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## 由尼柯耶論喬達摩成佛之道

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### 摘要

此次演講主要探討有關喬答摩成佛之道上的幾個問題。首先，根據尼柯耶，可以確定喬答摩修四禪。其次，「我」和「現法涅槃」並未出現在喬達摩修四禪的敘述中。接著討論的是達到初禪後的精神體驗。依據《梵網經》巴利原文的語法分析，達到初禪之後並不是住於初禪，因為「初禪」只是一個名相，代表一連串心理狀態。綜合《梵網經》和《布喻經》的敘述，由於禪修者刻意捨離了渴欲的對象與不善的心理狀態，有尋、伺、淨信、歡悅、喜、身輕安、樂等心理狀態自然地次第升起，最後止於三摩地。禪修者能在三摩地中持續一段時間，也就是安住於三摩地。此時心中對於感受完全沒有任何思惟憶念，因此沒有自我意識的束縛，這或許是喬達摩把「我」一詞從他禪修的敘述中剔除的原因。達二、三、四禪後，一樣會住於三摩地。然而，因為有擾動定境的因素，四禪以下只能暫住於三摩地。這些因素在初禪、二禪、三禪分別為尋伺、喜、樂。住於第四禪的三摩地，沒有擾亂定境的因素，所以是穩固的，沒有自我意識的約束，沒有覺受的影響，禪修者達到高度禪定，並且正念具足。此時才有可能獲得真正客觀的知識，毋需藉助邏輯思考。喬達摩達四禪住於三摩地時，依次如實知自己的過去世、眾生的過去世、苦樂生死輪

轉無盡，最後得「漏盡智（āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna）」，亦即有關除滅三種有漏的智慧。然而證得漏盡智菩提並不等同於證涅槃，因為還有想蘊會干擾定境。為了要住於定境不受干擾，喬達摩另外修無色定，最後達到滅想受定，止息了一切受蘊，並且把想蘊降低至不足以干擾定境的程度，這個境界最接近涅槃的狀態，這是禪修者在此世間可以經歷到的涅槃。在達滅受想定之後，喬達摩便自稱為「如來（Tathāgatā）」。

**關鍵詞：** 1.初禪    2.無上現法涅槃    3.三摩地    4.漏盡智    5.如來  
6.我

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今天我將要討論有關喬答摩成佛之道上的幾個問題。首先，喬答摩是否修四禪？有些學者認為他沒有修四禪。這種見解根本站不住腳，因為遍尋五部尼柯耶，沒有一處提到這種說法；相反地，在這些原始經典中一致記載著：不僅是喬答摩，連他的弟子都修四禪。所以喬答摩當然是修四禪的。

五部尼柯耶中對於四禪有兩種敘述，其中之一屬於無上現法涅槃學派（此派主張，證得無上涅槃時，萬法俱存）。這兩套說法幾乎完全相同，主要的差異只是：「此時，這個『我』已經達到涅槃。」這句話只出現在無上現法涅槃學派的敘述中，卻不見於喬答摩所修四禪的敘述。這或許是後世在結集時省略了這句話，因為沒有提到「我」，就表示證得無我實相。然而喬答摩當時還在修行初階，尚未經歷過自我消融，因此，「我」這個字眼，原來應該出現在喬答摩修四禪的敘述中。此外，當時所有的沙門都相信有常我或暫時的我的存在，這也可以佐證喬答摩修四禪的敘述中應該包含「我」這個字眼。

「無上現法涅槃」這個名相也應包含在喬答摩修四禪的敘述中。在無上現法涅槃的境界，所有的感受（受蘊）都已泯滅，然而感官認知機能（想蘊）依然完整地運作；換句話說，除了感受以及隨之而起的自我意識之外，達到無上現法涅槃的修行者仍有感覺認知憶想的活動。證道之後的喬答摩並不認為這是最高境界的涅槃；他認定世間究極的涅槃是滅受想定，此時不僅無一絲感受的束縛，甚至連所有的認知憶想也幾乎蕩然無

存。但是修四禪階段的喬答摩還沒有經歷過滅受想定，當時他既然不知道有任何境界更勝無上現法涅槃，自然不會在他修四禪的敘述中刪去這個名相。

然而，兩種不同的敘述也許不是由於後世結集的增刪。喬答摩之所以不認為此「我」達到無上現法涅槃有更深一層的理由，有關他修四禪的敘述和他實際的禪修經驗是一致的。這點稍後再討論。

另外，我想討論一個人達到初禪後精神方面的體驗。前面提到的兩種敘述都是有關相同的精神體驗，為了方便起見，我們主要依據《梵網經》中對無上現法涅槃學派的禪修敘述來討論這個問題，相關的經文照錄如下：

捨離了渴欲的對象與障礙聖道的心理狀態，而且也已經達到了初禪——初禪中有尋有伺，由捨離而生，並以喜、樂為特徵——之後，他安住。

此時，這個「我」（soul，靈魂，神識）已經達到了無上現法涅槃的境界。

這就是巴利原典所要傳達的意義，但是至今我所看過的翻譯對這段經文多有誤譯之處，因此也就扭曲了原義。在此，我僅提出一個對我們研究有重大影響的誤譯，也就是引文最後一部分的翻譯：「……現在，他達到且住於初禪。此時，這個『我』

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（soul，靈魂，神識）已經達到了無上現法涅槃的境界。」

