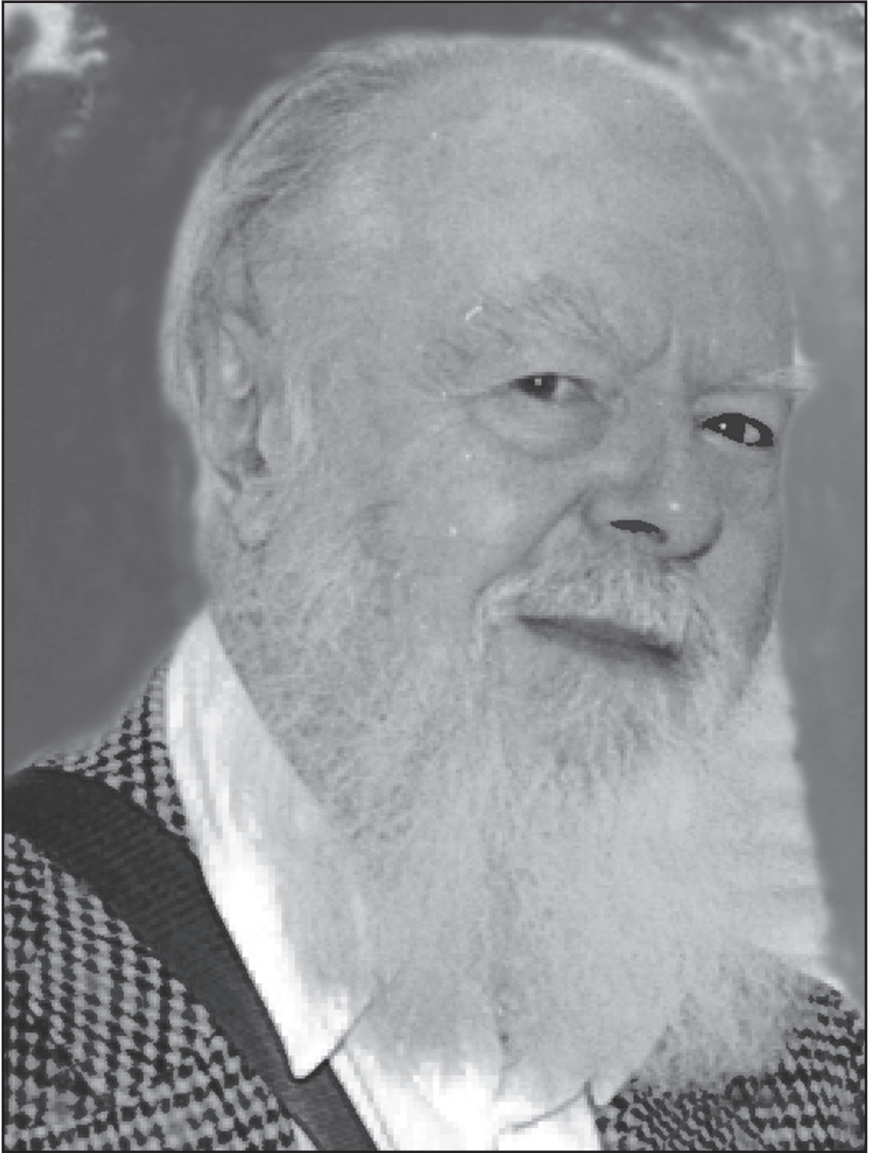


In Memoriam
Prof. Anthony K. Warder
(1925 – 2013)



May he attain the Peace of Nibbāna!

Prof. A. K. Warder

A Select Bibliography

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APPRECIATION

For comments by his students and colleagues, please visit <http://www.sumeru-books.com/2013/02/anthony-kennedy-warder-obituary/>

WORDS

Anthony Warder

Buddhist teachers have always had to depend on words to explain experience, which latter is what the teaching is about. But experience is of particular, unique, events. Words are generalizations, abstractions. Therefore words cannot match experience, but only hint vaguely at it. They are as it were translations from particulars to universals.

Taking the Pali words as these universals, Anglophone students then face the further difficulties of finding English words to reflect them, to understand them. The main part of this article offers English interpretations of essential Pali terms, from *dhmma* and the five *khandhas* to *pīti* and *naya*, after more than sixty years of experimenting to get at the roots of Buddhist tradition. On the way we have, for example, to distinguish between *attha*, *visaya*, *vatthu* and *ārammaṇa*, which sometimes have been confused. Here, in addition to their various contexts, we have a system of meanings.

