

# Soulmate of the Buddha

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# Chanda Sutra

*(Samyuktagama 262)*

Thus have I heard:

At that time there were a number of elder bhikshus who were staying together in the Deer Park, Isipatana, near the town of Varanasi, not long after the Buddha had died.

Now the bhikshu Chanda, when it was early morning, put on his sanghati robe, took his bowl and went into the town of Varanasi to make the alms' round.

When he had made the alms' round and eaten his midday meal, he put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, and taking his key with him went from one clump of trees to another, from one hut to another, from one walking meditation path to another. Wherever he went he said to the elders:

Venerable elders, please instruct me, teach me the Dharma, so that I can understand the Dharma, see the Dharma, so that I can truly know the Dharma and contemplate the Dharma in the right way.

At that the elder monks said to Chanda:

Form is impermanent and feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are also impermanent. All formations are impermanent, all objects of mind are without a separate self and nirvana is peace, security and the silencing of concepts.

Chanda said to the elders:

I know that form is impermanent and feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are also impermanent. I know that all formations are impermanent, all objects of mind are without a separate self and nirvana is peace, security and the silencing of concepts. However, I do not feel happy when I hear that all formations are empty, ungraspable and only when sensual desire is ended can nirvana be experienced.

If that is so, is there a self (a subject), that is able really to know the truth, and really to see the truth so that the person can say: “I have seen the truth,”?

Chanda repeated his question twice. Then he asked himself:

Who among these elders here can instruct me so that I can understand and see the Dharma?

Then he thought:

The venerable Ananda is presently staying in the Ghosita Park in the region of Kosambi. He was close to the Buddha and was the Buddha’s attendant. The Buddha praised him and all practitioners of the holy life have heard of him Surely he will be able to teach me the Dharma so that I can see and understand it.

He rested that night. The next morning, he put on his robe and carrying his bowl went into Varanasi on the alms’ round.

After he had completed the alms' round and had the midday meal he folded his bed. Having folded his bed, he put on his robe, took his bowl and set out for Kosambi. After many stages of the journey he arrived in Kosambi. Then he put down his bowl and his robe, washed his feet and went to the place where Ananda was staying. After exchanging courtesies with the venerable monk, Chanda sat down to one side.

Then he asked Ananda:

Venerable monk, at that time many elders were dwelling in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi. In the morning, I put on my robe and carried my bowl and went onto the town on the alms'round. After completing the alms' round and eating the midday meal, I put away my robe and bowl, washed my feet, took the key and went from one clump of trees to another, from one hut to another, from one walking-meditation path to another. Whenever I met an elder I would ask him to teach me and transmit to me the Dharma so that I could know and see the Dharma.

Then the venerable elders would teach me the Dharma and instructed me: "Form is impermanent and feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are also impermanent. All formations are impermanent, all objects of mind are without a separate self and nirvana is peace, security and the silencing of concepts."

Then I said to the elders:

“I know that form is impermanent and feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are also impermanent. I know that all formations are impermanent, all objects of mind are without a separate self and nirvana is peace, security and the silencing of concepts. However, I do not feel happy when I hear that all formations are empty, ungraspable and only when sensual desire is ended can nirvana be experienced.

“If that is so, is there a self (a subject), that is able really to know the truth, and really to see the truth so that the person can say: “I have seen the truth,”?”

Then I asked myself:

Who among these elders can instruct me so that I can understand and see the Dharma?

Then I thought:

“The venerable Ananda is presently staying in the Ghosita Park in the region of Kosambi. He was close to the Buddha and was the Buddha’s attendant. The Buddha praised him and all practitioners of the holy life have heard of him. Surely he will be able to teach me the Dharma so that I can see and understand it.

“Excellent, Venerable Ananda. Please, venerable monk, teach me the Dharma now so that I can know and see it.

Then Ananda said to Chanda:



Good, Chanda! I am glad. I am happy for you that you are able to stand before a practitioner of the holy life and not hide (what is in your heart) with the desire of putting an end to the obstacles of doubt in your mind.