譯者顯然改變了原義：原文「捨離」和「達到」這兩個動詞的型態是表示過去的動作，因此「捨離」和「達到」這兩個動作純粹屬於已發生的行為，和現在毫無關係，而譯者雖然正確地傳達出「捨離」過去式的意味，卻毫無根據地把「達到」轉變為現在式的動詞。這樣的翻譯顯示譯者認為修定的人住於初禪，而初禪就是無上現法涅槃。譯者這種認知我們不敢苟同，因為那和實際的禪修經驗不符。首先，所謂「初禪」，其實是一個約定俗成的名詞，用來指涉某些心理狀態；初禪，就是由這些心理狀態組成的，而不是有別於這些狀態的另一個東西。其次，「初禪」既然代表一連串的心理狀態，人就不可能在同一時間處於這一切狀態之

中。再者，屬於初禪的這些心理狀態含有許多擾亂定境的因素，而現法涅槃是心理極度寧靜的狀態，這兩者決不可能相等。

原文亦未明言禪修者住於初禪或任何一種狀態，只是表明「住」是一個現在式的動作，「已經達到了初禪」卻是過去式，所以，不可能「住於初禪」。另一方面，經中說：「達到後，持續住於涅槃。」可見「證涅槃」的行為雖然已經發生（*patto*），其境界卻一直持續到現在（*hoti*）。

因此「證涅槃」指的是現存的狀態，應該和「住」（*viharati*）這個現在式動詞有關。

接著要探討禪修者的心識住於何種狀態，以及這種心理狀態何以等同於無上現法涅槃。要解開這兩個疑點，首先得審視構成初禪的特徵。

有關初禪的描述中只提到捨離了欲與不善心法的心理狀態，同時存在的是初步的和持續的判斷性的思惟（有尋有伺），引發這種心理狀態的是捨離（由離生），而其特徵是喜與樂。其中，「欲」指的是一個人所執著渴欲的對象，而不是指欲望。因為經中說：若人無欲，則感悲傷。沒有人會因為失去欲望而感到悲傷。人要是沒有了欲望，反倒會感到快樂才對。因此，「捨離了欲」指的是捨離了渴欲的對象。其次，所謂「不善心法」指的是「造成障礙的心理因素」，也就是有礙修證的心理因素。依照無上現法涅槃學派的傳統，這些不善心法包括悲傷、哀痛、苦悶、絕望，同屬苦受的範疇。至於「由離生」的「離」（*viveka*）和「捨離了欲與不善心法」的「捨離」（*vivicca*）同樣由字根 $\backslash$ vic 加上接頭詞 vi- 衍化而來，可見這兩個字同指捨離欲與不善心法。捨離了之後，構成初禪的種種心理狀態才次第生起。因此初禪才會被稱為「由離生」。最後有關喜和樂，我們只能粗略的說：喜、樂皆與身心有關，但是喜主要影響生理，樂則偏重於心理。

此處臚列的初禪的特徵並不完備，在《中部・布喻經》也提到其他初禪的特徵：

當一個人捨離煩惱（內心的染污）時，心中便生起淨信（*pasāda*），

有信則有歡悅（*pāmojja*），

歡悅則喜（pīti）生，而後有身輕安（passaddhi），而後樂（sukha）生。

五部尼柯耶中的「樂」和寧靜有關，與一般日常所用的「樂」語意大不相同。此經亦未完全列出出現在初禪中的所有心理因素，例如對「不苦不樂」略而不提，在「樂」之後就直接跳到「三摩地（samādhi，心志專注）」。這一連串心理因素的次第生起以三摩地為終點。

這段經文對於我們的研究至為重要，所以有必要了解其中蘊含的訊息。《布喻經》陳述構成初禪的諸多心理因素，卻沒有提及「初禪」一詞，可見這不過是個名相，不是有別於以上所列出的另一種心理因素。此外，對初禪的敘述只是相對的事實，此經所謂的「煩惱」，涵蓋了《梵網經》中的「（渴）欲（的對象）」與「不善心法」。這兩部經都說：捨離了欲和不善心法（也就是「煩惱」）之後，構成初禪的心理因素便次第生起。所謂「捨離」並不是表示禪修者將欲與不善心法斷除盡淨，只是將其影響力降低到初禪中的種種心理因素可以生起的程度。所以在閱讀尼柯耶時，要注意常有以絕對語詞來描述相對事實的情形。

「身輕安」在「喜」之後出現。事實上，喜極易擾動定境，只是其力量不及先前大幅翦除的種種苦受，因而在喜之後，有身輕安的生起。

另有一點需要注意的是，捨離欲、不善心法（或是煩惱）是禪修者刻意的作為，淨信、歡悅等一連串心理變化，是在欲與不善心法大部份消失後自然而然出現的。因此，如果在禪修時將欲與不善心法捨離到某種程度，以上臚列的心理因素自然會次第而起，而這些心理轉變的過程止於三摩地。所謂次第而起，其實是指禪修者依次察覺到這些心理因素的存在，也就是感覺到某一種心理狀態，便沒有察覺到其他心理狀態。而當三摩地出現後，就沒有其他心理代之而起了，禪修者故而能在三摩地中持續一段時間，這就是經中所謂的「他安住」——禪修者安住於三摩地。此時只感覺到心境的專注，而不見苦、樂、喜等感受，其心中對於感受完全沒有任何思惟憶念。尼柯耶的傳統認為，自我意識與對感受的思惟憶念並存。換句話說，沒有對感受的思惟憶念，就沒有自我意識。所以處於三摩地時，不但察覺不到任何感受，而且不受自我意識的束縛。就因為此時只知心志專注而不覺有我，故說有作業而無作者。

若禪修者事後要詳細自述住於三摩地的經驗，必得裁去「自我」一詞，因為在三摩地中沒有自我意識，而「我」卻是神識中不可或缺的一環，三摩地中自然無「我」，既然如此，也不會有個「我」達到無上現法涅槃。因此之故，喬達摩很可能在證菩提之前，就把「我」一詞從有關修四禪的敘述中剔除了。而為何住於三摩地即是達到無上現法涅槃呢？這是因為在三摩地和在無上現法涅槃一樣，不受覺受與自我意識的束縛，