Students of language have concluded that people speak sentences , not words, that only sentences really have meanings. Word- meanings result only from analysis of sentences. But sentences are innumerable and we cannot make a dictionary of all the particular sentences of a language; so we fall back on words, on generalizations.

Though Buddhism claims ultimately to be based on experience, its tradition is based on words. Experience is of particular events, each of which is unique; words, which are generalizations, cannot reflect experiences precisely. But Buddhist teachers were dependent on words to explain what they described; so they tried to reach experience through words. This being impossible, they sought to narrow the gaps between words and experiences, and though imprecisely, to convey them.

Even in actions, which seem beyond words, such as meditation based on breathing exercises, words are generally used: 'I breathe in', 'I breathe out', etc. This example seems straightforward, since it refers to something concrete, accessible. But when we advance into abstractions

such as ‘concentration’, ‘reality’, ‘matter’ or ‘object’, it is difficult to explain them.

This was the problem encountered by ancient teachers using Pali or related dialects. But, worse, how can we translate these Pali words into a language as remote as English? We could make a start with etymologies, usually from Vedic Sanskrit. But this can be quite misleading, since it relates to a pre-Buddhist society. Words such as *dharman* or *dharma* (*dhamma*), or *satya* (*sacca*) or *saṃskāra* (*saṃkhāra*) could not have Buddhist associations. For example *sam-kr/saṃskāra* ‘putting together’, was used by brahman priests for a new body to be put together in heaven for the ‘sacrificer’ who commissioned them to prepare it for him (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *kāṇḍa* IV *adhyāya* 3 *brāhmaṇa* 4.5). We have to fall back on the contemporary contexts of Pali itself to find out if anything is being ‘put together’ there.

To start with *dhamma*, which some writers on Buddhism do not translate (unnecessary mystification) or are vague about (e.g. W. Rahula in *What the Buddha Taught*, who is usually sound; see pp. 8, 12 and the meaningless ‘things’ on p. 58), the basic modern study is by Th. Stcherbatsky (*The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word “Dharma”*), published in 1923. We eventually rejected his ‘element’ (p. 3) as suggesting a permanent substance, preferring ‘principle’ (see my “Dharmas and Data” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 1, 1971 pp. 272-295; for the Veda, see pp. 275ff., for Pali 277ff., for ‘principle’, 290f. and 292). The Commentaries give ‘without a being’ (DA p. 99) and ‘emptiness’ *suññatā* (MA I 17) as the meaning, the latter adding *dhar* as the verb ‘maintain’ from which *dhamma* is derived. A *dhamma* maintains its characteristic whenever it occurs, though it is impermanent and empty. But though momentary, it usually acts as a cause or condition. We leave aside contexts with special shades of meaning such as ‘virtue’, but note that the Buddha’s teaching as *dhamma* may share the same derivation: his ‘principle(s)’.

The (five) *khandhas* show beyond their contexts a system of terms which should reflect light on one another: a kind of classification. The basic meaning of *khandha* is a collection: a group or heap, even a ‘camp’. Since it sometimes means a ‘shoulder’, one might think of a ‘load’ as a possible link. It may also mean ‘trunk’ (of a tree), suggesting a ‘mass’ or ‘store’. The idea of the five collections perhaps arose as the analysis of a living body, but it was extended to any body, to everything in the world (except *nibbāna*).

(1) *Rūpa* seems originally to have meant ‘appearance’, bifurcated into something ‘seen’ (a visible object) and ‘matter’ as the physical, the

first group (including the ancient elements or ‘great realities’ ‘and the physical senses).

(2) *Vedanā* means ‘experience’ (same as *vedayita*). It is produced by contact of the mind with the senses. It can be happy, unhappy or neither. (‘Sensation’ is incorrect, being part of *rūpa*).

(3) *Saññā* is ‘perception’ (mental). ‘Recognition’ is an important part or even the whole of it, the identification of something sensed. Perception is that which grasps the sign (*nimitta*) of a concept (*paññatti*).

(4) A *saṃkhāra* is a ‘force’, usually acting on consciousness, especially a volition. It may be understood as a ‘putting together’ of thoughts, also of physical acting or of speech (S II p. 4), activating these; (‘formation’ is quite wrong; it is not static but impermanent, S II 26).

(5) *Viññāṇa* ‘consciousness’ is always of a ‘support’ (*ārammaṇa*, S II 65f., [Warder] *Indian Buddhism*, 3rd ed., 124ff.). Thought (*citta*), mind (*manas*) and consciousness are the same (S II 94f.).

