intellectual assent to its goodness. In short, cetanā describes not merely intention but the total posture of the personality, both cognitive and affective.

In view of the above, cetanā is not to be confused with the Western concept of the will as a faculty distinct from the intellect and the emotions. This is neither a Greek nor an Indian idea, and its origin in Western intellectual history can be found in the writings of St. Augustine. 'It is

generally accepted', writes Dihle, 'in the study of the history of philosophy that the notion of will, as it is used as a tool of analysis and description in many philosophical doctrines from the early Scholastics to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, was invented by St. Augustine' [1982:123].

Augustine's purpose in elaborating the concept of will (voluntas) was to forge a link between his trinitarian theology and his anthropology such that the power of the will became the subjective reflection in human psychology of the creative energy of the divine logos. Such a position was in line with the biblical statement that man was formed in the image and likeness of the creator, and it is through the power of the will, Augustine argued, that man either turns towards or away from god. The will, as a distinct spiritual faculty ultimately independent of sensuous and intellectual life, becomes the seat of choice between good and evil. Dihle writes:

'From St. Augustine's reflections emerged the concept of a human will, prior to and independent of the act of intellectual cognition, yet fundamentally different from sensual and irrational emotion, by which man can give his reply to the inexplicable utterances of the divine will' [1982:127].¹⁹

It is likely that the origination of the philosophical concept of voluntas by Augustine was influenced and facilitated by the Latin language and its comparative lack of psychological refinement. Jurisprudential developments in the notion of voluntas as a hermeneutical concept in Roman law also served to blunt its psychological and philosophical

precision by allowing it to be applied indiscriminately to motivation of all kinds.²⁰ Greek, on the other hand, recognises no such faculty as the will in its psychological terminology. There is no Aristotelian expression for 'freedom of the will', and Aristotle is sometimes criticised for failing to develop an adequate theory of the will although, as Hardie notes, 'he did not do badly without it' [1980:163]. Kenny replies to this charge as follows:

'This criticism of Aristotle depends upon a certain view of the nature of the will. According to a view familiar in modern philosophical tradition, the will is a phenomenon of introspective consciousness. Volition is a mental event which precedes and causes certain human actions: its presence or absence makes the difference between voluntary actions. The freedom of the will is to be located in the indeterminacy of these internal volitions. The occurrence of volitions, and their freedom from causal control, is a matter of intimate experience [1979:vii].

Neither prohairesis nor cetanā are mental events in the sense of purely cognitive functions. A theory of the will as defined above is not to be found in Aristotle or Buddhism, and perhaps for good reason. Kenny continues:

'It is true that this account of the will is not to be found in Aristotle. This is not to Aristotle's discredit, for this whole conception of volition and freedom has been subjected, in our own time, to decisive criticism by philosophers such as Ryle and Wittgenstein. Philosophers who accept the criticisms of this school have attempted to build afresh a philosophical theory of the springs of human action which will be free of the confusions involved in the theory familiar in modern philosophical tradition. The resulting new structures bear a remarkable resemblance to what we find in Aristotle's Ethics' [1979:viif].

Buddhism is similar in not relying on a theory of the will to support its notion of moral responsibility. Karunaratna writes:

'The expression "freedom of will" or its equivalent is not found in the suttas or other authentic texts recording the teachings of the Buddha and its use in modern expositions

only reflects an unstated wish to interpret Buddhist thought in terms of the categories of Western thought'.²¹

Responding to the charge that the possibility of developing a positive psychology of will has been neglected by Buddhist scholars, De Silva writes:

'This certainly is an important area to be explored. But the word 'will' is semantically troublesome [...] The semantic position here is important: the term 'will' is so vague that it cannot be identical with the more diversified, specific and analytical Buddhist terms' [1979:78].²²

Cetanā is not a discrete mental faculty transcending thought and feeling - it is the particular configuration or deployment of psychic potential which is found within the individual human subject. The Asl defines it as follows:

'Volition [Cetanā] is that which co-ordinates, that is, it binds closely to itself associated states as objects.'

Cetayatī ti cetanā: saddhim attanā sampayuttadhamme ārammaṇe abhisandahatī ti attho [111 PTS tr.].

Cetanā describes the general moral stance or posture adopted by the psyche and its orientation with respect to ends. In this sense it is synonymous with saṅkhāra²³ and is both conditioned and conditioning. In all the major Abhidharmic classifications it is given as one of the basic and omnipresent factors of psychic life (mahābhūmika-dharma) and its influence is felt in all aspects of mentation. It may be thought of as referring to the underlying, perhaps unconscious, motivations and drives inherited in the form of predisposing complexes (saṅkhāras). These inherited attitudes and dispositions will carry through to influence specific moral choices and decisions made in the present, which will in turn predispose the subject further in line with the pattern of choices made. Cetanā may be directed towards good

or evil -it is the predominant cause of moral and immoral acts, and the other mental factors play only a minor supporting role: according to the Asl, cetanā is exceedingly energetic (atireka-vāyāmā) and makes a double effort (diguna-ussāhā) and a double exertion (diguna-vāyāmā) [Asl.111].

The imagery used to describe cetanā illustrates its organisational and directional function. In the Asl [loc.cit] it is compared to a landowner who takes 55 strong men (cetasika-dhammas) into the fields to reap, where he supervises them and energetically works alongside them. It is also said to be like a chief disciple, head carpenter or general who takes the initiative in action and is followed by the other students, carpenters or soldiers [Asl 111f]. It both initiates and sustains activity and focusses the whole personality upon the task or object in hand. In this respect it is both dispositional and operational - it predisposes to action and leads to a result. Vasubandhu brings this out when he defines karma as cetanā and the act which follows it (cetanā tat kṛtaṃ ca tat) [Kośa 1V.1]. According to the Sarvāstivāda a complete act involves both volition and bodily or vocal action.²⁴ Aung points out that the Abhidhamma distinguishes two aspects of cetanā: one which is co-present with the other cetasikas (sahajāta-cetanā) as an organising and orientating influence; and another which issues in a moral result (nānakkhanika-cetanā) in specific circumstances [Abhs tr.:16,193].