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在思惟憶想能力不失的情況下，經歷到極度的寧靜。此時喬達摩尚未體驗到比三摩地更寧靜的境界，當然可能把捨離「我」的三摩地視為無上現法涅槃。

「住於初禪」的說法並不確實，正確的說法應該是「住於三摩地」。剛才提過：「住」是 *viharati*，由接頭詞 *vi-* 加上字根  $\sqrt{hr}$  形成的動詞，早期佛教傳統用這個字顯示身或心的運動的停駐點。禪修中有一連串心理狀態次第生起，止於三摩地且停駐於此。這也是我認為「他安住」指的是「住於三摩地」的另一個依據。禪修者在三摩地中的體驗和無上現法涅槃一樣，所以有關初禪的敘述中，「安住」和「達到無上現法涅槃」都和現在式有關，指現存的狀態。

從以上的討論也可明顯看出，佛陀有關無我和有作業而無作者的教說最初是基於他對三摩地的體驗。這些論點在後來喬達摩證滅受想定或證菩提時，獲得進一步的證實。

依《梵網經》所述，不僅在達初禪之後體驗無上現法涅槃，達二、三、四禪後，一樣會體驗到無上現法涅槃。也就是說，不管在哪一禪，禪修者都會有心理不受覺受與自我意識的制約的體驗，也就是住於三摩地。

在此值得注意的是，阿毘達摩文獻中提到三摩地為構成初禪、二禪、三禪、四禪中一連串心理因素的最後一項；喬達摩也說他達初禪後安住，他必然同樣地體驗到三摩地，雖然他沒有說：「此刻，此『我』已達無上現法涅槃。」

然而，他只能暫時住於三摩地，因為這種寧定的境界是自然而然升起，而非禪修者刻意引發的，他既然沒有剷除或壓抑動搖心定的因素，當一連串心理因素次第而起，止於三摩地時，擾攘不安的心理又開始作用。

初禪以尋（*vitakka*）、「伺」（*vicāra*）為主，因此禪修者的注意力由三摩

地轉向尋、伺，結果自然無法繼續安住於無上現法涅槃的極度寧靜之中。為了要重回定境，他便試圖以批判的方式遣除這兩項因素。藉由不斷的批判，禪修者對尋、伺產生嫌惡，繼而加以遣除。

當尋、伺不能擾動喬達摩的心境時，一連串的心理因素再次次第升起，名之為「二禪」。在此不細究構成二禪的種種心理因素，但簡而言之，這些心理變化一樣止於三摩地，喬達摩安住於此，再度經歷了無覺受與自我意識束縛的自在。同樣的，他也不能久住於此，因為此時「喜」成為擾動定境的主因，分散了他的注意力，使他又失去了類似涅槃的定境。於是她再次藉著不斷地批判而消除「喜」的影響力，繼而體驗到另一次的種種心理變化，名之為「三禪」。擾動「三禪」定境的是「樂」，這種感受稱之為「心的轉向 (*ābhoga*)」，*ābhoga* 是從動詞  $\sqrt{bhuj}$  衍生而來，其義為「轉彎，轉變方向」。「樂」使得禪修者的注意力轉向樂的感受，而不能住於三摩地，因此她再次從涅槃定境中退墮下來。接著她又藉著批判來遣除「樂」。這自然導致另一次的心理變化，同樣的止於三摩地，達到「四禪」，安住於三摩地。

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第四禪中有不苦不樂受，這本質上不是擾動定境的因素，所以一旦住於第四禪的三摩地，就沒有擾亂定境的因素升起，此時的三摩地是穩固的，沒有自我意識的約束，也就不受主觀因素的干擾，加上沒有覺受的影響，禪修者達到高度禪定，並且正念具足。再佛陀時代之前的沙門只著重禪定，因為涅槃即是禪定，卻不強調去除自我意識與主觀因素的束縛。但是，人唯有心中無絲毫主觀因素的左右，才有可能獲得真正客觀的知識，也就是對諸法如實的認識。名之為「菩提」的知識，就是一種客觀的知識。此外，禪修者住於這種無主觀因素影響的心境時，只要專注於某個對象，就能如實了解它，毋需藉助邏輯思考。這樣的知識稱為「如實 (*yathābhūta*)」。

這種心境不會自行改變，也不需要專注於任何對象，所以喬達摩可以專注於不同的事物，如實地了解這些事物。他首先專注於自己的過去世，不消片刻就看清楚自己無數的過去世。接著專注的對象是眾生的過去世，而了解眾生在不同的過去世中由於種種不同的業所造成的苦樂。他也發現這樣生生世世的輪轉無止盡，苦樂也因而無止盡。他想要找出解

脫的方法，立刻就認識到有漏的存在、根源、除滅、與除滅的方法。在最早可見的聖典中，這樣的認知稱爲「漏盡智（āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna）」，亦即有關除滅三種有漏的智慧。這種智慧被稱爲「菩提」是過了相當長的一段時間之後的事。

獲得「菩提」之後，他所知道的是，他不會再有生死輪迴，而且已經完成了所有該做的事。早期經典僅稱之爲「第三明」，後來在《有學經》中被稱爲「菩提生（bodhijam）」，意思是由於菩提而產生的。菩提，也就是對諸法客觀的如實認知，每次只能針對一個對象，無法同時專注於各種不同的對象。在《念處經》中記載了佛陀如實認識的許多事物，但是只有對於有漏或苦的如實認知才稱爲「菩提」。

