

The Whole Body, not Heart, as 'Seat of Consciousness': The Buddha's View, by Suwanda
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THE WHOLE BODY, NOT HEART, AS 'SEAT OF CONSCIOUSNESS': THE BUDDHA'S VIEW

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What is the 'seat of consciousness' in Buddhism? This is the question that this essay seeks to answer, understanding the term 'seat', however, as a mere 'concealing'¹ (*sammuti*) term, to denote not a static entity but a dynamic process, like every other *dhamma* 'phenomenon'²—human, animal, plant, or otherwise. In answering the question, we shall explore three sources: the Nikāyas, the Abhidhamma, and the works of two commentators, Buddhaghosa's *Vissuddhimagga* (fifth century C.E.) and Kassapa's *Mohavicchedanī* (twelfth century C.E.). While the former is the "oldest non-canonical authority of the Theravāda" (Ñāṇamoli 1956, p. x), the latter represents "the final stage of development of the Theravāda Abhidhamma system in India and Ceylon" (Buddhadatta and Warder 1961, p. xv). No attempt, however, has been made here to explore traditions other than the Theravāda.

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The Traditional View

The most pervasive traditional answer to our question is captured in the *Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, under the entry *hadaya*: "the heart as seat of thought and feeling, esp. strong emotion . . . which shows itself in the action of the heart" (Davids and Stede 1979, p. 728). A similar strain of thought runs through another entry under *citta*: "citta = hadaya, the heart as incorporating man's personality" (p. 266). This view is echoed by modern scholars. Reviewing the literature in his *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Karunadasa, for example, says that "what is called *hadaya-vatthu* is not absolutely identical with heart as such" (1967, pp. 62 ff.). Yet, in the very next sentence, he says: "like the sense-organs, it is a very subtle and delicate species of matter, and is located inside the heart" (p. 65).

Commentaries. Going back in history for an answer to our question, however, we begin with Buddhaghosa, because it is in the *Visuddhimagga* that we seem to find the issue specifically developed, even though, as we shall see, the seeds of the concept can be found earlier. The *Visuddhimagga* clearly posits the mind, the Pāli term used being *mano*, specifically in the heart, in the materiality (*rūpa*) aggregate: *Manodhātu-manoviññādhātūnaṃ-nissayalakkhaṇaṃ hadayavatthu* 'The heart-basis has the characteristic of being the [material] support for the mind-element and for the mind-consciousness element' (chap. XIV, no. 60; Warren 1950, p. 378; Ñāṇamoli 1956, pp. 496–497).³ The characteristics of the mind are then shown, with its function (*rasa*) being to 'subserve' (*ādhāraṇa*) and the 'manifestation' (*paccupattihāna*) being 'the carrying of them' (*ubbahana*).

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What is interesting, however, is that no ‘proximate cause’ is offered, the fourth type of characterization given in relation to each of the other items in both the materiality and the mentality aggregates (chap. XIV). But, there is a sentence which seems to suggest such a proximate cause: “it is assisted by the primaries with their function of upholding” (*sandhāraṇādikiccehi bhūtehi katūpakāraṃ*) (chap. XIV, no. 60; N, p. 497; W, p. 379)—primaries being, of course, earthness, wateriness, fireness, and airiness. Buddhaghosa further confirms that “it [heart] serves as physical basis for the mind-element and mind-consciousness element, and for the states associated with them” (*manodhātu-manoviññādhātūnañ c’eva taṃsampayuttadhammānañ ca vatthubhāvaṃ sādhayamānaṃ tiṭṭhati*) (ibid.).

We are now told that it (*hadayavatthu*) is to be found “in dependence of the blood” (*lohitam nissāya*) (ibid.), as in relation to the heart itself elsewhere (in the *anussati-kammaṭṭhānaniddeso* ‘description of concentration-on-other-recollections as meditation subjects’ [W, pp. 189 ff.; N, pp. 247 ff.]), where it is described in relation to color, shape, direction, location, and delimitation.⁴

Elsewhere in the *Visuddhimagga*, the heart-basis is given as an example in explaining a ‘prenascence condition’ (*pūrejātapaccayo*), a “state that assists by being present, having arisen previously” (*paṭhamataraṃ uppajjitvā vattamānabhāvena upakāraḥ*) (no. 85; N, p. 617; W, p. 457) and a ‘conascence condition’ (*sahajātapaccayo*), a “state that, while arising, assists [another state] by making it arise together with itself” (*uppajjamāno va saha uppādanabhāvena upakāraḥ dhammo*) (no. 77; N, p. 615; W, p. 455). The heart-basis is further associated with the mind at ‘rebirth-linking’ (no. 215; N, p. 651) (*paṭisandhiyaṃ*), ‘in the course of existence’ (no. 130; N, p. 630) (*pavatte*), and ‘human death’ (no. 163; N, p. 638) (*manussacuti*). Finally, *hadayavatthu* is linked with the three major cognates appearing in the literature: *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* (see below).

Nothing substantial seems to have changed in the commentarial thinking on the subject between the fifth and the twelfth centuries. Kassapa, in his *Mohavicchedanī*, covers the same ground as Buddhaghosa does, outlining the characteristics of the heart, and linking it to the mind, without again showing a ‘proximate cause’ (Buddhadatta and Warder 1961, p. 64). The connection between the mind and blood is also made (ibid.) as is the role of the heart at birth, in life, and at death (ibid.; nos. 43, 48, etc.). Continuing the Buddhaghosa tradition, he links the heart with all three terms, *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, as well.