In the sequence of conditioned origination in the *Mahānidāna Sutta*, we read that the somewhat obscure *nāmarūpa* occurs through the condition of consciousness but also that consciousness occurs through the condition of *nāmarūpa*. Thus these are reciprocal conditions, though *nāmarūpa* is also a condition for contact (*phassa*), and in the *Nidāna Samyutta*, consciousness occurs through the condition of the forces (*saṃkhāra*). Evidently *nāmarūpa* is the sentient body which combines with consciousness to become a living animal: matter (*rūpa*) with a sensory organisation (*nāma*).*

As an example of a system of terms, we have the different kinds of object, often confused in modern writings. The real (*vatthu*) is external, independent. The sense object (*visaya*) is the visible and dependent. The support (*ālambana*, see under *viññāṇa* above) is the object of consciousness, not external at all but mental. These three have to be carefully distinguished. The four ‘dominant’ (*adhipati*) conditions or powers or forces - will, thought, energy and investigation - are much less clear as a system acting in consciousness, strengthening principles.

Words have no real meanings, according to the best linguisticians (e, g, *Bhartrhari*, *Vākyapadīya* II.145ff., see *Indian Buddhism*, 3rd ed., pp. 439-40). Only sentences have meanings, at least in their actual contexts (see my *Introduction to Pali* pp. 4f., 250f. and 287f., *Aggavaṃsa*). The meaning of a sentence is understood by native speakers of a language by intuition (*pratibhā*, Pali *paṭibhāna*). This harmonises with the idea we began with above that words are abstractions, generalisations, and do not

* A word list in the draft appearing here is shown at the end, alphabetized.

relate directly to reality. People talk sentences, not words. Natural language consists of sentences, not words, which are abstractions devised by grammarians through analysis (*veyyākaraṇa* or *apoddhāra* - Bhartṛhari). So why do we talk about words? The alternative to these abstractions might be to talk about sentences, though these seem endless.

For example: 'In this connection a monk produces will, exertion, initiates energy, applies and exerts thought, for the non-occurrence of evil, bad principles which have not occurred.' This negative sentence requires its context of training and the related sentences which follow it. Perhaps it is not a natural sentence but a confection of words established by previous analysis.

Or: 'Birth is unhappiness; so is ageing, dying, grief, lamentation, pain, depression, misery, not getting what one wants.'

Or: 'It is the whole of the best life: good friendship, good companionship, contact with the good.'

Or: 'Through lack of understanding, lack of comprehension, of these principles, these people do not escape transmigration, which is misery, an evil destiny, ruin, as if it had become tangled in a loom, with its threads twisted and knotted, were of rushes and straw.'

Or: 'What can this be?'

Or: 'It is too cold.'

Or: 'It is action which divides beings in this way.'

Or: 'For the sake of pleasures, people work hard at various trades, putting up with many kinds of discomfort such as cold, heat, flies, hunger, thirst, etc.'

Short, simple sentences seem most natural. The teaching usually appears artificial, constructed out of words instead of the other way round. For comparison we can look at some of Asoka's edicts:

'I wish them all benefit and happiness in this world (life) and the next world.' (Kalinga edict).

'...there is no generosity like the gift of principle, or the praise of principle, or the sharing of principle, or relationship in principle. In this connection it consists of right behaviour towards slaves and servants (etc.)' (Rock Edict 7).

'King Devanampiya Piyadasi honours all sects, those who have gone forth and householders.' (Rock Edict 8).

These are somewhat less technical than the Canonical examples, more natural. But we still cannot give a vocabulary of all the sentences in a

language. Even if we could, with a computer, it would be too unwieldy. If we set out to translate it, as we did above with words, we would find ourselves analyzing the meanings of the constituent words. So we are brought back to our abstractions. But at least they are finite and we can hope to make some headway among them. And the experience? No two people can have the same experience. Yet we keep trying, just like the old teachers.

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(Pali Texts referred to are the Pali Text Society's Editions.)