Cetanā embraces a continuum which runs from predisposition

through choice to action. The orientation of cetanā and the choices and actions it leads to will be determined by the interrelation of cognitive and affective potential on both conscious and unconscious levels. Thus Karunaratna:

'Cetanā or the will which is conditioned by affective and cognitive elements (vedanā, saññā) may either function as the closely directed effort on the part of the individual or it may function, as it often does, without conscious deliberation by him'.²⁵

In an article on the concept of the will in early Buddhism, Bruce Matthews [1975] brings out the complex interaction of the psychic faculties involved in volitional action:

'In my investigation of a concept of will in the Nikāyas, I have found that the most meaningful and useful definition is one that straddles the traditional conative, affective and cognitive 'roles', that embraces such terms as virīya (energy, striving), chanda (desire, intention), and dvārāni-sugguttāni (guarding the doors of the senses)' [1975:152].

Here cetanā is not the central focus of the discussion and Matthews concentrates rather on the affective inputs to volition (what he refers to as 'the positive characteristics of the early Buddhist concept of will') in order to rebut the assertion that all desire is thought wrongful and to be extirpated [infra S.(iv)]. At the same time, he is clear that if the concept of will is to be used in Buddhism at all it must be understood as embracing both emotional and rational faculties. Matthews draws a distinction between the impetus to action and the rational canalization of the impetus into a moral course:

'I justify this definition by arguing that if 'will' is characterized as simply 'energy' or 'striving', much of its moral and essentially ethical nature is lost, and likewise if it is characterized only in ethical terms, it loses that sense of positive drive so apparent in much of the Buddhist magga, or soteriological path' [1975:153].

Poussin, too, draws attention to the breadth of meaning of cetanā:

'We have said that an act is essentially cetanā, and translated this as 'volition'. But the notion that the word cetanā covers is complex and it is only recently that the translation as 'volition' has been proposed.

Buddhist language, in addition to cetanā, has a rich terminology. The Sarvāstivādins believe that: 1. Chanda, 'wish' defined as 'desire to act', 2. manasikāra, the 'act of attention' by which we ply or bend thought towards the object, and also 'judgement', 3. adhimokṣa, which is something like approbation or approval, are simultaneous with cetanā. Add vyāma 'effort', niśraya 'decision', as much in an intellectual as a volitional sense, adhyavasāya, 'resolution'. Add vitarka which, following 'wish', triggers off 'effort', which the schools sometimes make into a certain sort of cetanā, volition, and sometimes a certain sort of prajñā or 'knowledge'. The list is not complete, and its mere extent points to the absence of a term which exactly covers the idea of the will' [1927:135f].

As may be seen from the following statement, Poussin was clear that cetanā was neither an exclusively intellectual nor emotional faculty. He does not consider that it may be an interaction of the two and concludes instead that it is a separate power of the mind corresponding to the Augustinian notion of the faculty of the will:

'The relations between intelligence, passion and volition are mysterious, and the Buddhists did not give a methodical exposition of them. We are sure, at least, that cetanā, which is action, is not confused with desire or passion; it is not of the emotional order. On the other hand, if it belongs to the understanding, it is not confused with 'view' or opinion. Our doctors know that the will, although they name it badly, is distinct from motives of an intellectual order, from desires and from aversions' [1927:138].

There is no English term which satisfactorily includes all the meanings of cetanā. Guenther suggests that 'stimulus, motive or drive' are the most appropriate equivalents [1976:42f]. However, while this expresses well the

participation of the emotions it falls into the other extreme of ignoring the role of reasoning which 'volition' and 'intention' capture rather better. Many English terms have been suggested for cetanā;²⁶ the important point is that any translation must bring out precisely which point in the cetanā-continuum is being referred to.

Prohairesis similarly involves the co-operation of reason and desire. Aristotle says that prohairesis is 'either desireful reason (orektikon nous) or reasonable desire (orexis dianoetike) [NE VI.2 1139 b4-5]. Echoing this Kenny states that 'Prohairesis is at one and the same time desiderative thought and deliberative desire' [1979:94]. According to Gauthier:

'For him [Aristotle], an intention [prohairesis] is right when reason has so pervaded desire that this latter is drawn toward the very object that reason prescribes. This pervading of desire by reason is virtue itself, and this is why virtue rectifies intention' [1967:16].

Hardie distinguishes three ways in which Aristotle uses the term prohairesis which are similar to the range of meanings of cetanā:

- i) the desire to do an action
- ii) the decision to do an action
- iii) the initiation of an action. [1980:164].

Gauthier understands Aristotle as using the term in this inclusive sense such that the three components occur together:

'It is necessary to recall that for Aristotle an 'intention' necessarily expresses itself in action, for it is identified with 'decision'. Aristotle has only one word, prohairesis, to

designate both the one and the other. A contradiction has often been seen here - does Aristotle not teach that decision has means for its object, whereas intention is obviously directed towards an end? [...] This is to forget that an Aristotelian 'decision' is only directed to means in order better to be directed to the end. It is a sufficiently powerful desire for the end, so clarified by deliberation to make us take means to reach the end successfully; and if it is distinguished from the wish for the end which is boulesis, this is not because wish is directed toward the end, but because this wish is directed toward the end too weakly to take the means to reach it successfully. Indeed, it does not even know if those means exist. Thus what Aristotle means to say in making moral intention a prohairesis is that it is an effective act; the entirely Platonic wish or boulesis is not yet moral intention for him. Only the desire for the end which expresses itself in action is moral intention, and this is why virtue necessarily implies the decisive intention which is prohairesis and the exterior act which is praxis [...]. The first does not occur without the second' [1967:16f].

It would seem to be true of cetanā also that the intention and the praxis are constantly conjoined. To resolve the matter a detailed examination of the uses of the term would be required and I cannot embark on that here. We may, however, consider Guenther's opinion on the matter:

'We see that cetanā not only arouses mass activity but also sustains it so that certain definite results appear. This shows beyond doubt that the translation of cetanā by 'volition' is against all evidence [...]. In its most sharply distinguished sense volition designates merely the act of making a choice or decision, but it rarely suggests the determination to put one's decision or choice into effect. Volition is thus the very reverse of cetanā which everywhere is said to put something into effect' [1976:43f].