But Kassapa makes a significant addition to Buddhaghosa. Even though the latter had associated the heart with the mind, he did not specifically name a ‘dhamma’ in the mentality domain to parallel *hadaya* in the materiality domain. But this Kassapa does, drawing obviously from

tradition itself, by actually listing *citta* as one of thirty-nine dhammas in the ‘mentality domain’ (*cittuppādakaṇḍo*) (Buddhadatta and Warder, p. 8), equating it with *viññāṇa* and *manas*. It is now given a description as in the case of *hadayavattu*, the characteristic being shown as ‘knowing’ (*viñānana*), the function as ‘forerunning’ (*pubbaṅgama*), the manifestation as ‘continuous existence in consciousness’ (*nirantarappavattito santāna*), and, unlike in relation to *hadayavatthu*, the proximate cause as ‘mentality-materiality’ (*nāmarūpa*) (ibid., p. 12). It is as if Kassapa saw a hiatus in Buddhaghosa’s systematization and felt compelled to fill it!

Judging by the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Mohavicchedanī*, then, what we find in the commentaries is that the mind, using the term *citta* in particular, is associated, firmly and irrevocably, with the heart.⁵

The Abhidhamma. In his notes to *hadayavatthu*, in editing *Abhidhammatthasāṅgaha* (see note 5), contemporary Sri Lankan scholar Narada (1968, p. 293) says that “the Buddha refers to the basis of consciousness in such indirect terms as *yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya* ‘depending on that material thing’,” a point made by Aung (1910) and Ñāṇamoli (pp. 498, 502) as well.

But Narada’s quotation, though attributed to the Buddha, is in fact, *not* from the Nikāyas but from the Abhidhamma work, *Paṭṭhāna* (Mrs. Davids 1921), a later systematization. It is said, for example, that the mind-element and the mind-consciousness element sometimes occur as a ‘prenascence condition’ (as, e.g., in the course of an existence) and sometimes do not (as, e.g., at rebirth linking).⁶ And in the explanation of a ‘prenascence condition’, the ‘heart basis’ (*hadayavatthu*) is listed as one of eleven *physical* conditions (along with the five physical bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body and objects in the five doors) for the mind-element and mind-consciousness element and for the states associated with it.

Interestingly, however, *hadayavatthu* does not occur in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the first book of Abhidhamma (nor does it occur in *Atthasālinī*, Buddhaghosa’s commentary to it). What does occur is *hadaya*, which, unlike in the *Paṭṭhāna*, is equated with the *mind*. In answer to the question, *katamo tasmīn samaye viññāṇakkhandho hoti* ‘what then constitutes *viññāṇa*?’ for example, we see the following statement: *Yaṃ tasmīn samaye cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍāraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho tajjā manoviññāṇadhātu-ayaṃ tasmīn samaye viññāṇakkhandho hoti* (Muller 1885, p. 18). Here *hadaya* ‘heart’ is equated with, among other things, the three major terms for the mind (*supra*), *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*. As if further evidence were needed, we find the same stock answer repeated for the same question again, replacing *viññāṇa* with *manāyatana* and *manoviññāṇadhātu* (ibid.). In like manner, we find in the *Vibhaṅga* that *hadaya*

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

is defined “in a purely mental and not physical sense” (Ñāṇamoli, p. 498 n. 26), in its definition of mind-element and mind-consciousness element.⁷

Like the Commentaries, then, we find the Abhidhamma making a definite link of the mind with the heart, even though not all the Abhidhamma authors seem to have been sure whether to put it in the mentality domain or the materiality domain, or whether to use *hadaya* or *hadayavatthu!*

The Nikāyas. Since both the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries always quote the Nikāyas as their source and authority, we need to look at what evidence we get from the Nikāyas for a link between the mind and the heart. The first of the two dictionary entries quoted in the subsection above gives its source as *Samyutta* I.199. In examining this source, we find the Buddha’s chief disciple Ānanda being addressed by “a deva, indigenous to that [Kosalese] forest, moved with compassion [for Ānanda!], desiring his welfare, and wishing to agitate him” (Mrs. Davids 1950, 254); in verse:

*Rukkhamaḷagahaṇaṃ pasakkiya
nibbānaṃ hadayasmin opiya. . .* (Feer 1884, p. 198)

meaning, ‘Having gone forth to the thicket at the foot of a tree, and having experienced nibbāna in the heart. . .’⁸ Given that none of the classical cognates for the mind (e.g., *citta*, *mano*, or *viññāṇa*) appears in the verse, the association of the mind with the heart can only be made here by extension, understanding that the experiencing of nibbāna is through the mind, or, put another way, that it is the mind that experiences nibbāna. So it is only through a great license as taken by Mrs. Davids (see note 8) that we can agree with the Dictionary entry, “the heart as the seat of thought and feeling.”

Elsewhere in the *Samyutta*, there occurs a line where both *citta* and *hadaya* occur: *cittaṃ vā khippeyya hadayaṃ vā phaleyya . . .* ‘derange the mind or split the heart’ (*Samyutta* I.207). While the two clearly have nothing to do with each other here, their occurrence together may be interpreted as suggesting an implicit connection. Even in such an event, the words are not the Buddha’s, even though the utterance falls off his lips; he is only *repeating* the words of Suciloma, the Yakkha, who has threaten him: “Friar, I will ask thee a question. If thou answerest me not, I will either derange thy mind or split thy heart” (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 265).⁹ The words that follow, “I will take you by the feet and throw thee over the Ganges,” clearly indicate that Suciloma was speaking literally, and in no fancy language.¹⁰

Philosophy East & West elsewhere, in the words *hadayaṃ vāssa phaleyya . . . cittavikkhepaṃ*

vā . . . (*Samyutta* I.125–126). Again, it is the daughters of Mara that are speaking, having tried in vain to seduce the Buddha. The full text makes this clear:

For if we had approached after this fashion any recluse or brahmin who had not extirpated lust, either his heart would be cleft asunder, or hot blood had flowed from his mouth, or he had become crazy, or have lost his mental balance. . . . (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 157)¹¹

So it is not the Buddha that is speaking!