關於有漏的如實認識特別重要，因爲漏盡智和生死輪迴的解脫有直接關係。有漏分爲三種：一、欲漏（kāmāsava），因五欲之樂而引起的雜染；二、有漏（bhavāsava），和個體存在有關的雜染；三、無明漏（avijjāsava），和根本無明有關的雜染。顯而易見的，只要除滅有漏，禪修者就能跳出生死輪迴。

然而這種心理狀態並非涅槃。證菩提並不等同於證涅槃，證涅槃是心理極度的寧定，這是證菩提時無法體驗到的。因爲證菩提時思惟憶念的能力（想蘊）和可以感受到的諸法的範疇維持不變，而任何思惟活動對住於三摩地的禪修者而言卻猶如在背的芒刺。爲了要住於定境不受干擾，喬達摩修另一套禪法——無色定，以降低思惟作用及其範圍。他先藉由批判形體使心不受形體的束縛。空間是因爲形體才變爲有限，隨著形體的消失，他體驗到廣袤無垠的空間。無色定的修持不是我們今天探討的要點，所以我只提出喬達摩最後達到非想非非想處，但即使在這個境界，思惟作用也沒有完全根除，換句話說，和涅槃相較之下，這個境界仍不穩定。佛陀連那絲毫的思惟作用也除去了，

因此不受自我意識（我、我所）的控制，思惟活動也大幅降低至不足以干擾定境的程度。所以這個境界最接近涅槃的狀態，這是禪修者在此世間可以經歷到的涅槃。不論在證四禪住三摩地時，或在非想非非想處定中思惟感受止息時，主觀因素都不復存在。這使得喬達摩相信：在有爲法與無爲法中，「我」皆不存在。基於以上的討論內容可知：佛陀主要的教說源於其禪修經驗，而在達滅受想定之後，喬達摩便自稱爲「如來（Tathāgatā）」。

接下來我想探討另一個相當重要的問題：爲何喬達摩在證菩提之後選擇證入現法涅槃？

喬達摩在證菩提之後已經確定他最終將證入涅槃，跳脫生死輪迴，他已經完成了應該做的事，也看穿了我、我所虛妄的本質，因此不可能對涅槃有所欲求以滿足一己之私。那麼爲何他要進而努力求取涅槃呢？在這種情況下，唯一可能的解釋是他對眾生毫無條件的慈悲：由於對眾生的慈悲，他證涅槃以圓滿利他行。根據《雙念經》，喬達摩甚至在達初禪之前就培養出自然流露的平等的慈悲。

我們或許可以因此理解他的行爲是出於慈悲，但這並未解釋爲何必須證涅槃以幫助苦難眾生。他原本可以藉著持戒、教導大眾證菩提之道來利益眾生，而要做到這兩點不需要證涅槃。那麼他爲什麼要有現法涅槃的經驗呢？佛陀那個時代的老師只宣說自己所經歷過的，無上現法涅槃學派和無色禪定的老師顯然都是如此，即使是斷滅論的老師也是基於自身親證而說法。他們之中沒有一個人宣說屬於無爲法的涅槃，但是當時一般似乎將無爲法視爲理想，而「如來」就被認定是用來描述親證涅槃無爲法的人。要是沒有經歷過涅槃，就無法全然掌握真理。根據對色心諸法真正客觀的認知，在有爲法中並沒有「我」的存在，而達到滅受想定時，他也體認到無爲法中「我」亦不可得。他是在有了這樣的經驗之後才能宣說無我的真理，也才能探討涅槃。而且一個人唯有證涅槃的經驗才能確保在身死命終色身壞滅後入涅槃。涅槃是此生必須達到的最高精神目標，是修行人無上尊貴的表徵，人們會熱切的追求奉行這種人的教導。正是因爲如此，喬達摩在證菩提之後進而體驗涅槃。

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# **Gotama Becomes the Buddha: A Study in Nikāya**

## **Traditions**

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### **Summary**

The main concern of this speech is certain problems about the path which Gotama followed to become Tathāgata. First, according to the Nikāyas, Gotama surely practiced the 4 jhānas. In Gotama's version of the 4 jhānas in the Nikāyas there is no mention of “attā” and “Parama-diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbāna”. The next problem is about the spiritual experience after the attainment of the first jhāna. With the analysis of the Brahmajāla-sutta in Pali, after the attainment of the first jhāna, one does not abide in the first jhāna, for “the first jhāna” is a mere name for a series of mental elements. According to Brahmajāla-sutta and Vatthupama-sutta, due to the meditator's intentional separation from the object of desire and in expedient mental elements, such mental elements as initial

and sustained judgemental deliberations (vitakka and vicāra), pasāda (confidence), pāmojja (glad), pīti (joy), passaddhi (physical tranquility), and sukha (happiness) naturally arise one after another and end with the arising of samādhi (mental concentration). The meditator is able to remain conscious of samādhi for some time, which situation is indicated by the statement “he abides (viharati)” (in “samādhi”). The thoughts of all feelings are absent from the mind of the meditator, and therefore there is no awareness of “I”. So it is quite possible that Gotama dropped the term “attā” from his description of the 4 jhānas. After the attainment of the other three jhānas, the meditator was abiding in samādhi. But because of some agitative elements Gotama could not abide in samādhi for long until the attainment of the fourth jhāna. The most agitative elements in the first three jhānas are vitakka and vicāra, pīti, and sukha respectively. Without any disturbing element, samādhi after the fourth jhāna is stable and the meditator’s mind is free from any feeling and “I-consciousness”. It is then that it is possible for him to gain truly objective knowledge with no aid of any logical thinking. Gotama gained in order the truly objective knowledge of his own past lives, the past lives of others and the endless cycle of birth and death.

h, and the āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna (the wisdom regarding the destruction of the āśravas). The realisation of āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna is, however, different from the realisation of nibbāna, for in former case the faculty of perception remains intact and disturbs the calmness in samādhi. To experience the undisturbed calmness Gotama next followed the ārupya-samāpatti (the attainment of formlessness) and finally attained the state of the saññā-vedayita-nirodha (the cessation of perception and feeling), which is the closest possible approximation to the actual nibbāna. After the attainment of the saññā-vedayita-nirodha, Gotama declared himself to be the Tathāgatā.