Chanda, ignorant worldly people are not able to understand that form is impermanent and feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are also impermanent. They do not know that all formations are impermanent, all objects of mind are without a separate self and nirvana is peace, security and the absence of concepts. Now that you have the capacity to receive the deep and wonderful teachings, listen carefully and I shall instruct you.

Then Chanda thought:

“I am happy. I have this altogether wonderful state of mind, because I know that now I am able to receive the deep and wonderful Dharma.

Then Ananda said to Chanda:

I myself heard the Buddha give the following teaching to the Venerable Mahakatayana:

People in the world are normally caught in one of two extremes: the view of being and the view of non-being. Since worldly people are caught in these two objects of perception, their minds are bound. If someone does not accept, does not grasp, does not stand firm in these ideas, does not compare and

measure a separate self that he is then caught in, then he will see that when the causes are sufficient for suffering to arise, suffering arises, and when the causes are no longer sufficient, suffering ceases (and in that there is no need for a self, and the ideas of being and non-being cannot be applied).

Katyayana, when someone is able to see that, he has no more doubts, he is no longer subject to the afflictions. This insight is not transmitted to him by someone else, but is his own insight. This is what the Tathagata means by right view.

Katyayana, why is this so? When someone looks correctly at the coming to be of the world, she does not give rise to the idea of non-being and when she correctly observes the destruction of the world, she does not give rise to the idea of being. Katyayana, the Tathagata has abandoned these two extremes and teaches the Dharma dwelling in the middle way. This means: “This is because that is and this arises because that arises. Conditioned by ignorance are formations. . . . . (and so on until) conditioned by birth are old age, death, sorrow, misfortune and the afflictions. That is the origin of all this suffering. It also means that this is not because that is not and this ceases because that ceases. With the ending of ignorance formations cease. . . . .( until) with the ending of birth, old age, death, sorrow, misfortune and the afflictions cease. That is the end of all this suffering.

While Ananda was giving this teaching Chanda arrived at the state of freedom from the dust of the world. He abandoned all impurities and received the spotless eye of the Dharma. Now he saw and realized the Dharma, knew the Dharma, gave rise to the Dharma and overcame all doubt. His insight was not given to him by someone else. He reached the state of fearlessness in the Dharma of the great beings. Respectfully he joined his palms and said to Ananda:

So it is, Ananda, you are a true practitioner of the holy life, a spiritual friend, a Dharma teacher who has the capacity to instruct, teach the precepts and the Dharma well.

Now that I have heard this teaching from the venerable Ananda I have seen that all objects of mind are empty, are silent and at peace, cannot be grasped conceptually and only when craving ends and all desire is left behind can there be the absolute peace that is nirvana. My mind is peaceful and happy, dwells peacefully in liberation. There is no going back, there is no more perception of a separate self. There is only perception of the right Dharma.

Then Ananda said to Chanda:

Now you have realized the enormous and wholesome benefit, you have the holy eye of insight into the very deep teaching of the Buddha.

Both great beings rejoiced for the other, stood up together and each returned to his place of abode.

# The Emptiness of Formations

*(Samyuktagama 273)*

This is what I have heard:

Once the Buddha was staying in the Jeta Grove in Anathapindaka's monastery in the town of Shravasti. At that time he said to the bhikshus:

(In brief) it is like when there is the clapping of two hands, there is a sound, just so when eyes and form condition each other there is the arising of eyes consciousness. When these three elements (eyes, form and eyes consciousness) come together it gives rise to contact. Contact gives rise to feeling (vedana). Feeling gives rise to perception (samjna) and volition (cetana).

All these things are not a self, they are not permanent, (if they were a self then) that would be an impermanent self, not eternal, not secure, not unchanging. Why is that? Monks these are things that arise and have to go through birth, decay and death.

Monks, all formations (phenomena) are a magic show, like flames, they only last for a bare instant (kṣaṇa) and then they are destroyed, they do not truly come and then go.

Therefore, monks you should have a thorough understanding that such formations are empty, you should accept that they are empty, mindfully observe them and always remember that formations are impermanent, they are phenomena that cannot last, they cannot remain for any length of time

without changing. They are not the self and they do not belong to a self.