As can be seen, then, the only three references in the *Samyutta* that seem to suggest an association between the mind and the heart are contained in the “Sagātha” section, dealing as they do “with legends, fairies, gods and devils, with royal and priestly interviewers of the sublime teacher” (ibid., p. vi), or of his disciples. So the only evidence we have from the *Samyutta* comes not through the words of the Buddha but from unenlightened *puthujjanas* ‘average people’, or rather *puthussattas* ‘average beings’—to coin a term that includes humans, *yakkhas*, and *devas*!

What the *Nikāyas* then encourage us to conclude is that whatever else the Buddha may or may not have understood as the seat of consciousness (see discussion below), it certainly wasn’t the heart. In fact, the only sense in which the term *hadaya* occurs in the *Nikāyas* is in the sense of an *organ*, as, for example, the eleventh part of the body in a list of thirty-two upon which to meditate¹²—this in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Taylor 1905, vol. 1, p. 6), a book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.¹³ The term *hadayavatthu*, which appears in the *Abhidhamma* and the *Commentarial literature* with roughly the same semantic distribution as *hadaya*, never once appears in the *Nikāyas*!

Discussion. Given that the Buddha himself has not linked the mind to the heart, or at least not made a statement to that effect, what is readily evident is that the localization of the mind in the heart seems to have taken root among the ranks of the Buddha’s discipleship during the time of the systematization of the *Abhidhamma*. But during this stage, the conceptualization still seems fluid: sometimes not appearing at all, as, for example, in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, where it appears sometimes as *hadaya* alone, sometimes as *hadayavatthu*, and sometimes with one or the other appearing in either of or both the material and the mentality domains. The fact that the term does not appear in the *Atthasālinī*, Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, in which he sought to be authentic to tradition, provides further evidence of the ambivalence during this early period.

Since, however, we find such fluidity giving way to solidity by Buddhaghosa’s time (fifth century C.E.), it may encourage one to view the entrenchment as a result of a boldness on the part of Buddhaghosa, given

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

that, as Ñāṇamoli points out, he did not hesitate to take liberties in his creative work, the *Visuddhimagga*, as he was equally careful to be true to tradition in his other works (e.g., the *Atthasālinī*). But we cannot ignore the words of Mrs. Rhys Davids: “Of his [Buddhaghosa’s] talent there can be no doubt. . . . But of originality, of independent thought, there is at present no evidence” (Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 2, p. 887; quoted in Adikaram 1946, p. 4). Further, in none of the relevant sections in the *Visuddhimagga* that refer to *hadayavatthu* or *hadaya* for the first time (XIII.99 and VII.111, respectively) or deal with them extensively (XIV.60, VIII.111), do we have Buddhaghosa making the claim *ayaṃ pana me attano mati* ‘this indeed is my own view’, as seen, for example, in the *Papañcasūdanī* (see Adikaram, p. 3, for the reference).

Now we come to the possibility that Buddhaghosa was simply following tradition. There is much evidence to support this. Buddhaghosa’s task “was not to write a series of original books on Buddhism but to put into Pali in a coherent and intelligent form the matter that already existed in the various Sinhalese Commentaries” (Adikaram, p. 2). His description of his own methodology in the *Samantapāsādikā* (Introduction) bears witness to this:

In commencing this commentary—having embodied therein the *Mahā Aṭṭhakathā*, without excluding any proper meaning from the decisions contained in the *Mahāpaccarī*, as also in the famous *Kurundī* and other commentaries, and including the opinions of the Elders. . . . From these commentaries, after casting off the language, condensing detailed accounts, including authoritative decisions, without overstepping any Pāli idiom. . . . (quoted in Adikaram, p. 2)

If Buddhaghosa is thus being authentic to tradition, it can be reasonably assumed that the notion of *hadayavatthu* as the seat of consciousness was already in the Sinhalese commentaries as well (in addition to the *Abhidhamma*). Since the *Visuddhimagga* was the “test” by which Buddhaghosa was judged by the Sinhalese Elders to be allowed to translate the commentaries into Pāli, it cannot but be the case that he had to be accurate in his understanding and analysis of so central a concept as the dhammas. It is indeed entirely possible as well that Buddhaghosa noted the presence of the noncanonical material in the Sinhalese commentaries, but, as Adikaram points out (p. 4), his task was “not to rectify,” particularly given his lack of originality (*supra*) and the striving for authenticity to scripture. There are, of course, unfortunately no Sinhalese commentaries to check out this claim.

So if we assume a role for Buddhaghosa, the authors of Sinhalese commentaries, and the authors of the *Abhidhamma* in the evolving localization of the mind in the heart, they all seemed to have had a fur-

ther source—ironically, the Nikāyas themselves—and this, as we shall see, almost by default!