關鍵詞：1.the first jhāna

2.Parama-diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbānavādins/PDN 3.samādhi

4.āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna 5.Tathāgatā 6.attā

Today I would like to discuss certain problems relating to the path which Gotama followed to become Tathāgata.[\[1\]](#)

The first problem is whether Gotama practised the system of 4 jhānas or not. Some scholars think that Gotama did not practise this system of meditation. Such a view is really untenable. The Nikāyas do not know o

f any tradition that states that Gotama did not follow this system of meditation. On the contrary, the Nikāyas consistently and unanimously hold that not only Gotama but also his disciples followed the system of 4 jhānas. So we may take it for granted that Gotama practised the 4 jhānas.

There are 2 different versions of the 4 jhānas in the Nikāyas. One version is attributed to the Parama-ditṭha-dhamma-nibbānavādins (Parama-ditṭha-dhamma-nibbāna is called PDN hereafter), or the advocates of the Supreme Nibbāna amidst the perceptibles. These 2 versions are almost identical. The only notable difference is that the PDN-vādin version includes the following sentence which is missing from the version attributed to Gotama:

“Now the attā has attained the PDN”. One may think that this difference is due to the later-day editing due to the following reasons: the non-mention of the term “attā” presupposes the realisation of the truth of “an attā”. But Gotama was then in the initial stages of his spiritual journey. He had yet no experience about the non-existence of “attā”. So the version attributed to Gotama should have included the term “attā”.

Moreover, all the contemporary śramaṇas believed in the permanent or temporary existence of “attā”. This state of things also supports the idea that Gotama had included the term “attā” in his account of the 4 jhānas.

Again it is reasonable to think that the term PDN was also included in his version. In PDN the feelings are absent, but the faculty of perception remains intact. Except the feelings and the resultant “I-awareness”, all the other perceptibles can be experienced. This state was not accepted by the Buddha as the Supreme Nibbāna. The state of saññā-vedayita-nirodha, which is free not only from all feelings but also from almost all perceptions was accepted by the Buddha as the Nibbāna in this world. But Gotama had not yet experienced this state. As Gotama had not yet any knowledge of nibbāna which was truer and higher than the PDN, there is no reason why Gotama would drop this term from his account of the 4 jhānas.

Yet this difference between the 2 versions may not be due to editing at a later period. There are deeper reasons to think Gotama did not accept the view that the attā attains the PDN. Consequently the version attri-

buted to Gotamaconforms to the actual experience that hehad in meditation. This point will bediscussed later.

The next problem I want to discuss is about the spiritual experience oneattains after theattainment of the first jhāna. In course of our discussion itwould become clear that both theversions speak of the same spiritualexperience. For the sake of convenience we woulddiscuss this problem mainlywith reference to the PDN-vāda as given in theBrahmajāla-sutta.

The relevant passage in the Brahmajāla-sutta runs as follows:

Having separated himself (vivicca) from kāma (desirable objects), havingseparated himself (vivicca) from akusala-dhammas (inexpedientmentalelements) and having attained the first jhāna -- which isaccompanied byvitakka and vicara, born of separation (vivekaja) andcharacterised by pītiand sukha (joy and happiness) -- he abides(viharati). Now the attā (soul)has attained the PD N.

This is what the Pāli passage actually means. But so far as I have seen, this passage hasalways been wrongly translated in morethan one pl

aces and the message was distorted. Here I will discuss only one of the mistakes committed by the previous translators which is of utmost importance for our study. They have translated the last part of the account as follows:

“He attains and abides in the first jhāna. Now the attā has attained the PDN”.

One can immediately see how the translators have changed the meaning of the passage. The forms of “vivicca” and “upasampajja” are gerund and in Pāli these forms are called “pubba-kiriyā”, which means “past action”. So these actions of separation (vivicca) and attainment (upasampajja) belong exclusively to the past and are no way connected with the present. But the scholars arbitrarily interprets “upasampajja” in the present tense (attains) while retaining the correct meaning of “vivicca” (having separated). Moreover, the implications of such an arbitrary translation, as it will be shown, are absolutely unacceptable. This translation implies that the meditator is abiding in the first jhāna, and that the first jhāna is the same as the PDN. Both these implications are contradicted by meditative experiences and should be rejected. First, there is no first jhāna over and above the mental elements characterising this ment

alstate. The first jhāna is a mere name to indicate all these elements. Secondly, the term first jhāna stands for a series of mental elements and one cannot abide in all these elements at the same time. Thirdly, this series contains many agitative elements and so it cannot be identical with the nibbāna in this world, which indicates ideal mental calmness.

The text also does not state that the meditator abides in the first jhāna. It simply states that he abides (viharati). We have also to note that the attainment of the first jhāna has been described as a completed past action (upasampajja = having attained), a pubba-kiriyā. On the other hand, the expression “viharati” (abides) indicates a present action. The act of “abiding” cannot mean abiding in the first jhāna. The attainment of nibbāna, on the other hand, has been described through the verbal expression “patto hoti”. The experience of nibbāna, though already attained (patto), is still continuing in the present (hoti). So the attainment of nibbāna refers to a present situation and as such it should be connected with the present action of abiding (viharati).