What is true of the eyes is also true of the ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When mind and objects of mind condition each other, mind consciousness arises. When mind, object of mind and mind consciousness arise there are contact, feelings, perceptions and volition. All these things are without a separate self and impermanent. They are not a self and they do not belong to a self.

# The Adaptation of Conditioned Genesis that Connects with Emptiness

*(Samyuktagama 293)*

This is what I have heard:

At that time the Buddha was staying in the Bamboo Grove in the city of Rajagriha and he gave this teaching:

I have overcome all doubt, removed all hesitation, uprooted the thorns of wrong views, so that they cannot arise again. Once your mind is no longer attached to anything at all, where can you find a separate self? And I have taught you, the itinerant bhikshus coming from another country, I have demonstrated to you the Dharma door of skilful adaptation of conditioned genesis that helps to connect with emptiness. This is a Dharma door that has been practiced by the holy, good and most excellent practitioners. I have said: Because this is, that is; because this arises, that arises. This means that dependent on ignorance there are formations, dependent on formations there is consciousness, dependent on consciousness there is the psych-soma, dependent on the psyche-soma are the sense organs and objects, dependent on the sense organs and objects is contact, dependent on contact is feeling, dependent on feeling is craving, dependent on craving

is grasping, dependent on grasping is becoming, dependent on becoming is birth, dependent on birth are old age, death, anxiety, grief and suffering. From that this whole mass of suffering arises. (With the absence of ignorance, there are no formations ..... (and so on until) and from that this whole mass of suffering is destroyed.)

This is how I have taught but you itinerant monks coming from another country still doubt and have hesitation. Because you have not yet realized the insight that you need to realize, have not harvested the insight that you need to harvest, have not seen for yourselves the insight that you need to witness, when I finished the teaching you worried, you felt sad, you had regrets, were in obscurity, lost your direction and had many obstacles on your way ahead.

Why is this, bhikshus? The teaching on conditioned genesis is very deep and hard to see. And deeper and harder to see is the abandoning of all grasping that leads to the ending of all craving and desire and the realization of the state of freedom that comes with the silencing of notions, namely nirvana. There are two kinds of objects of mind: conditioned objects of mind and unconditioned objects of mind. Conditioned objects of mind are born, endure for a while, change and come to an end. Unconditioned objects of mind are not born, do not endure for a while, do not change and do not come to an end.

Bhikshus, that is why it is said that to be caught in conditioned objects of mind (formations) is suffering, but when you arrive at the freedom of the silencing of all notions you can enjoy nirvana. The reason why there is suffering is because there is the making of suffering. When the causes for suffering have ended there is the end of suffering. When the paths that lead to suffering have been cut off, once the continuous stream of suffering has ended, that is the ending of suffering.

O monks! What is it that comes to an end? It is the residue of the different kinds of suffering. Once that is ended there is a state of coolness and silence. That is the ending of all grasping, the end of craving. It is a state of no desire, freedom and nirvana.

After the monks heard the Buddha give this teaching they were happy and put it into practice.



# Jaṇussoṇi Sutta

*(Samyutta Nikaya 12.47)*

At Savatthī. Then the brahmin Jaṇussoṇi approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, he sat down to one side and said to him:

“How is it, Master Gotama: does all exist?”

“All exists’: this, brahmin, is one extreme.”

“Then, Master Gotama, does all not exist?”

“All does not exist’: this, brahmin, is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the middle way: “With ignorance as condition, formations come to be; with formations as condition, consciousness comes to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of formations; with the cessation of formations, the cessation of consciousness.... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.””

When this was said, the brahmin Jaṇussoṇi said to the Blessed One:

“Magnificent, Master Gotama! ... From today let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

# Examination of Being and Non-Being

*(Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna, ch. 15)*

1. It is unreasonable to think  
That the self-nature lies in the conditions.  
A self-nature that is born from conditions  
Would be something that is made.
2. It does not make sense to say  
That the self-nature is something made.  
The nature of something is not made.
3. If phenomena do not have a self-nature  
There cannot be an other-nature.  
The self-nature of this thing  
Is other-nature of another thing.
4. Without self-nature and other-nature  
How can we have phenomena?  
Only with self- and other-nature  
Can dharmas be possible.
5. When there is no possibility of being  
How can non-being be possible?  
Only when there is being  
Can it end and become non-being.