Writing the words, “The heart-basis . . . the support for the mind-element and for the mindconsciousness-element,” Buddhaghosa asks, “How is that to be known?” He answers, “[1] From scriptures and [2] from logical reasoning” (no. 60; N, pp. 497–498 n. 26). He then goes on to quote the *Paṭṭhāna* (I.10, as above)¹⁴ as his evidence. But why is it not (as noted above) in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (the first book of the Abhidhamma), he asks, if it is in the *Paṭṭhāna*? Buddhaghosa explains that the reason is the “non-inconsistency of the teaching,” to ensure “unity” (ibid.).¹⁵

What seems ironic is that even though he seeks to make the Buddha’s teaching consistent, it is the very inconsistency in the Nikāyas¹⁶ (and presumably of the Buddha himself?)¹⁷ that has led to the inconsistency between the Nikāyas and the later works on the issue of the localization of the mind!

It is evident, for example, that more than one term has been used by the Buddha to denote the concept of consciousness, along with its associated states. The three principal ones are *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, as contained, for example, in the classic statement, *cittaṃ iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇaṃ* (*Saṃyutta* II.95), or in *yañ ca vuccati cittaṃ vā mano ti vā viññāṇaṃ ti vā* (*Dīgha* I.21). It is “as if to say, choose which you will” (Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, p. 237)!¹⁸

Each term, further, has variant renderings: *citta* as *ceto*, *cetanā*, *cetayita* (ibid., p. 239), and even *cetasika*; *mano* as *manindriya*, *manodhātu*, *manāyatana*, *manoviññāṇa*, *manoviññāṇadhātu*, and so on; and *viññāṇa* as *viññāṇadhātu*, *cakkhu-*, *sota-*, *ghāna-*, *jivhā-*, *kāya-*, *mano-viññāṇa*, and so on (see Davids and Stede 1979 for the entries). This, of course, is not to mention *nāma* ‘mentality’, as in *nāmarūpa* ‘psychophysique’ (this being my translation of the term, in Sugunasiri 1978).

Again, grammatically speaking, of the three terms, *citta* alone appears in the plural (though only “3 of 150 times in the Nikāyas” [Davids and Stede, p. 266]), while *mano* and *viññāṇa* never do.

The apparent semantic inconsistency of the three major terms seems to complicate matters further. If, as we have seen in the *Saṃyutta* and the *Dīgha* statements above, that the terms are used synonymously, they are also used with different shades of meaning. “*Mano* represents the intellectual functioning of consciousness, while *viññāṇa* represents the field of sense and sense-reaction (‘perception’), and *citta* the subjective aspect of consciousness” (Davids and Stede, p. 520). Or “In *mano* we have the man valuing, measuring, appraising, and also purposing, intending. . . . In *citta*, we more usually have the man as affective and affected, as experiencing. In *viññāṇa*, we have the man as not of this world only” (Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, p. 237).

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

Further, while *citta* means “inquisitiveness, instability, impulsiveness” (combining the intellectual and the affective), or “thinking or thought” (intellectual), it is on the one hand contrasted with *kāya* ‘body’ (as, e.g., in the series, *cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna*, *jivhā*, *kāya*, and *mano*), and on the other hand with *rūpa* ‘matter’ (ibid., p. 239). It is also both compared and contrasted with ‘will’ (Davids and Stede, p. 267). *Mano* is, again, used with “prefixes of sentiment,” as, for example, in *sumana* and *dummana* (ibid., p. 238), but not *citta*.

Given the sometimes overlapping, sometimes complementary usage, it now seems a simple step for Buddhaghosa, the Sinhalese commentators, or the Ābhidhammikas to extend the association of *nibbāna* to the heart in the *Samyutta* (*supra*), made by a deva, first, to all three terms, *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa*, and second, to put it in the mouth of the Buddha! Not even the fact that the connection was being made in the other two contexts in the *Samyutta* by a yakkha and Mara’s daughters seems to have entered anybody’s mind!¹⁹

If, then, inconsistency in the Nikāyas served as one condition for the view to prevail that the mind was located in the heart, it is equally likely that the notion was influenced by an external source as well: the Upaniṣads. For one thing, at least some of the Upaniṣads (other than the earliest five)²⁰ were not much older in time, some in fact being written afterwards.²¹ For another, at least some of the Sinhalese elders who wrote down the first Commentaries, if not Buddhaghosa himself,²² were “conversant with the Sanskrit language” (Adikaram, p. 4).²³

What, then, is this Upaniṣadic view? The Sanskrit term *jīva(h)*, which means ‘life’ (Monier-Williams 1957, p. 452), literally means ‘that which breathes’, from the root *jiv* ‘to breathe’. According to the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *ātman* ‘soul’ is based on the *prāṇa* ‘life-breath’, also called ‘in-breath’ (Radhakrishnan 1953).²⁴ Death, too, is associated with breathing, in both the physical and the nonphysical senses.²⁵

If breath is associated with ‘soul’ and ‘death’ in the Upaniṣads, we also find it associated with the heart as well, in life and at death. In sleep, for example, “When this being fell asleep . . . then [he] rests in that place which is the space within the heart” (*yatraiṣa etat supto’bhūt . . . ya eso’ntar-hṛdaya ākāśaḥ tasmīñ chete*) (BU II.1.17; R, p. 189). At death, “the point of his heart becomes lighted up and by that light the self departs” (*tasya haitasya hṛdayasyāgraṃ pradyotate, tena pradyotenaiṣa ātmā niṣkrāmati*) (BU IV.4.2; R, p. 270).

Nor is that all. *Jīva*, which, as we have seen, referred originally to the biological aspect of human nature throughout one’s life (awake, in a dream state, or asleep), has a cognate, *puruṣa*, meaning ‘man’ (both gender-neutral and male). But the term has a literal sense as well, namely *puri-śaya* ‘that which dwells in the citadel of heart’ (R, p. 90). In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* of several centuries later, we in fact find the soul (or self)

directly linked with the heart: *ātmāsyā jantor nihito guhāyaṃ* ‘the self is set in the heart of every creature’ (KU I.2.20; R, p. 617). If in the later *Kaṭha* this secret place is “the chief seat of the Supreme” (*guhām . . . parame parārdhe*) (KU I.3.1; R, p. 621), in the earlier *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, Brahman itself comes to be equated with the heart: *eṣa prajā-patir yad hr̥dayam, etad brahma* ‘This is Prajā-pati [literally, ‘Lord of People’] [the same as] this heart. It is Brahman’ (BU V.3.1; R, p. 291). When the line continues with the words *etat sarvam. tad etat try-akṣaram; hr̥-da-yam iti* ‘It is all. It has three syllables, *hr̥, da, yam . . .*’, we find even a ritual quality accorded the heart.²⁶

If the understanding of the heart that we get from what is given above is captured in the *Chāndogya* phrase *ātmā hr̥di* ‘the self is in the heart’ (CU VIII.3.3; R, p. 496), the Kauṣītākī-Brāhmaṇa captures its extended concept in the phrase *prāṇo brahmeti* ‘the breathing [living] spirit is Brahma’ (II.1; R, p. 761).

But what about the heart as the seat of the ‘mind’? For this we have to turn to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, where we find a specific reference to two cognates of the mind, *mano* and *citta*, captured in the parallel phrases *mano brahmeti* ‘mind as Brahman’ (CU III.18.1; R, p. 397) and *cittam brahmeti* ‘thought as Brahman’ (CU VII.5.3; R, pp. 474–475).

So we find in the Upaniṣads, both early and late, the mind associated with the heart, definitively and irrevocably. But how is the heart itself described in terms of its physical make-up? Here is the *Chāndogya* description: *atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharam puṇḍarīkaṃ veśma, daharo’sminn antarākāśaḥ. . .* ‘Now, here in this city of Brahman is an abode, a small lotus flower; within it is a small place’ (CU VIII.1.1; R, p. 491). The term *hr̥daya* itself occurs two verses later: *yāvān vā ayam ākāśaḥ, tāvān eṣo’ntarhr̥daya ākāśaḥ. . .* ‘as far, verily, as this [world] space extends, so far extends the space within the heart’ (CU VIII.1.3; R, p. 492).²⁷

It may now be instructive to recall that the heart was characterized in the *Visuddhimagga* (see above), too, in terms of a lotus, in relation to both its shape and color. And, reminiscent of *ākāśa* in the Upaniṣads, Buddhaghosa writes, “Inside it there is a hollow,” too (see note 4).

No doubt the much more detailed characterization of the heart in the *Visuddhimagga* speaks to the creative genius of Buddhaghosa that Ñāṇamoli (*supra*) talks about. But the parallel between the specific characterization of the heart in relation to the lotus and the placing of ‘the mind-element and the mind-consciousness element’ in the blood that is in the hollow of the heart are too close to be dismissed as being merely coincidental or accidental. The inevitable conclusion, then, has to be that the origin of the view of the seat of consciousness as being in the heart is at least partly Upaniṣadic.

Now it may be ironic that the early disciples of the Buddha would

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

want to accept something from Vedism out of a critique of which Buddhism arose. But, of course, it needs to be remembered that the Buddha himself had continued to use some of the Vedic terminology (e.g., *nāmarūpa*, *viññāṇa*, *manas*, *citta*, etc.; see Mrs. Rhys Davids 1936, chap. 10, for a discussion), though with changed meaning, and had *not* categorically rejected the mind-heart association as he had, for example, the caste system, or the existence of a soul. There is the possibility, further, that Vedism would have been in the country (Lanka) prior to the advent of Buddhism, making it no alien thought to the educated Sinhalese. So it may be conjectured, in the absence of a better alternative, that the disciples hung on to what was helping to make the intellectual circles at the time. There was, after all, no reason to think that the Brahminical tradition was wrong in everything!

On the basis of the discussion above, then, we must conclude that in associating the mind (using whatever term) with the heart—basing oneself in the Upaniṣads (and the Vedas) or the Nikāyas—Buddhaghosa, the Sinhalese commentators, and the Ābhidhammikas all erred!

The Buddha's View as Reconstructed from the Nikāyas

Having outlined the possible reasons for the erroneous localization of the mind in the heart during the post-Buddhian period, we are still left with the task of identifying what the Buddha's view indeed was on the matter. Did he in fact simply "not commit himself" to a particular view, as Narada (*supra* p. 199) claims:

It was [the] cardiac theory [the view that the heart is the seat of consciousness] that prevailed in the Buddha's time. . . . The Buddha could have adopted this popular theory, but He did not commit Himself.

Was he being silent on the matter, as Aung argues?

On a surface level, the answer to both questions has to be in the affirmative, for the issue does not seem to have warranted his attention qua issue.²⁸ We find no elucidation of it in the discourses where one should legitimately expect one, namely in the *Mahānidāna Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 15), one of two suttas mentioned by name at the First Council (the other being the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*) and thus likely to be among the oldest and most reflective of the Buddha's own teachings,²⁹ or in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (*Dīgha* 14) (see Warder 1970, pp. 107–117 for a discussion).