It follows from the conclusions reached above that we have now to find out what is the mental state where one can abide and why was this mental state identified with the PDN. To solve these two problems we have to pay close attention to the characteristics that constitute the so-called first jhāna.

The first jhāna formula merely tells us that the mental state is separated from kāma and akusala-dhammas, accompanied by initial and sustained judgemental deliberations (vitakka and vicāra), born of separation (vivekajam) and characterised by pīti and sukha (joy and happiness). Here kāma means desirable objects to which one is attached. It does not mean desire. For in the text we read that when a person loses kāma, he becomes sad. Nobody becomes sad by losing desire. One becomes happy instead. And what is the meaning of “akusala-dhammas”? This term can be translated as “inexpedient mental elements”, i.e. the mental elements which are unsuitable for attaining the spiritual goal. According to the PDN-vādin tradition these dhammas stand for soka (grief), pārīdeva (lamentation), dukha (pain), domanassa (melancholy) and upāyāsā (despair). It is obvious that these akusala-dhammas belong to the category of the feeling of dukkha.

Next the term “viveka”

(separation) may be explained. Vivicca and vivekacome from the same root √ vic together with the same prefix “vi”. It is reasonable to conclude that these two terms refer to the separation from the same elements viz kāma and akusala-dhammas. As a result of this separation the mental elements constituting the first jhāna gradually come into existence. The jhāna is, therefore, called “vivekajam”.

As to pīti and sukha we can say without going into a detailed discussion that pīti is joy which is more connected with the body than with the mind. This joy affects the body strongly. Sukha is more mental than physical. But it is also connected with the body, for one experiences sukha through the body.

This list of the mental characteristics of the first jhāna as given here is not complete. There are other characteristics of this state which have been given in the Vatthupama-sutta of Majjhima Nikāya as follows:

When one gives up the upakilesas (mental defilements) the element of pasāda (confidence) arises in his mind. When there is pasāda, he feels pāmojja (glad). When he feels glad, pīti (joy) arises.

ses in his mind. After pīti he experiences physical tranquility (passaddhi). After passaddhi, sukha (happiness) arises.

Sukha in the Nikāyas is connected with calmness, and is different from what is understood as sukha in ordinary life. The sutta omits a number of elements, one of which is adukkham-asukham. Immediately after sukha, the sutta mentions the arising of the element of mental concentration (samādhi). And this progression from one element to another came to an end with the arising of the element of samādhi.

This passage is of utmost importance for our study and we should try to understand the message it conveys. The Vatthupama-sutta gives a description of the mental element constituting the first jhāna without using the blanket term "first jhāna". This shows that the "first jhāna" is a mere name; there is no first jhāna as distinct from the mental traits enumerated.

Moreover, the account of the first jhāna is only relatively true. "Upakilesa" of the Vatthupama-sutta covers the desire for the desirable objects (kāma) and the akusala-dhammas of the Brahmajāla-sutta account of the first jhāna. The suttas state that after the meditator has become sep-

arated from kāma and akusala-dhammas (i.e. from upakilesa) the mental elements constituting the first jhāna come into existence. When these uttas speak of the separation from kāma and akusala-dhammas, it does not mean that the meditator has completely given up kāma etc. He has become free from these elements to the extent it is necessary for the arising of the mental elements constituting the first jhāna. One has to be very careful while reading Nikāyas which are often using non-relative expressions to express relative facts.

Physical calmness (passaddhi) arises after pīti. Actually pīti is a very agitative element. But it is not as agitative as the feelings belonging to the category of dukkha which the meditator has just given up to a great extent. So compared to dukkha, pīti does not agitate the body so much. Consequently after the arising of pīti he feels physical calmness (passaddhi).

Another point we have to note is that the giving up of kāma and akusal-a-dhammas or that of the upakilesas is an intentional act on the part of the meditator. The arising of pasāda, pāmojja, etc. is not intended by the meditator; it is happening automatically. The process starts due to t

he relative absence of kāma and akusala-dhammas. Thus if one is able to give up kāma and akusala-dhammas to some extent in meditation, the mental elements enumerated above will naturally rise one after another. This natural progression of elements comes to an end with the arising of the element of “samādhi”

(mental concentration). The statement that the mental elements are arising one after another actually means that the meditator is becoming conscious of them one after another. When he is conscious of one element, he is not conscious of the other elements. So when the element of samādhi comes into existence, there is no mental element that naturally rises after samādhi and replaces it. So the meditator is able to remain conscious of it for some time. This situation is indicated by the statement “he abides”

(viharati). The meditator abides in “samādhi”. Now the meditator is only aware of the concentrated state of mind. He is no longer aware of such feelings as dukkha, sukha, pīti, etc. So the thoughts of all feelings are absent from the mind of the meditator. According to the Nikāya tradition the thoughts of “I-awareness” must co-exist with the thoughts of feelings. If there is no thoughts of feelings, there cannot be an awareness

of “I” So while in samādhi one is not only free from the consciousness of any feeling but also free from the ego-consciousness, or “I”.

When one abides in samādhi, the awareness of the mental concentration is there, but there is no awareness of “I”. So such thoughts as “I am aware of that” does not arise. Thus there is knowledge of an action but not of an actor.

If the meditator himself should later give an accurate description of his experience in samādhi, he could do it only by dropping the term attā from his description. It is so because there is no awareness of “I” in samādhi, whereas “I” is the essential characteristic of an attā. So it is quite possible that even before the attainment of bodhi Gotama dropped the term “attā” from his description of the 4 jhānas. As the existence of “attā” in the state of samādhi is denied, the question of an attā attaining the PDN does not arise at all. Why was the abiding in samādhi accepted as the attainment of the PDN? The experience of samādhi is free from small thoughts of feelings, and of ego-consciousness also. In this state the meditator experiences a great degree of calmness, even though the faculty of perception remains intact. This state was identified with the

PDN. Gotama had not yet experienced any state which was calmer than samādhi; so he might have accepted this identification of samādhi with the PDN, provided the *tā* was not brought into association with this experience.