6. Someone who talks about being and non-being  
Sees self-nature and other-nature  
And that person is not able to see  
The true meaning of the Buddhadharma.
7. Buddha extinguishes being and non-being.  
In the teachings given to Katyayana.  
He gave instructions on how  
To go beyond being and non-being.
8. If objects of mind have an original nature  
They cannot become non-being.  
It is not reasonable to say  
That original nature could change and become  
something else.
9. If objects of mind have an original nature  
How can they change?  
If they have no original nature  
How can they change?
10. To talk about being is to be caught in eternalism  
To talk about non-being is to be caught in  
annihilation.  
Therefore the wise person  
Is not caught in being or non-being.
11. If objects of mind have a self-nature  
And are not non-being that is eternalism  
If they exist to begin with and later do not exist  
That is annihilation.

### **Sanskrit original:**

na saṁbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyayahetubhiḥ |  
hetupratyayasam̐bhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet ||1||  
svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ katham |  
akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca ||2||  
kutaḥ svabhāvasyābhāve parabhāvo bhaviṣyati |  
svabhāvaḥ parabhāvasya parabhāvo hi kathyate ||3||  
svabhāvaparabhāvābhyām ṛte bhāvaḥ kutaḥ punaḥ |  
svabhāve parabhāve ca sati bhāvo hi sidhyati ||4||  
bhāvasya ced aprasiddhir abhāvo naiva sidhyati |  
bhāvasya hy anyathābhāvam abhāvaṁ bruvate janāḥ ||5||  
svabhāvaṁ parabhāvaṁ ca bhāvaṁ cābhāvam eva ca |  
ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṁ buddhaśāsane ||6||  
kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhayam |  
pratiśiddhaṁ bhagavatā bhāvābhāvavibhāvinā ||7||  
yady astitvaṁ prakṛtyā syān na bhaved asya nāstitā |  
prakṛter anyathābhāvo na hi jātūpapadyate ||8||  
prakṛtau kasya vāsatyām anyathātvam bhaviṣyati |  
prakṛtau kasya vā satyām anyathātvam bhaviṣyati ||9||  
astīti śāśvatagrāho nāstīty ucchedadarśanam |  
tasmād astitvanāstitve nāśrīyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ ||10||  
asti yad dhi svabhāvena na tan nāstīti śāśvatam |  
nāstīdānīm abhūt pūrvam ity ucchedaḥ prasajyate ||11||

## Chinese translation:

眾緣中有性 是事則不然  
性從眾緣出 即名為作法  
性若是作者 云何有此義  
性名為無作 不待異法成  
法若無自性 云何有他性  
自性於他性 亦名為他性  
離自性他性 何得更有法  
若有自他性 諸法則得成  
有若不成者 無云何可成  
因有有法故 有壞名為無  
若人見有無 見自性他性  
如是則不見 佛法真實義  
佛能滅有無 如化迦旃延  
經中之所說 離有亦離無  
若法實有性 後則不應異  
性若有異相 是事終不然  
若法實有性 云何而可異  
若法實無性 云何而可異  
定有則著常 定無則著斷  
是故有智者 不應著有無  
若法有定性 非無則是常  
先有而今無 是則為斷滅  
觀有無品第十五(十一偈)

# About Nirvana

(Udana 8.3)

## **Pali original:**

Evaṃ me sutam— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvattiyam viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā bhikkhū nibbānapaṭisaṃyuttāya dhammiyā kathāya sandasseti samādapeti samuttejeti sampahaṃseti. Tedha bhikkhū aṭṭhiṃ katvā, manasi katvā, sabbam cetaso samannāharitvā, ohitasotā dhammaṃ suṇanti.

Atha kho bhagavā etamattham veditvā tāyaṃ velāyaṃ imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi:

“Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam. No cetam, bhikkhave, abhavissa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam, nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇam paññāyetha. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhatam, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇam paññāyatī”ti.