The absence of a specific answer to our question in the Nikāyas is on the one hand understandable, since from the Buddha's point of view, all he was doing was refraining from answering abstract, philosophical, or psychological questions merely for the sake of answering them, and seeking rather to help human beings achieve liberation from *saṃsāra*. Not that he did not have any complex explanations; but he would offer these only to the extent that they were relevant to the liberative process.

But it is precisely for this reason that the lack of an answer is difficult to understand—because of the singularly important position held by the concept of consciousness in his teachings.

Such an absence may also suggest that the Buddha was specifically seeking to avoid answering a ‘wrong’ question of the type “What would the hair color of an offspring of a barren woman be?”—knowing fully well that any answer given would be wrong! Thus, for example, talking about a ‘seat’ could suggest (a) a permanence or tangibility where none exists, or (b) a linear causality that contradicts the reality of relationality (reciprocal, circular, and multicausal) as contained in the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, a fundamental pillar of his teaching.

Despite the absence of a definitive answer to our question *in our terms*, I want to argue that the Buddha did indeed identify ‘the seat of consciousness’ without calling it such, however, and that the evidence is right there in the Nikāyas, waiting to be discovered and continuing to appear in the Abhidhamma, the Commentaries from the *Visuddhimagga* to the *Mohavicchedanī*, and in all the Buddhist writings of all schools to date.

In our explorations for a home for consciousness, we can find the teacher talking to Ānanda, explaining to him his teaching of *paṭiccasamuppāda* ‘Conditioned Origination’ (*Mahānidāna Sutta*). In explaining the cycle of causation, the Buddha comes to the words *viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ* ‘conditioned by consciousness is the psychophysique’. Then he summarizes the sequence backwards, *nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*, showing the reciprocal relationship between the two, a point in fact made by Sāriputta, too, to a learned Brahmin Kotthita (*Samyutta* II.80).

The Buddha continues his explanation to Ānanda: “If consciousness did not descend into the mother’s womb there would be no formation (‘coagulation’, *sam-murcch*) of a sentient body in the mother’s womb. Or, if, after descending into the womb, consciousness were to pass away, the sentient body would not be produced for this world” (Warder, p. 110).

Since the *Mahanidāna Sutta* is one of two discourses mentioned by name at the First Council, and the fact that it is also shared by other schools (Warder, p. 108),³⁰ we can assume that this was, if not actually the Buddha’s very own thinking, the closest we can get to it.

The *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (*supra*) speaks to the same reciprocal relationship: “this consciousness turns back again from the sentient body. It goes no further. To this extent one may be born, grow old, die and be reborn, namely [to the extent that] consciousness exists through the condition of a sentient body, a sentient body through the condition of consciousness” (*ibid.*, p. 117).

A further addition is significant; it makes conditioned origination

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

“the content of a Buddha’s Enlightenment” (ibid., p. 116). Given that the Buddha (our’s or any other, since all Buddhas are supposed to have similar paths to Enlightenment) would not be born again, the suggested reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* holds not only in the rebirth process but even in the process of a given lifetime, a point made by Buddhaghosa, too (*supra*).

There are, of course, many other places where the sequence showing the reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* occurs throughout the Nikāyas. But of specific relevance is another *Dīgha* text (III.211), repeated in the *Saṃyutta* and also found in the Chinese tradition (Warder, p. 118), where *viññāṇa* is shown as one of four ‘foods’ (*āhāra*): “All beings (*sattvas*) persist through food” (ibid). Elsewhere (*Dīgha* III.247; *M* III.31, 247), *viññāṇa* occurs as one of six *dhātus* ‘bases’, along with the four elements (*āpo, tejo, vāyo, paṭhavi*), and space (*ākāsa*), suggesting even a material quality.

As the evidence above indicates, the view in the Nikāyas is that the mind, instead of being localized in a single organ, is, rather, *non-localized*, that is, spread throughout, or is coterminous with, the *whole* of *nāmarūpa*. This, captured also, incidentally, by Kassapa in his *Mohavicchedanī* (*supra*), is confirmed from another function of *viññāṇa*—as the ‘coordinator’ of the senses. Such coordination may be aspectual (‘localized’ if you like) in relation to each of the *cakkhu-*, *sota-*, *ghāna-*, and *jivhā-viññāṇas* when the data (*ārammaṇa*) is input through the eye, ear, nose, and tongue, respectively. But in the case of *kāya* of this same series, meaning the rest of the body other than the eye, ear, nose, and tongue,³¹ it is evident that *viññāṇa*, by definition, is in the whole body and not in any one particular locale.

The same is the case when it comes to the mind as *sense* (in the series *cakkhu-*, *sota-*, *ghāna-*, *jivhā-*, *kāya-*, and *mano-viññāṇa*); it is logical to conclude that the mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*) is not ‘localized’ in any one part of the body as in the case of the other four—*cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna*, and *jivhā*.

If, indeed, in the Buddha’s mind, consciousness was localized in the heart even as, for example, in the eye and ear, one would expect to see him use a term such as **hadaya-viññāṇa*³² to capture the notion, giving Buddhaghosa his fare. But, of course, no such term occurs anywhere in the Nikāya literature.