We may note, however, that what is put into effect need not be physical action, as Guenther seems to assume, and that the use of the term 'volition' may not be so inaccurate as he suggests. The Buddha seems to have held the view that the process of cetanā was followed by a praxis of some kind, and that after deliberation (cetayitvā) there was inevitably

action (kammam karoti). However, he distinguishes three types of praxis: bodily (kāyasā), vocal (vācāsā) and mental (manasā). Cetanā, then, inevitably reaches a terminus with moral implications, but the morally determinative praxis may be purely mental in form. When cetanā is used in this sense the translation of it by 'volition' may not be misleading.

While cetanā is morally determinative, action without cetanā is not ethically charged. This is not an idea which is peculiar to Buddhism. The English criminal law, for example, considers both the mental state of the accused and his overt actions. It draws a distinction between the mens rea and the actus reus: the latter is the physical action and the former is 'the state of mind which must be present in an accused if his overt action is to constitute a crime, and if he is to be held responsible for it.'²⁷ Kenny's explanation of mens rea brings out a point of difference between cetanā and prohairesis:

'In general, an enquiry into the mens rea of an accused is an enquiry into his reasons for acting as he did. When we say that someone acted for a certain reason, we are attributing to him both a cognitive and an affective state: a desire for a certain state of affairs to be brought about, and a belief that a certain manner of acting is a way of bringing about that state of affairs. Cognitive states of mind are those which involve a person's possession of a piece of information (true or, as the case may be, false): such things as belief, awareness, expectation, certainty, knowledge. Affective states of mind are neither true nor false but consist in an attitude of pursuit or avoidance: such things as purpose, intention, desire, volition. Some mental states, of course, are both affective and cognitive: hope and fear, for instance, involve both an expectation of a prospective state of affairs and a judgement of the state of affairs as good or evil. Very various cognitive and affective states may constitute mens rea in different crimes and in different circumstances [1978:46].

In law, generally speaking, mens rea by itself does not constitute a crime unless accompanied by actus reus. Prohairesis, too, (which Kenny translates as 'purposive choice') embraces both mens rea and actus reus. Cetanā, however, seems to allow for purely mental states as morally determinative, which means that for Buddhism a covert mental state will satisfy the requirement of actus reus, at least as far as moral action is concerned. In monastic jurisprudence, however, an overt actus reus is required for there to be a transgression of the Vinaya.²⁸ In the sphere of legal responsibility mens rea acknowledges a gradation of blameworthy states of mind from wilful intention through recklessness and negligence down to blameless inadvertence.²⁹

Motive alone, however, is not the sole criterion of rightness. As Poussin points out, following the Kośa, the ritual slaying of animals is not meritorious merely because Brahmins believe it to be so; nor is euthanasia for aged parents morally right even though it is the custom in certain countries [1927:30]. There is an objective standard of rightness discoverable and attainable through the partnership of reason and right desire. For cetanā to be virtuous it must conform to these requirements, and even acts performed from a good motive are wrongful if based on moha [Kośa 1V.68d].

We have noted that moral responsibility and moral choice are determined by the total personality with its cognitive and affective faculties. Cetanā, prohairesis, and mens rea are defined with reference to that core of the personality which

is the final resort of explanation for moral action and which is ultimately definitive of moral status. To say that reason is involved in this complex is not to say that moral choice is essentially calculative: on the contrary, virtue is seen most clearly in one who chooses promptly and intuitively what is right.³⁰ In such a person the desire for the good is instinctive and the choice of right means can be made immediately without the distorting influence of egotistical considerations. As Clark notes:

'The Buddhist and the Aristotelian saint alike are not pressed by self-control to do what is right, nor do they accompany their actions with verbal conclusions about what they ought to be doing - the conclusion of the practical syllogism is for them, as for animals, an action (De Motu 701a10f), not as it is for most of us a murmured encouragement to virtue' [1975:189].

The comparison with Aristotle has, I hope, enabled us to understand something of the theoretical structure of Buddhist ethics and its grounding in human anthropology. In this section I have sought to elucidate the nature of the relationship between reason and emotion and the way in which their interaction in a particular way constitutes moral excellence or virtue. In the course of this I considered the function and meaning of cetanā and compared it with Aristotle's understanding of prohairesis. In both cases moral choice was seen to be a function of the emotional and intellectual disposition of the agent.

(iv) The Desire for the Good

Cetanā, then, involves a moral conclusion which may or may not manifest itself in bodily or vocal action. Let us assume that a choice is made in favour of virtue, i.e. in accordance with Buddhist values. This will be a rational choice motivated by a desire for what is good and deriving its validation ultimately from the final good for man (nibbāna). It may seem odd in a Buddhist context to speak of 'desire' in this context, and I wish now to clarify briefly the role of the affective faculties in the pursuit of the final good.³¹

It is an oversimplification of the Buddhist position to assume that it seeks an end of all desire. Such a view, however, is not uncommon. Poussin succumbed to it for a time, confessing in 1927 'I believed for a long time that a Buddhist should not desire Nirvāṇa before coming to recognise that the desire for what is good (kuśaladharmacchanda) is necessary and important' [1927:152]. The eradication of desire would be an artificial suppression of the affective side of human nature and result only in apathy. What Buddhism seeks an end of is desire for what is not good and for what is in some sense extraneous to man's nature, that is to say, desire which is perverted by ignorance (avijjā). It seeks an end to the desire for false values (vipallāsa), and the replacement of worthless objectives by an orientation of the personality towards what is truly good.