The abiding in the “first jhāna” is unreal, but the abiding in samādhi is real. This abiding, as pointed out before, is indicated by the expression “viharati”

(he abides). The verbal root √ *hṛ* with the prefix “vi-” in early Buddhist tradition shows the point at which a movement, whether physical or mental, comes to an end, and the person abides there. In meditation also the meditator experiences one mental element after another. This series of experiences comes to an end when he experiences samādhi and he abides there (viharati). This is also another reason for which I conclude that “abiding” means abiding in samādhi. The mental state in samādhi is the same as the mental state of one who experiences PDN. Therefore, in the description of the first jhāna the acts of abiding and attaining the PDN have been referred to as current situations.

It is also apparent from what I have discussed so far that the Buddha” teachings about anattā or about actions without an actor are initially based on his experience of the mental state in samādhi. Later these conclusions were further confirmed when Gotama attained the āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna or bodhi.

Moreover, the Brahmajāla-sutta speaks of experiencing the PDN not only after the attainment of the first jhāna but also after the attainment of the other three jhānas. This shows that in all these cases the meditator was experiencing the same mental state which is free from the thoughts of all feelings and the awareness of “I”. This means that in every case he was abiding in samādhi.

It may be noted in this connection that the Abhidharma texts mention samādhi as the last element in the series of mental elements constituting all the four jhānas. There is no doubt that Gotama also experienced the same mental state, for he also says that he abides (viharati) after attaining the first jhāna, though he most probably did not use the expression: “Now the attā has attained the PDN”.

But Gotama could abide in this peaceful mental state only for a very short time. Why? He has experienced the state of samādhi due to the force of natural progression of mental elements that ends in samādhi. This progression has not been willed by the meditator. The agitative elements have neither been destroyed nor suppressed by him. When the progression of elements comes to an end with the arising of samādhi, the agitative elements again start becoming active. The most agitative elements in the first jhāna are the vitakka and vicāra. So his continuous awareness of the mental concentration (samādhi) is disturbed, and his attention is drawn towards these two elements. Consequently he loses his awareness of the peacefulness of PDN. He wants to get back the state of nibbāniccalmness. He therefore tries to get rid of these two elements by adversely criticising them again and again. The meditator loses his liking for the elements adversely criticised and generates aversion for them, and in consequence gets rid of them.

When the vitakka and vicāra lost their influence on the mind of Gotama, a progression of a new series of mental elements followed, which was given the name of “second jhāna”. We need not discuss all the mental elements constituting the second jhāna. We can simply say that this

progression of elements also ends in samādhi, in which Gotama abide d. So again he experienced the same mental state which was free from all feelings, and consequently from the awareness of "I". Again Gotama could not abide in samādhi, for pīti, the most agitative element in this mental state, creates distraction and he could no longer be aware of the mental concentration. He lost nibbāna-like calmness. So he got rid of pīti through adverse criticism of pīti, and became aware of another series of mental elements the conventional name for which was the "third jhāna".

The samādhi in which Gotama was abiding after the attainment of the third jhāna was disturbed by the element of sukha (happiness). Sukha is the strongest agitative element in this mental state. This feeling (sukha) is called the "ābhoga" of mind. The word "ābhoga" comes from the verbal root √ bhuj, which means in this case "to bend". The feeling "sukha" bends the attention of the meditator towards itself, so that the meditator cannot abide in samādhi anymore.

Thus he lost the nibbānic calmness again. So he next got rid of sukha by adversely criticising it, and naturally another progression of elements

followed which likewise ended in samādhi, and he attained the fourth jhāna. He abided in samādhi.

The feeling in the fourth jhāna is called adukkham-asukham. It is non-agitative in itself. So once the meditator is in samādhi, there is no element in this mental state that can disturb the concentrated state of mind.

So samādhi after the fourth jhāna is called stable and immovable. The mind in samādhi is free from “I-consciousness”, so it is free from subjective elements. Moreover, as the mind in this state is not influenced by any feeling and “I-consciousness”, it is characterised by a deep calmness and perfect mindfulness. The pre-Buddhist śramaṇas paid attention to the calmness only, for nibbāna was calmness itself. But they did not pay attention to the freedom from the ego-consciousness and subjective elements. And only when a person's mind is free from subjective elements is it possible for him to gain truly objective knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of an object as it truly is. The knowledge which is given the name of “bodhi” is also an objective knowledge.

Another interesting feature of this mental state is that the meditator in his state -- which is free from all subjective elements -- gains the true knowledge of an object as it truly is. The knowledge which is given the name of “bodhi” is also an objective knowledge.

nowledge of it by simply paying attention to it; it is not necessary for him to go through any logical thinking. Such a knowledge is indicated by the term “yathābhūta” (如實).

This mental state does not change of itself. Moreover, this is a state of mental concentration without any object to concentrate upon. So Gotama was able to direct his attention to different subjects of enquiry to gain objective knowledge of them. He first directed his attention to his own past lives. And immediately he could see innumerable past lives with various details. Next he paid attention to the past lives of others and could know about their sorrows and happiness in different past lives due to various types of kammas (skt.karma). He found there is no end to this progression of one life to another, no end to the experiences of sadness and happiness. So he wanted to find a way out of this situation. Thereafter he had the direct knowledges of the existence of the āsavas (skt. āśrava), the origin of the āsavas, the destruction of the āsavas, and the path to their destruction. In the earliest available tradition these knowledges came to be collectively called as the āśrava-kṣaya-jñāna, the wisdom regarding the destruction of the āśravas. This wisdom came to be known as “bodhi” at a comparatively later time.