## **English translation:**

### **The Third Discourse about Nibbāna**

Thus I heard: At one time the Blessed One was dwelling near Sāvathī, in Jeta's Wood, at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then at that time the Blessed One was instructing, rousing, enthusing, and cheering the monks with a Dhamma talk connected with Nirvāṇa. Those monks, after making it their goal, applying their minds, considering it with all their mind, were listening to Dhamma with an attentive ear.

Then the Blessed One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“There is, monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned. If, monks there were not that unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, you could not know an escape here from the born, become, made, and conditioned. But because there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned, therefore you do know an escape from the born, become, made, and conditioned.”

# The Great Emptiness

*(Samyuktagama 297)*

This is what I have heard:

Once the Buddha was staying in a village of the Kuru people, where they looked after cattle. At that time he instructed the bhikshus:

“Bhikshus, I shall teach you the Dharma, that is lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely at the end, the Dharma whose meaning and significance are good, homogeneous, pure and (beneficial for) the chaste and holy life. This is the teaching on the great emptiness. Bhikshus, listen carefully and contemplate it thoroughly.

“What is the teaching on the great emptiness. It is: because that is, this is; because this arises, that arises. That means: conditioned by ignorance are formations, conditioned by formations is consciousness..... (until) this whole mass of suffering comes about.

“Because there is the detail: conditioned by birth are old age and death, someone could ask, ‘Who is the one who grows old and dies? To whom do old age and death belong?’ That person might well reply, ‘I am the growing old and the dying and the growing old and dying is I.’

“There are people who say that the body is the soul, or that the soul and the body are two different things.



Although the examples given are different, the content of the meaning of these questions is the same. If you say that the life and the body are one, that is not the view of those who, like you, practice the holy life. If you say that life and the body are two different things people who practice the holy life will also not agree. Those who practice the holy life should avoid these two extremes and take the middle path. The middle path is seeing things rightly as they are, it does not turn upside down the teachings of the highest, good and holy ones. It means that dependent on birth are old age and death. The same is true for becoming, grasping, craving, feelings, contact, the six sense organs and objects, the psyche-soma, consciousness, formations and ignorance.

“If that person continues to ask, ‘Who is the formations? To whom do the formations belong?’

That person may want to reply, ‘I am the formations, the formations are mine.’ Someone may see the body and the soul as one thing, but the practitioner of the holy life does not see it like that. Someone may see the soul and the body as two different things, but the practitioner of the holy life does not see it like that. These two extremes have to be abandoned so that you can go straight in the direction of the middle way. The highest, good and holy ones thanks to right view can see the truth as it is and do not turn upside down the teaching: ‘dependent on ignorance are formations’.

“Bhikshus, if you are able to abandon ignorance (avidya) and gain understanding (vidya) by leaving desire behind, then who is the one who grows old and dies? To whom do old age and death belong? Your understanding means that old age and death are ended. You know that the root of these things has been removed. Like someone whose head has been cut off, cannot come to life again in the future. If the Bhikshu is able to abandon ignorance and craving and give rise to understanding (vidya), then who is born and to whom does that birth belong? In the same way you should examine: Who is the formations and to whom do the formations belong ? Then formations will come to an end. You then know that the root of formations has been removed and like someone whose head has been cut off, they cannot come to life again in the future. If the Bhikshu is able to abandon ignorance and craving and give rise to understanding (vidya), he will see that with the ending of ignorance formations cease .....(until) this whole mass of suffering is ended. That is the teaching on the great emptiness.”

After the Buddha had given this teaching, the bhikshus who heard it were happy to put it into practice.

# The Conditioned Genesis of Dharmas

*(Samyuktagama 296)*

This is what I have heard:

Once the Buddha was staying in the Bamboo Grove in Kalandaka, near Rajagrha. At that time the Buddha said to the monks:

Monks, I now wish to teach you the Dharma concerning causes and conditions and conditioned genesis. What is the Dharma concerning causes and conditions?

It is: this is because that is. Conditioned by ignorance are formations, conditioned by formations is consciousness.....(until) this whole mass of suffering comes about.

What is the Dharma concerning conditioned genesis?

It is the Dharma on ignorance giving rise to formations and so on. Whether the Buddha is in the world or no longer in the world, this Dharma still stands. It is an abiding truth (Dharma), a proclamation of the way things are (Dharma). Because the Tathagata has of himself woken up to this wisdom, and has realized the highest right and inclusive awakening, he teaches the Dharma to people, he explains and makes plain to them the fact that

conditioned by ignorance are formations .....(until) conditioned by birth are old-age and death.

Whether the Buddha is in the world or no longer in the world, this Dharma still stands. It is an abiding truth (Dharma), a proclamation of the way things are (Dharma). Because the Tathagata has of himself woken up to this wisdom, and has realized the highest right and inclusive awakening, he teaches the Dharma to people, he explains and makes plain to them that because of conditioned genesis there are old-age, sickness, death, anxiety, grief, suffering and affliction. All these teachings (Dharma) are the abiding truth, the truth (Dharma) of emptiness, of suchness, of 'things are like that', the truth that cannot be separated from suchness, that is not different from suchness, the Dharma that investigates things and discovers their truth, that is not perverted, and adapts skillfully the principle of conditioned genesis. That is the Dharma of conditioned genesis, meaning that conditioned by ignorance are formations, consciousness, the psyche-soma, the sense organs and objects, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, old-age, sickness, death, anxiety, grief, afflictions, suffering. That is the Dharma of conditioned genesis.

The holy and noble disciples, who have been well-trained are able to realize this true, right and skilful insight. They do not go searching for their past lives, asking: 'In the past was I there or not? In the past to

what race of beings did I belong and what kind of life did I lead?' Such disciples also do not need to go searching for their future lives asking: 'Shall I be there in the future or not? What kind of being shall I be and what kind of life shall I lead?' Nor do they have doubts about the present asking: 'Who am I? How come that I am present in life? Whence do I come and whither shall I go? When I die what will happen to me?'

If a shramana or Brahmin gives rise to such profane views that bind and imprison him, like the view of a separate self, a human being, a living being or a lifespan or the view that is caught in rites and rituals or hedonism, he should straightaway put an end to them and understand them clearly. Once these views have been ended, it is like when the top of the palm tree has been cut off, it will not be able to grow again in the future.

This is called the Dharma of conditioned genesis of the holy ones who have been well-trained. If you wish to understand rightly and truly this Dharma of conditioned genesis, you should examine and penetrate it skillfully.

As the Buddha finished giving this teaching, the bhikshus who heard it were happy to put it into practice.

# The Emptiness of the World

*(Samyuktagama 232)*

This is what I have heard:

At one time the Buddha was residing in the Jeta Grove in Anathapindaka's monastery in the town of Shravasti. At that time a bhikshu by the name of Samriddhi came to where the Buddha was staying, prostrated before the Buddha, sat down to one side and asked the Buddha:

World-honoured Lord, you have spoken of the emptiness of the world. What is meant by the emptiness of the world?

The Buddha taught Samriddhi:

Eyes are empty, they are not permanent, lasting and without change. They do not have a separate self and do not belong to a separate self. Why is that? Because their nature is such. If the sense object, (form), eye-consciousness, eye-contact and the conditions for eye-contact are sufficient, there are feelings, that are either pleasant, unpleasant or neutral and those feelings are empty, they are not permanent, lasting and unchanging. They do not have a self and they do not belong to a self. Why is that? Because their nature is such. The same is true for ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. That is why we say that the world is empty.

When the Buddha had spoken, the bhikshu Samriddhi put into practice what he had heard.

# Transcending Eternalism and Nihilism

*(Samyuktagama 300)*

This is what I heard:

At that time the Buddha was staying in a village of the Kuru people and in this village people were taking care of cattle. Then a Brahmin, a stranger in that place, came to where the Buddha was staying and exchanged words of greeting and courtesies with the Buddha. After that he sat down to one side facing the Buddha. Then he asked the Buddha:

Master Gotama, are the person who acts and the person who reaps the fruit of the action the same person?

The Buddha said to the Brahmin:

This question as to whether the person who acts and the person who reaps the fruit of the action are the same, I do not have to answer. It is a question about a matter that cannot be explained (avyakata).

Master Gotama, does that mean to say that the person who acts and the person who reaps the fruit of the action are two different people?