There are two aspects to the rectification of desire: first the curbing of its excessive forms through temperance or restraint (samvara); and second the channelling of desire towards that which is identified as good after a programme of correct rational analysis. Buddhism has never sought the complete eradication of desire. Even the Buddha was not free of desires, although he was, of course free from desire motivated by delusion (selfish desire). His desire for the wellbeing of others remained throughout his life, and he tells us that as far as others are concerned he desires their good, welfare, and freedom from bonds.³² 'Purposeful activity' (sankheyyakāro) is said to be one of his characteristics [Sn.351]. As Mrs. Rhys Davids points out, in the work of the earlier translators the single English word 'desire' is made to do duty for no less than 17 Pali words including tanhā, 'not one of which means desire taken in its ordinary general sense but rather in that of perverted, morbid, excessive desire' [1898:54]. This excessive desire is the result of want (ākaṅkhā) becoming craving (tanhā), desire (chanda) becoming lust (chanda-rāga), lusts of the flesh (kāma-rāga) and sensual delight (nandi-rāga) [1898:49]. In the same vein she writes in her Introduction to the Dhs:

'Now we cannot afford to impoverish our ethical (and aesthetical) concepts by squandering this term [sc. 'desire'] outright on tanhā, and thereby, so to speak, making the devil a present of all desire - even of that dhammachanda that drove Prometheus to fight Zeus, that drove the Buddha from home to the Bo tree, that drove Christ to bring down heaven to earth. Much harm hereby has been wrought by translators, whose cheapening of the word 'desire' has justified the superficial criticism which perennially speaks of Buddhist ethics as the 'negation' or 'extinction of all desire' [Dhs tr.:244f].

Failing to distinguish the various forms of desire has led to confusion as to the overall Buddhist objective.³³

Desire, even in its extreme form of craving (tanhā), is not merely a free-floating emotion which attaches itself willy-nilly to a succession of objects. It is desire for things under a certain description, namely that it would be good to have, possess and enjoy those things. It is the conception of them as good things which provides the stimulus and motivation for pursuing them. It is not simply that one has a quotient of amorphous desire that can be satisfied by indiscriminate means. On the contrary, these and other things are felt wants insofar as they are conceived of as good. 'Emotions', writes MacIntyre, 'are intentional, that is, they presuppose beliefs and we cannot characterise the emotion except in terms of the relevant object of belief' [1971:245]. The goal of eliminating desire per se is unintelligible, since there is no such thing as desire as a brute fact. To aim at the destruction of 'desire' is to tilt at windmills. It is not desire that is to be eradicated but the desire for things mistakenly conceived of as good (desirable) when they are not. What is required is insight (paññā) into the unworthy nature of these objectives and their replacement by worthwhile (good) ends.

There are many and varied conceptions of what is good. The job of practical wisdom (phronesis) is to identify what is truly good (and hence truly desirable) and to pursue it intelligently. Things which are truly good will participate

in and promote human flourishing while things which are bad will be deleterious and prejudicial to it. Virtue (kusala) involves both a correct identification of the good and a participation in it, and it is from this participation that arises the emotionally-toned satisfaction and delight in the good. Here the emotional response is quite appropriate. Tanhā, on the other hand, is essentially an incorrect evaluation and inappropriate emotional response - it is the counterfeit of correct emotional participation. If there is no emotional response (and this vacuity is what many mistakenly believe Buddhists to aim at) then a dimension of human experience is arbitrarily denied. In fact Buddhist sources point out the joy and satisfaction of the religious life both in the pre- and post-enlightenment condition [Collins 1982:192]. The importance of participation by the total personality in aims and objectives is recognised not only by Buddhists. Thus Finnis:

'Typically, success in the attainment of any goal is itself an experience, indeed an experience which is pleasurable and satisfying. What matters to us, in the last analysis, is not the emotional experience of getting knowledge, but coming to know; not the emotions of friendship, but being a friend [...]. But in each case, there is typically an emotional aspect to participation in one or other of these goods, and that emotion or feeling is one aspect of their reality as human goods. True, a participation in these goods which is emotionally dry and subjectively unsatisfying is still good and meaningful as far as it goes. But these goods are not participated in fully unless they are experienced as good. That characteristic human experience of good we call emotion or (intensional) feeling. Such full participation in good is the opportunity made possible by our bodily/intellectual nature, given favourable circumstances' [1983:47f].

Human good cannot be complete if it is only participated in by the intellect; to be fully realised it must be seen as good and felt as good, and this involves an appropriate

emotional response. Aristotle's doctrine of the mean (which we have not dealt with here) is essentially an attempt to establish where an appropriate emotional response lies. 'I take the doctrine', writes Richard Norman, 'to be a thesis about the proper relation between reason and feeling' [1983:50]. Norman regards the Aristotelian thesis as lying midway between the extreme positions typified by Plato and D.H. Lawrence. For Plato, reason (logos) must assert authoritative control over the other two parts of the soul (desire and anger). For Lawrence, on the other hand, 'reason should keep out of the way, and leave room for the free and entirely spontaneous expression of the feelings' [1983:51]. Aristotle adopts a middle position and so, essentially, does Buddhism, although we also find in the latter positions closer to both extremes. Thus we find talk in the Theravāda of extirpating the passions as if they had an autonomous life independent of reason; and in the Mahāyāna by the time of Śāntideva rāga is spoken of as a virtue and becomes almost a sine qua non of enlightenment.³⁴ Neither Aristotle nor the Buddha accepted these extremes, and Norman can be read as referring to both when he says of the former:

'I want to suggest that we can usefully see Aristotle as questioning the necessity of this antagonism. For Aristotle, feelings can themselves be the embodiment of reason. It is not just a matter of reason controlling and guiding the feelings. Rather the feelings can themselves be more or less rational. Reason can be present in them' [1983:52].

To say that feelings are rational means that they are appropriate to the situation. For Aristotle strong emotions such as anger could be appropriate in certain circumstances, and we may notice that 'righteous anger' also has a place in

Christianity. For Buddhism, however, this is an extreme emotional response. The ideal in Buddhism is a gradual attenuation of responses of this kind and given its extended time-scale for human perfectibility, such a goal is thought to be attainable and admirable.

For Aristotle, the correct response (the mean) is to be determined by the man of practical wisdom (the phronimos). For Buddhists the phronimos is the Buddha, and it is his choice which determines where virtue lies. Buddhist ethics, as we have seen, is founded on his conduct. The goal of Buddhist soteriology is the transformation of character in accordance with this ideal, so that all choices and actions will be virtuous like those of the Buddha. Phronesis and virtue are inseparable in action and are almost inseparable conceptually. Aristotle sometimes contrasts them by saying that virtue makes the end right and phronesis adopts the right means. In practice, however, as Ackrill notes, the two cannot be disentangled:

'Since the pursuit of an objective involves thinking of it, while carrying out things necessary to be done depends on having a desire to do them, thought and desire seem to be involved with one another at each stage of effective deliberation and action. Both have to be faultless if a man is to be either phronimos or morally good; and if they are, he is both phronimos and good' [1973:29].

In this chapter we have considered the overall ethical structure of Buddhism in the light of the Aristotelian model. Both are teleological systems, and we examined their conceptions of the final goal or telos, the starting point in untutored human nature from which one moves towards this

telos, and the mechanism of moral choice by which progress towards this goal is made. A more detailed investigation of the points of similarity and difference must be the subject of further research.

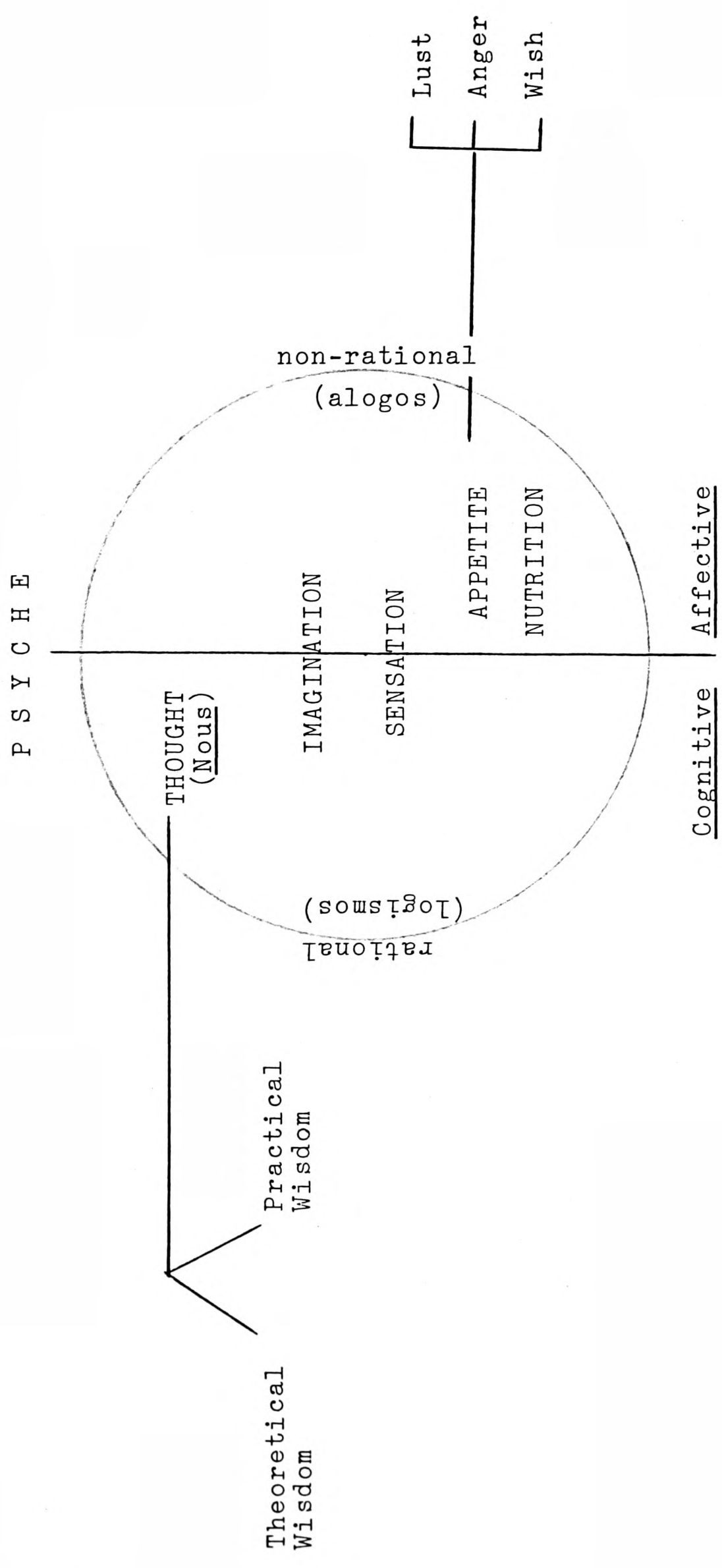


Figure 1. The Powers of the Psyche

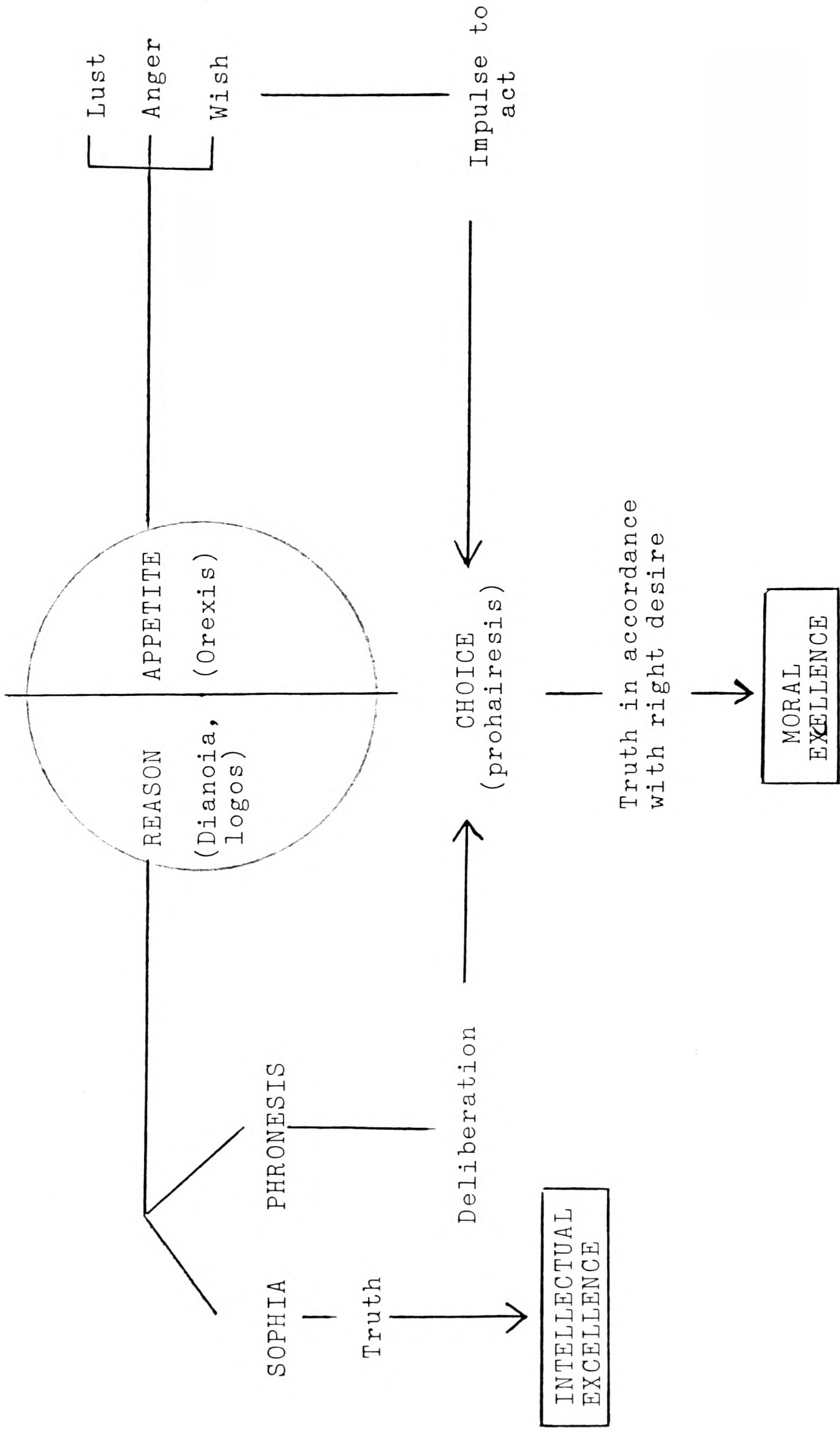


Figure 2. The Powers of the Psyche