After “bodhi” he got the knowledge that he would have no more any futurebirth, he hadalready done what had to be done. In the earlier sutt as thisknowledge is merely called the“third knowledge”. But later in the Sekha-suttathis knowledge is called “bodhijam”, born ofbodhi. The objective knowledge ofdifferent things has to be gained separately. One cannotget the objectiveknowledge of all things at the same time. In the Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta wereadabout many items about which the Buddha had objective knowledge. But onlytheobjective knowledge about āsavas or duhkha came to be known as “bodhi”.

The objective knowledge of the āśrava was held to be specially important,for theāśrava-ksaya-jñāna is directly connected with the end of the cycle ofbirths and deaths.There are three types of āsavas:

- 1) kāmāsava, or thedefilements connected with desire forthe five types of sensual objects,
- 2)bhavāsava, or the defilements connected with individualexistence, a nd 3)avijjāsava, or the defilements connected with the basic ignorance . So oncetheāśravas are destroyed, the meditator becomes free from all future existences.

This state is, however, not the experience of nibbāna. The realisation of “bodhi” is not the same as the realisation of nibbāna, for the nibbāna stands for the utmost calmness which in the state of bodhi cannot be experienced. This is so because in the state of bodhi both the faculty of perception and the entire range of perceptibles remain intact. And any act of perception is painful and has been compared to a boil and other painful things. It disturbs the abiding in samādhi. So to experience the undisturbed calmness he next followed another system of meditation, the ārupya-samāpattis (the attainment of formlessness) in order to reduce the faculty and field of perception. First he freed his mind from the forms through the adverse criticism of forms. The space becomes limited due to forms. With the disappearance of forms he experiences the unlimited space. We would not discuss the different states of formless meditation. Anyway, he gradually reached the state of neither-perception-nor-not-perception. Even in this state the Buddha had the awareness of some perception. This state was agitative compared to the nibbāna. So Buddha got rid of even that perception and attained the state of the saññā-vedayita-nirodha, the cessation of perception and feeling. The cessation in the tradition speaks of is not complete cessation. For if there is a tot

al cessation of perception, the meditator would not be able to know that he was in that mental state. It is, however, true that he got rid of all feelings, and consequently he was free from the awareness of "I" and "mine." The perception in this state is so weak that it does not disturb the meditator's sense of calmness. The state is the closest possible approximation to the actual nibbāna, the unconditioned. This is the nibbāna which the meditator can experience while in this world.

The absence of the element of "I" either in the state of samādhi after the attainment of therūpajhāna, or in the state of the cessation of perception and feeling after the samāpatti of the neither-perception-nor-not-perception, convinced the Buddha of the non-existence of the attā in both the realms of the conditioned and the unconditioned. On the basis of what we have discussed so far it is clear that the main tenets which the Buddha taught flows from his meditative experiences. After the attainment of the saññā-vedayita-nirodha, Gotama declared himself to be the Tathāgatā.

I would now like to discuss a problem which might be of some importance. Why did Gotama choose to realise the nibbāna in this world after the attainment of the “bodhi”?

After the realisation of “bodhi” Gotama was certain that he would ultimately merge into nibbāna and go out of the vortex of samsāra. All he had to do had already been done. Moreover, as Gotama had seen through the illusory nature of “I” and “mine”, he could not have any personal desire for nibbāna. So why did he further strive for nibbāna? Under such circumstances the only answer that suggests itself is his unconditional compassion for others. Out of compassion for others he realised the nibbāna, so that he could help others better. According to the Dvedhāvitakka-sutta Gotama developed non-judgemental, spontaneous compassion even before the attainment of the first jhāna.

We may thus accept that he acted out of compassion. But this does not explain why he had to realise nibbāna in order to help the suffering people. He could have helped by preaching sīla and teaching others the path to the realisation of bodhi. And to do this it was not necessary to attain nibbāna. So why did he experience nibbāna in this world? In those

daysthe teachers preachedonly what they experienced. This is evide  
nt from the teachers oftheParama-ditṭha-dhamma-nibbāna-vāda, the  
different formlessattainments(ārūpya-samā-patti). Even the teachers  
of the Ucchedavāda spoke from theirownexperiences. None of them p  
reached the nibbāna, the Unconditioned. But itappearsthat the Uncon  
ditioned as an ideal was well known and the Tathāgatā wasthe accept  
edepithet of the knower of the Unconditioned, the nibbāna. Withoutex  
periencing the nibbānathe truth was not completely mastered. The tru  
eobjective knowledge of the differentelements -- physical or mental --  
provedthat the conditioned was devoid of attā. On theother hand, the  
attainment ofthe cessation of perception and feeling showed him that t  
herewas no attā evenin the Unconditioned. It was only after this experi  
ence that he was inaposition to preach the truth of anattā and talk abo  
ut the nibbāna.It is only after therealisation of the nibbāna that one is a  
ble to mergedirectly into the nibbāna after thedissolution of the body.  
The nibbāna was thehighest spiritual goal to be attained in this lifeand  
marked the unrivalledexcellence of a śramaṇa. The teachings of such  
a person wouldbe eagerly soughtafter and followed by the people. It i

s for this reason the Gotama experienced the nibbāna even after the realisation of the bodhi.

(A speech at Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, on June 5, 2001. Translated and collated by Miss FANG Yirong)

[1] A copy of the speech I gave extempore for the students on May 6, 2001 at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies.