

## Pariyatti, Paṭipatti and Paṭivedha

The material in the *Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies* is organized along a traditional tripartite division of *pariyatti*, *paṭipatti* and *paṭivedha* ('theory', 'praxis' and 'insight'). Even though the division itself is not canonical in origin, each of them, in the sense construed here, is not without scriptural roots.

To begin with, taken literally, *pariyatti* means 'completely + to reach' (< pari + āp-), and therefore can be seen as allowing inclusion in an academic journal any material that reaches out for, or brings in, knowledge. Among the term's several meanings is 'accomplishment' (see Davids and Stede, 1979:432), the multiple characterizations of which seem to allow for the incorporation of all three - theory, praxis and insight.

Accomplishment is explained, first, in relation to that of 'a treasurer' (*bhaṇḍāgārika*). Implied here is an 'accumulation', and one that is secular, and mundane. A second characterization is 'the divisions of *pariyatti* in its three Baskets' (*tīsu piṭakesu tividho pariyatti-bhedo*). While this renders a closer religious connotation, it still relates to a body of knowledge, presumably to be accumulated. Even more concretely, accomplishment comes to have an association with learning itself, as in *pariyattiṃ uggaṇhāti* "undertakes the learning [of the Scriptures]".

In these three senses of accomplishment, then, we may take *pariyatti* to mean 'theory', equated here with the dharma as contained in the Buddhist texts.

But accomplishment is also characterized in two other ways, one negative and the other positive. The first, 'like a serpent' (*alagaddūpamā*), speaks to the consequences of mishandling (*duggahita*) (DN Commentary). Here, then, we have in *pariyatti* the sense of *paṭipatti* 'praxis' - in its multiple senses of 'method, conduct, practice, performance, behaviour' (*ibid.*:396).

The positive characterization of accomplishment is 'on account of going forth' (*nissaraṇathā*). Explained as a well-handling (*suggahita*), we may find embedded in *pariyatti* the category of *paṭivedha* 'insight'. It is not knowledge, textual or oral, that is the basis of accomplishment, but knowledge gained, figuratively by going away from it, through meditation practice, leading to personal discovery.

If in *pariyatti* itself we can thus find the three-fold concept of theory, practice and insight, why utilize a three-way classification in the journal? It is for purely heuristic reasons.

The *raison d'être* of an academic journal is the furtherance of knowledge through the pursuit of truth. But this is to be come by not just through *theory* (texts). As in Medicine, Engineering, Education or Psychology in the academy, the validation lies in its application. Hence *praxis* as a separate organizational category. But, still from a Buddhist point of view, there is nothing like insight to open up the truth, this through meditation practice, a parallel in the academy perhaps being Music. Hence *insight* as a distinct category.

We may note here as well that the three-way division neatly dovetails with the tripartite division of the Noble Eightfold Path - wisdom (emanating from knowledge, part based in theory), self-discipline (relating to praxis) and concentration (basis for insight), changing here the traditional order of listing - *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. It is an expectation that in consciously including insight, the CJBS

will be able to bring to the academy the benefit of the many meditational techniques that have been developed over centuries and across cultures. The fact that an estimated 75% of Buddhologists or those who teach courses relating to Buddhism in North America are practicing Buddhists seems to advance the case.

Presenting material along the lines of theory, praxis and insight is also seen by us as a small contribution towards expanding the academic horizons. Buddhism offers a methodology that balances an objectivity based in empiricism with a subjectivity, also based in empiricism. If this is to put it in academic terms, it may also be understood as a multiculturalizing of the academy. While since its introduction, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism has enriched our lives at a mundane level (as e.g., in the culinary and the fine arts), the academy seemed to be little touched by it. Incorporating a Buddhist methodology may, then, not only be an invitation to multicultural alacrity, but also to a humanizing of the academy. We need no better (worse) example than the atomic bomb, though a clear misuse of pure research, to be convinced that knowledge without a spiritual, religious or moral dimension can be plainly inimical, not just to the academy but to humanity itself which the academy is set up to serve.

### Bibliography

Davids, Rhys and Stede, William. *Pali – English Dictionary*. London: Pali Text Society, 1979.

*(Critical comments on this would be much appreciated)*

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