and their functions

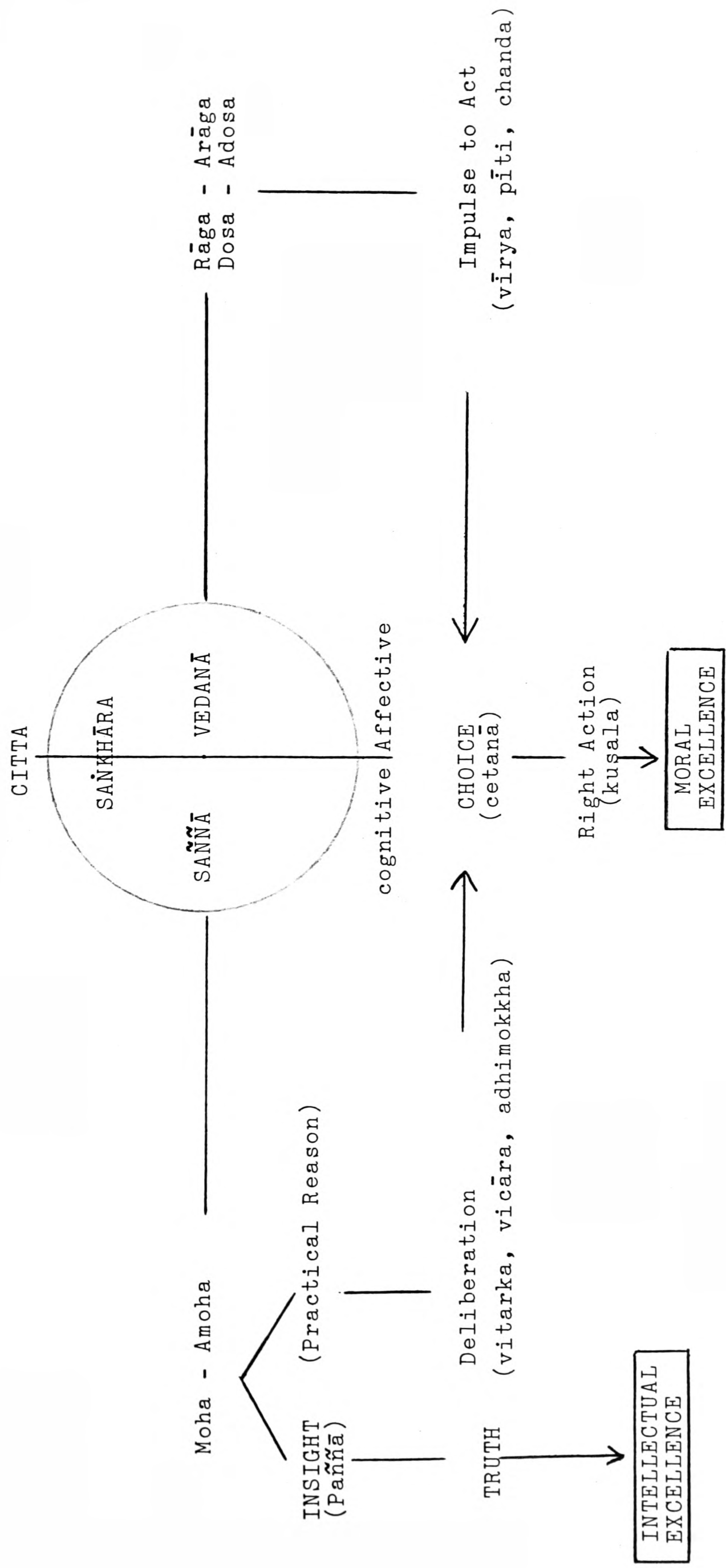


Figure 3. The Powers of Citta
and their functions

Notes to Chapter Six

1. The facts concerning the composition of these works are disputed. I am following Cooper [1975:xi]. For a more cautious opinion see Hardie [1980:6,9], who has more recently admitted that the latest research favours Cooper [1980:359]. Cf. Kenny [1979:ixf]. The translations of Aristotle's works I have relied on are in the series edited by Sir David Ross [1908]. A useful summary of the central portions of most of the texts relevant to our present enquiry (excluding the MM) may be found in Ackrill [1973].