In answer to our question, I can now hear the Buddha speaking to us as follows: “While there is no ‘seat’ as such of consciousness, as an unchanging entity, or as a ‘first cause’, there is a *process* in the mental domain that coarises with the process of the totality of the physical domain.” Indeed, there are two terms in the Nikāyas that we can point to as having precisely these functions in the respective domains. They are *jīvita* ‘life’ and *jīvitindriya* ‘life faculty’. Of the two, *jīvita* appears in the

Nikāyas extensively (V II.191; S I.42, IV.169, 213; M II.173; A I.155; etc.), but unlike the case of *hadaya/hadayavatthu*, the extended term *jīvitindriya* also occurs at least twice (V III.73; S V.204).³³ Both also occur in the context of ‘depriving’ (*jīvitam voropeti*) or ‘destruction’ (*jīvitam upacchindati*).

The most fundamental justification for our reconstruction, then, is that unlike *hadayatthu*, *jīvitindriya* is authentic to the tradition, and not a later concoction of the Ābhidhammikas or Porāṇāchariyas or Buddhaghosa, even though it certainly received further elucidation at their hands.

Though not understood as we have used them here, what is of interest is that we find the two terms (and concepts) appearing in the *Visuddhimagga*, too—*jīvita* as the seventh of twenty seven ‘constant states’ associated with the first sense-sphere of (profitable) consciousness (chap. XIV; 133 [395]) and *jīvitindriya*, its corollary, as a ‘derived materiality’ (*upādāya rūpa*) (chap. XIV; 36 [375]). In outlining the features of *jīvita*, Buddhaghosa says, for example: *lakkhaṇādīni pan’assa rūpajivite vuttanayen’eva veditabbāni. Tan hi rūpadhammānañ jīvitam, idam arūpadhammānaṃ ti idam ev’ettha nānākāraṇaṃ* ‘its characteristics, etc. should be understood in the way stated under material life. For that is life of material things and this is life of immaterial things. This is the only difference here’ (no. 138; W, p. 392; N, p. 523). The fourfold description of *jīvitindriya* is given as follows: *Sahajarūpānupālanalakkhaṇāñ jīvitindriyaṃ, tesan pavattanarasam, tesam yeva thapanapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, yāpayitabbabhūtapadaṭṭhānaṃ* ‘The life faculty has the characteristic of maintaining conscent kinds of matter. Its function is to make them occur. It is manifested in the establishing of their presence. Its proximate cause is primary elements that are to be sustained’ (no. 59; W, p. 378; N, p. 496).

Further, in rebirth-linking (*paṭisandhiyaṃ*) as well as in the course of an existence (*pavatte*), the ‘material life [faculty]’ (*rūpajīvitam*) is a condition (in three ways: as presence, nondisappearance, and faculty (*atthiavigata-indriyavasena ... tidhā*) (chap. XVII, 217). But what about at death? Here is Buddhaghosa’s explanation:

It [i.e., *jīvitindriya*] does not prolong presence at the moment of dissolution because it is itself dissolving, like the flame of a lamp when the wick and the oil are getting used up. But it must not be regarded as destitute of power, to maintain, make occur, and make present, because it does accomplish each of these functions at the moment stated.” (No. 59; N, p. 496)³⁴

Elsewhere, *jīvitindriya* is characterized as being one of eleven components that make up materiality, the others being the four primaries and the six physical bases (chap. XVII, no. 204). Noteworthy is the fact that *hadayatthu* is not included here. Further, while ‘life faculty’ is listed by

Suwanda H.J. Sugunasiri

Buddhaghosa as an *indriya* ‘faculty/organ’ (i.e., *jīvitindriya*) [chap. XVI, no. 1]), the ‘heart-base’ is not,³⁵ with no such term as **hadayavatthvindrīya* appearing anywhere in the *Visuddhimagga*, just as it appears nowhere else in the canonical literature either!³⁶

Finally, Buddhaghosa seems to recognize the primacy of the life-faculty over the heart-basis when he says that the latter “is maintained by life” (*āyunā anupāliyamānaṃ*) (chap. XIV, no. 60).

If, then, ‘life faculty’ (1) is an *indriya*, (2) has, as is to be expected for an *indriya*, the primary elements as the ‘proximate cause’, (3) is a condition for rebirth, (4) is not destitute of power for continuing life, and (5) dissolves at death, it is immediately evident that it is coextensive with the whole psychophysique. This conclusion is further confirmed by its being listed (chap. XIV, no. 1) along with *itthindriya* ‘femininity faculty’ and *purisindriya* ‘masculinity faculty’, both of which, of course, must be understood as being coextensive with the whole body.

This indeed is what we found the Buddha telling us in the Nikāyas: the reciprocal relationship between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāṇa* (*supra*). In the lamp/wick analogy above, one is reminded of the characterization of *viññāṇa* in relation to *nāmarūpa* elsewhere: “A state that, while arising, assists [another state] by making it arise together with itself [as] a co-nascence condition, as a lamp is for illumination” (no. 77; Ñāṇamoli, p. 614). It is thus that Sāriputta talks of the two as reeds supporting each other.

As would be evident from our discussion, then, it can be established, with seeming authority from the Buddha and even the later tradition, that *jīvitindriya* can lay a more legitimate claim as the ‘seat of consciousness’ in the materiality domain. This, interestingly enough, was a possibility considered by the author of *Visuddhimagga Aṭṭhakathā*, but passed up in favor of *hadayavatthu* on the flimsiest of arguments, and without any evidential base! To quote: “And in the case of the life faculty, that would have to have another function, so to make it the support would be illogical, too” (Ñāṇamoli, p. 497 n. 26). But why it must have “another function” or what this function would be is never explained. Nor is it explained why it is illogical!³⁷ But he concludes: “So it is the heart-basis that remains to be recognized as their support” (ibid.)! The author certainly seems to have been eager to be faithful to Buddhaghosa, or perhaps trying to cover up, or justify, an error!