Suggested translations of a few other terms:

- Attha* ‘meaning’ (objective).
Adhipati ‘dominant’.
Adhivacana ‘designation’.
Animitta ‘signless’ (‘concentration’ or ‘freedom’).
Anusaya ‘tendency’.
Appaṇihita ‘uncommited’, ‘undirected’.
Abhiññā ‘certainty’ (not ‘insight’).
Ariya ‘excellent’ (‘noble’ inappropriate).
Arūpa ‘immaterial’, ‘imponderable’ (world of the gods).
Ākāra ‘feature’.
Ājiva ‘livelihood’.
Āyatana ‘entrance’ (not the vague but time-honoured ‘sphere’).
Āsava ‘influence’ (pleasure, desire for existence and ignorance, which keep one in transmigration).
Iddhi ‘power’.
Indriya ‘faculty’ (confidence, energy, self-possession, concentration and understanding).
Uddhaccakukkucca ‘vanity’ (one concept).
Uddesa ‘summarised description’.
Upādāna ‘attachment’.
Upekkhā ‘equanimity’.
Ehipassika ‘verifiable’ (the teaching or principles).
Ottappa ‘fear of blame’.
Kamma ‘action’ (sometimes untranslated or replaced by Sanskrit: ‘mystification’).
Kāmacchanda ‘will to pleasure’ (not ‘lust’).
Kicca ‘function’.
Gocara ‘range’.
Cariya ‘conduct’.
Citta ‘thought’.
Chandas ‘will’.
Jhāna ‘meditation’.
Ṭhiti ‘station’, ‘opinion’.
Thīnamiddha ‘stupidity’ (one concept, not two).
Diṭṭhi ‘opinion’
Dukkha ‘unhappiness’ is a wide term like unsatisfactoriness or unrest (words like ‘suffering’ and ‘pain’ are too narrow); see *Saccavibhanga* in M No. 141, *Indian Buddhism*, 3rd ed., p. 101.)
Dhātu ‘base’ (cf. ‘ore’ and ‘root’, not ‘element’; the old conception in chemistry).

Naya ‘scheme’.

Niddesa ‘elaborate exposition’.

Nimitta ‘sign’ (see *saññā* above).

Nirutti ‘expression’, ‘language’.

Nirodha ‘cessation’ is the same as *nibbāna*, extinction, the unconditioned.

Nīvaraṇa ‘obstacle’ (more than a ‘hindrance’).

Nekkhamma ‘renunciation’.

Pakati ‘nature’.

Paññatti ‘concept’ (‘making known’, see *saññā*).

Paññā ‘understanding’ (following Ñānamoli; definitely not the vague ‘wisdom’, but precise analysis).

Paṭiccasamuppāda ‘conditioned origination’.

Paṭipadā ‘practice’.

Padhāna ‘exertion’.

Passaddhi ‘assurance’ (‘tranquility’ wrong; Rahula’s ‘relaxation’ also wrong).

Pīti ‘joy’.

Phassa ‘contact’ (see *vedanā* above, also *namarūpa*; mental, not physical, which is *abhighāta* or *paṭigha* ‘resistance’).

Bala ‘strength’ (*Indian Buddhism*, 3rd Ed., p. 92).

Brahma ‘great’, ‘best’.

Bhava ‘existence’, ‘transmigration’, ‘becoming’.

Bhāva ‘being’ (better than ‘nature’).

Bhāvanā ‘development’.

Bhūta ‘reality’ (not ‘existence’).

Magga ‘way’.

Manasikāra ‘attention’.

Yutti ‘congruence’.

Vatthu ‘ground’, ‘real object’.

Vācā ‘speech’.

Vāyāma ‘exercise’.

Vikappa ‘imagining’.

Vicaya ‘discrimination’.

Vicikicchā ‘uncertainty’.

Viriya ‘energy’.

Viveka ‘separation’ (from pleasures and bad principles).

Visaya ‘sense object’.

Vīmaṃsā ‘investigation’ [all of the four above ‘dominant’ (*adhipati*) in consciousness].

Vohāra ‘usage’.

Vyāpāda ‘malevolence’.

Sakkāya ‘existing substance’ (i.e. permanent, ‘soul’).

Sanṅkappa ‘intention’.

Sati ‘self-possession’; ‘attentiveness’ (the usual ‘memory’ doesn’t fit the context of Buddhist practice).

Sama ‘impartial’.

Samaññā ‘agreed usage’.

Samatha ‘calming’.

Samādhi ‘concentration’.

Samāpatti ‘attainment’.

Samūha ‘manifold’.

Samodhāna ‘collective’.

Sampajāna ‘alert’.

Sambhāra ‘collection’.

Sutta ‘dialogue’ (literally ‘thread’ of an argument, not a ‘sermon’!)

Hiri ‘self-respect’.