2. The translation of eudaimonia as 'flourishing' continues to gain ground over the less satisfactory 'happiness' favoured by earlier translators. 'Happiness' connotes a less stable emotional condition than the long-term structured participation in virtue which is eudaimonia.

3. All references to nibbāna in this context are to 'nibbāna-in-this-life' (sopādisesa-nibbāna). The notion of nibbāna as a collection of basic goods is considered and rejected by Gudmunsen without reference to Aristotle [1973:42-46]. His reasoning seems to be that all nibbānic goods (e.g. nibbānic 'peace') are 'qualitatively' and 'existentially' distinct from their worldly counterparts.

4. The same has happened to Aristotle's eudaimonia. Cooper's work [1975] is an attempt to counteract this interpretation.

5. S.V.2; On the duties and obligations of an individual in society see Weeraratne [1976:Ch.3].

6. Allan [1970:Ch.6].

7. On the stages of his development and the dispute concerning the intermediate position see Hardie [1980:Ch.V].

8 Cf.Hardie [1980:72].

9. It is not my purpose here to enter in detail into this intriguing but recondite aspect of Aristotelian anthropology. However, the similarity between the Buddhist and Aristotelian conception of man as a psycho-physical aggregate with a detachable conscious component bears further examination.

10. Cf.Kenny [1979:13]

11. Allan [1970:49].

12. ibid:126

13. ibid:49

14. supra p.126

15. For a discussion of the issues here see Hardie [1980] Ch.XI, especially p.227: 'The end, according to Aristotle, is an object of desire, and it moves us by being the object of thought or imagination. Hence practical wisdom, if it is to be complete and not headless, must include the intuitive thought of the end as well as the intellectual powers required for the discovery of means.'

16. The 'psychic' (nāma) faculties are sometimes listed as fivefold, e.g. at S.ii.3: 'Feeling, cognition, volition, contact of the senses with their objects (phassa), and attention: these are the psychic (nāma) faculties' (Vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro: idam vuccatī nāmam).

17. On the meaning of these terms see Asl 142-145; Govinda [1974:119]; Guenther [1976:49-60].

18. Guenther [1976:43n]; Poussin Kośa IV.2n. and infra. Mrs. Rhys Davids also admits, 'I regret the rendering of cetanā by 'volition' in the later editions of my Buddhist Psychological Ethics (1923)' [1936:276].

19. Cf. p.132: 'But it seems to be clear without further explanation that a notion of will, as distinct from both irrational impulse or decision on the basis of knowledge, was indispensable in the theory of St. Augustine'. Augustine also believed that the will would invariably choose the worst due to the corruption of human nature in the Fall, and that only with the help of God's grace could man choose rightly.

20. The role of the Latin language in the formation of the concept of the will is discussed at length by Dihle [1982:132ff].

21. EB 'cetanā' p.91.

22. De Silva prefers to analyse the specific conative terminology of Buddhism 'against the background of the concept of saṅkhāra' [loc.cit]. He translates 'attakāra' as 'free will' and 'purisakāra' as 'personal endeavour' [op.cit:7]. Cf. Jayatilleke [1971:54]: 'On this occasion the Buddha says that there is such a thing as 'an element of initiative' (ārabha-dhātu) and as a result one can observe beings acting with initiative and this says the Buddha is what is called 'the free will of people' (sattānam attakāro). He also goes on to say that there is an 'element of origination' (nikkama-dhātu), an 'element of endeavour' (parakkama-dhātu), an element of strength (thāma-dhātu) and an element of perseverance (thiti-dhātu) and an 'element of volitional effort' (upākkama-dhātu), which makes beings of their own accord act in various ways and that this showed that there was such a thing as free will (A.iii.337,338)'.

23. 'What, monks, are the formations? There are six kinds of

intentions: the will for form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects' (katamā ca bhikkhave saṅkhārā? Chayime bhikkhave cetanākāyā, rūpasañcetanā, sadda-gandha-rasa-phoṭṭhabba-dhamma sañcetanā, ime vuccanti bhikkhave saṅkhārā [S.iii.60]).

24. On their theory of the four stages of an act see Kośa IV.68c.

25. EB 'cetanā' p.90.

26. Karunaratna lists: 'will, volition, intention, motivation, conation, drive, stimulus, disposition, determination, effort, choice, resolve, arrangement, organisation, aspiration, purposive intellection, mental construction and formative tendency' [EB. 'cetanā' p.86].

27. The Oxford Companion to Law by David Walker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

28. Bareau writes: 'From the point of view of the Buddhist legislator, responsibility is far more closely associated with the execution of the crime than with criminal intention' [1956:221].

29. On exonerating conditions in the Vinaya see Little & Twiss [1978:222-5]; supra p.212

30. Cf. Foot [1978:4f].

31. Further references to the positive role of desire in the Nikāyas may be found in Matthews [1975].

32. 'Puriso atthakāmo hitakāmo yogakkhemakāmo ti kho bhikkhave Tathāgatassa etaṃ adhivacanam arahato sammāsambuddhassa' [M.i.118].

33. Cf. the fruitless debate between A.L.Herman and others in PEW [vol.29 No.1 1979; vol.30 No.4 1980] on the so-called 'paradox of desire'. If all desire is wrong, it is suggested, then desire for the Dhamma is wrong. Herman devotes a long section of his recent book [1983:320-324] to the same misconceived debate. In fact this very question is dealt with in the Canon [S.v.271ff] where Ānanda makes it clear that desire for nibbāna is not a hindrance to its attainment. Cf. A.v.346f where a passion for the Dhamma (dhamma-rāga) and delight in the Dhamma (dhammanandi) are said to lead upwards to enlightenment.

34. Śikṣā 92.4-10

CONCLUSION

As statements of the conclusions reached have been provided in the course of the discussion my summary here will be brief. Our three objectives stated in the Introduction [p.2] were as follows: i) to enquire into the meaning and content of sīla; ii) to relate sīla to the overall conception of human good culminating in liberation as expounded by the Buddha; iii) to put forward a hypothesis concerning the formal characterisation of the Buddhist ethical system.