The Buddha instructed the Brahmin:

To ask whether there is one person who acts and another person who reaps the fruit of the action is also

a question I cannot answer because the matter is inexplicable.

The Brahmin said:

When I asked whether the person who acts and the person who reaps the fruit of the action are the same or not, you said that this question concerns a matter that cannot be explained, and when I asked whether there is one person who acts and another person who reaps the fruit of the action, you also said that this question is about a matter that cannot be explained and you did not answer. So what does that mean?

The Buddha instructed the Brahmin:

If you say that the person who acts and the person who reaps the fruit of the action are the same person you have fallen into the eternalistic view. If you say that they are two different people, you have fallen into the nihilistic view. When I give teachings about the meaning and principles of the Dharma, I keep away from these two extreme views and follow the middle path. The middle path means that because this is that is, because this arises, that arises. Dependent on ignorance there are impulses.....(and so on until) there is this whole mass of suffering. It also means that when ignorance ceases, impulses cease..... (until) this whole mass of suffering ceases.

When the Brahmin had heard the Buddha speak, he felt happy. He rose and took his leave.



# Purification of Alms' Food

*(Ekottarikagama 45, 6. Taisho 2, 773)*

This is what I have heard:

At that time the Buddha was staying in Anathapindaka's monastery in the Jeta Grove. The venerable Shariputra in the early morning left his hut and went to where the Buddha was. He prostrated before the Buddha and then sat down to one side facing the Buddha.

Then Buddha instructed Shariputra:

Your organs of sense seem to be pure, your countenance is bright and different from that of ordinary people. In what kind of meditat samadhi are you coursing freely?

Shariputra replied:

World-honoured Lord I usually course freely in a kind of samadhi called the samadhi on emptiness.

The Buddha said to Shariputra;

Excellent, Shariputra! Excellent Shariputra! To be able to course freely in the samadhi on emptiness is something infinitely precious. Why is that? Among all the kinds of samadhi, the samadhi on emptiness is the highest kind of meditation. A bhikshu who is able to dwell in the samadhi on emptiness can transcend the ideas of self, human, living-being and lifespan. Such a monk can also transcend the notion of a beginning and an end of formations (conditioned

objects of mind). That monk by his actions does not produce the conditions that are the root of formations, because he has transcended the idea of the beginning and end of formations. For that reason he is no longer subject to becoming in the future. Because he is no longer subject to becoming in the future, he no longer is burdened by pleasant or unpleasant retributions.

Shariputra, you should know that as I sat at the foot of the bodhi tree when I had not yet realized the fruit of buddhahood, I always asked myself: What practice is it that beings are not able to master so that they have to continue in the cycle of birth and death and cannot escape from it? After that I discovered: It is because they do not know how to practice the samadhi on emptiness, that living beings are drifting up and down on the ocean of birth and death without being able to arrive at the shore of liberation. The fact is that the samadhi on emptiness is there, but because they do not know how to practice it living beings give rise to perceptions and notions and are caught in these perceptions and notions. Because they give rise to perceptions and notions about the world like this, they are burdened by the condition of birth and death. Once one attains the samadhi on emptiness one no longer has the need to run after anything anymore and one attains the samadhi of aimlessness and transcends forever the ideas of birth and death. At this point the practitioner simultaneously attains the samadhi on signlessness and experiences much joy. It is because

beings are not able to realize these three samadhis (on emptiness, signlessness and aimlessness), that they have to keep going around in the cycle of birth and death. We have to keep looking deeply into objects of mind until we realize the samadhi on emptiness. Once we have realized the samadhi on emptiness we shall go on and realize the highest right and equal enlightenment.

Shariputra once we had realized the samadhi on emptiness, we continued for seven days and nights to sit at the foot of the bodhi tree in order to keep looking deeply and our eyes never grew tired.

For this reason, Shariputra, you should know that the samadhi on emptiness is the highest of all samadhis, the king of all samadhis.

Shariputra everyone who can should find ways to practice the samadhi on emptiness to its perfection. You should also practice like that.

Having heard the Buddha speak, Shariputra rejoiced and put the teaching into practice.