These objectives overlap to a considerable degree, and this has been reflected in the structure of the discussion in the course of each chapter. Broadly speaking, however, the first received specific attention in Chapters One and Four, with separate reference to sources from the Small and Large Vehicles respectively. The substantive preceptual content of moral codes and related classifications was examined both as an end in itself and for the light it could shed upon our further objectives. Of particular interest here were the reformulated moral codes elaborated by the Mahāyāna and the pattern of ethical push and pull which seemed to lead in two directions at once. It sought to excel the sīla of the Śrāvakas both in the rigour of its discipline and in its devotion to the service of others, and this tension found stability of a kind in the tripartite ethical structure consisting of śīla as temperance (saṃvara), pursuit of the good (kuśāla-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla), and altruistic concern

(sattva-artha-kriyā-sīla).

The exploration of our second objective ran thread-like through Chapters One to Four. The binary pattern of human good consisting of sīla and pañña was located in the SKV and traced through to its systematic formulation by the Abhidharma in Chapter Two. The role of samādhi in this binary scheme was also outlined at this point. In Chapter Three we sought to challenge an alternative conception of Buddhist value theory and the soteriological telos which posited a fundamental cleavage between the twin spheres of human good. The relegation of ethics to the 'kammic' and its divorce from the 'nibbānic' was resisted as a distorted representation of Canonical teachings and contemporary practice. The commonly adduced Canonical support for this view, such as the Parable of the Raft, was examined and reinterpreted in a manner which, in our submission, is more consonant with the original sources and the overall scheme of Buddhist soteriology. The bilateral scheme of human good proposed so far was also found to be evident in Mahāyāna sources in the scheme of the Perfections (pāramitās) and the emphasis on Wisdom and Means (prajñā and upāya) as the two essential qualities of a bodhisattva.

While noting the bilateral spheres of human good as fundamental, our sources also evince a shift in the pattern of emphasis given to each. The historical development of the Buddhist tradition may in fact be regarded as fuelled by the inner dynamic of this synthetic relationship. In the Small

Vehicle we see the ascendancy of Paññā and in the Large Vehicle the rise of Karunā to the point where it eclipses the former and achieves the status of a supreme ideal. This development triggers the appearance of antinomian doctrines both in a metaphorical form (upāya₂) and possibly also prescriptively ordained (upāya₃). !

Our final objective was to put forward a formal characterisation of the Buddhist ethical system, and to this purpose we turned our attention in the final two chapters. We considered first of all the possibility of Buddhist ethics as a member of the utilitarian family of ethical theory, to which the closest approximation would be a form of NRU. This was rejected on a number of grounds and we concluded that the resemblance between Buddhist and utilitarian ethics could not be maintained on closer investigation. The possibility still exists, however, that a form of the upāya doctrine (upāya₃) may lend itself to a characterisation as a utilitarian hybrid along the lines of the Situation Ethics of Joseph Fletcher. Further anthropological and textual research would be needed to determine the basis for such a claim.

Finally, in Chapter Six, we turned our attention to what seems to be the most promising and fruitful candidate for a Western analogue to Buddhist ethics, namely the ethical theory of Aristotle. Both Aristotle and the Buddha were alike in eschewing metaphysical notions and directing their attention to the practical and empirical. The central concern of both is with the telos of human nature and the means of

attaining it. The abstract similarities of the two systems were explored in Chapter Six together with a test-case examination of a specific point of contact with respect to moral choice and intention. For Aristotle the good for man is something to be participated in but never completely attained, whereas for the Buddha the goal of full perfection was achievable over the course of many lifetimes through the patient cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path.

In the Introduction [p.32] I promised to return at this point to the question of the theoretical clarification of Buddhist ethics in the terminology of Western philosophical ethics and summarise reasons for the characterisations I outlined in advance. My reasons for the characterisations offered will have become apparent in the course of the discussion but we may state them now once again as follows. The description of Buddhist ethics as egotistic must be rejected on the basis of the discussion in Chapter Two where the Buddha's moral perfection was seen to be motivated by sympathy (anukampā) and fraternal concern. The widely-held view of Buddhist ethics as egotistical stems from an instrumentalist conception of kamma and a linear soteriology which regards sīla as a step to be 'got over'. The alternative characterisation of Buddhist ethics as altruistic is more appropriate but requires qualification in view of the personal soteriological consequences of ethical development which are not to be lost sight of. Moral development in Buddhism never occurs at the expense of one's own long-term good: it benefits both oneself and others. In terms of the

patterns of validation offered by Little & Twiss [1978:236] we may accordingly strike out the possibility of 'unqualified intrapersonal teleology' (i.e. ethical egoism). The two remaining possibilities of 'qualified intrapersonal teleology' and 'qualified extrapersonal teleology' are both inadequate by themselves since the dominant pattern of validation in Buddhism recognises the simultaneity of one's own and the other's good.

On the issue of Relativism and Absolutism we again steer a middle course which acknowledges variation within a structured pattern of the pursuit of human good. The good for man is not arbitrary - it is governed by the facts of human nature and the inalienable characteristics of the world we inhabit, such as impermanence and change. A position of extreme relativism is therefore ruled out. Yet within these confines forms of life and codes of conduct may vary to some degree, a fact acknowledged by the Buddha, and the basic goods may be participated in in a variety of ways; the absolutism is, accordingly, attenuated and qualified.

Finally, we may characterise Buddhist ethics as objectivist and naturalist, a position consonant with the empiricism of the Buddha. Ethical judgements are objective since criteria are provided for an assessment of their rightness and wrongness [Jayatilleke 1970b; Weeraratne 1976:58-65] independently of subjective moral perception or preference. And Buddhist ethics is naturalist in view of the account of moral action which may be given in terms of the psychological

constitution of the moral subject [Chapter Two]. My reasons for characterising Buddhist ethics as teleological rather than consequentialist have been fully set out in the course of the last two chapters.

As mentioned in the Introduction, at this stage of the enquiry our conclusions must remain tentative and provisional. My purpose in this thesis has been to map out the ethical landscape of Buddhism as a preliminary to research in more specific areas in the hope that such research will be illumined by a greater awareness of the geography of the whole.

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