Now *jīvitindriya*, though in the ‘materiality’ domain, needs to be understood as a *process* like *citta* and not *hadaya*. *Jīvita*, also a process, listed as a *dhamma*, both *kusala* ‘moral’ and *akusala* ‘immoral’—and presumably *avyākata* ‘indeterminate’, too—and thus present in *all* the states of mind, would be its legitimate sibling in the mentality domain. *Jīvita* and *jīvitindriya* are, then, both coextensive with the whole body, and with each other.

Concluding Remarks

If our analysis is correct, then we must see the identification of the heart-base as the seat of consciousness during the post-Buddhian period as a gross misrepresentation of the Buddha, in violation of the Buddha's advice not to be led by "tradition" or "the authority of religious texts" (*Kālāma Sutta*). The tradition here for the Sinhalese Porāṇācariyas appears to be Brahminism and the associated worldview, with the Vedas, Purānas, Āgamas, and Upaniṣads collectively being the texts. For Buddhaghosa, Kassapa, and all others later, the Sinhalese Porāṇācariyas and their Aṭṭhakathās (see Adikaram 1946 for an overview) serve as tradition and text, respectively. What we then have, it appears, is an example of how the violation of a scholarly principle of objectivity, as called for by the Buddha, can blind an inquirer to the obvious. For after all, as we have seen, the reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* is no stranger to the Ābhidhammikas, Porāṇācariyas, or Buddhaghosa, since it appears in their own analyses. Yet they slide over it as if it was irrelevant to the question at hand!³⁸

While a comprehensive treatment of the epistemological and pragmatic implications of our new understanding is beyond the scope of this essay, we may suggest some productive lines of comparative inquiry. An obvious one would be our current scientific understanding of the nature of the mind. Writing in *Psychology Today*, John (1976) pointed out, for example, how the mind is extended throughout the body, through its neuroskeletal system. Chopra (1989), "exploring the frontiers of mind-body medicine" in his *Quantum Healing*, refers to a 'thinking body', positing the mind ('intelligence') in the whole body.³⁹ Buddha's own understanding, of course, goes beyond John's neuroskeletal system to the very boundaries—skin, hair, nails, and teeth, included as part of the thirty-two body parts (*supra*). Putting the Buddha's understanding in terms of contemporary terminology, should we say that the mind is in every one of over several trillion cells in each one of us, residing in each DNA molecule and in instantaneous communication with every other DNA molecule, with research assigning this function of communication to 'neuropeptides' or "information molecules" (see note 39)? Since the blueprint for every subsequent DNA molecule is provided by the very first DNA molecule that comes into existence at the point of conception, before the embryo starts dividing up the second day or begins to make a nervous system on day eighteen (Chopra 1989), it is obvious that the mind must then be in the very first DNA molecule as well. That is to say, it is *precortical*. Isn't this, then, what the Buddha says when he posits a reciprocal relationship between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāṇa*?

There is another related line of inquiry. In maintaining that the heart is not the seat of consciousness, the Buddha obviously joins contemporary medicine in rejecting cardiac arrest as constituting (clinical) death.

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

But whether the current medical understanding that “brain death” constitutes death matches with the Buddha’s understanding can only be determined through an examination of the concept of *cuti-citta* ‘exit consciousness’ and associated teachings. For a start, it may be noted that, as mentioned in this section, the mind exists from day (i.e., moment) one, eighteen days *before* the neuronal system evolves. Would it not then make sense to consider the theoretical possibility that consciousness (another term for mind) could still be present *after* ‘brain death’, for however brief a moment, even though we may not have instruments sophisticated enough to measure it?

On a more pragmatic level, one of the obvious concerns relates to organ transplantation (see Sugunasiri 1990). For example, if the seat of consciousness is not the heart, would it be easier for Tibetan Buddhists, for example, to emulate the Bodhisattva ideal of donating organs (*Jātakas*) without being troubled by their traditional understanding that a dead body should not be moved for seven days, since life continues in the *heart* for that long? This, however, is not to say that life does not indeed continue to exist in the whole body, “postcortically” as we have suggested, after being declared clinically dead. If so, what are the implications for the treatment of cadavers, autopsies, burials, cremations, and so on—or, indeed, for Buddhist postdeath customs of transferring merit and offering alms at the end of three, seven, or thirty days, at the end of the first year, and so on?

NOTES

My thanks go to Professors A. K. Warder and Leonard Priestley of the University of Toronto for comments on an earlier version of this essay, and to the anonymous reviewers for their critical evaluation.

- 1 – This is Warder’s (1970, p. 150) translation of the Sanskrit term, *saṃvṛti* (Pāli *sammuti*), and I use it here since it captures best the notion I am seeking to convey.
- 2 – The term *dhamma* has different meanings (see Watanabe 1983, chap. 2, for a discussion). Thus it will be rendered differently elsewhere in this essay, and sometimes it will be retained without translation.
- 3 – Unless otherwise indicated, the references to the *Visuddhimagga* in this discussion are to Warren 1950 (cited as “W”) when in Pāli and to Ñāṇamoli 1952 (cited as “N”) when in translation.

Philosophy East & West

- 4 – The full description here is as follows:

This is the heart flesh. As to *colour*, it is the colour of the back of a red-lotus petal. As to *shape*, it is the shape of a lotus bud with the outer petals removed and turned upside down; it is smooth outside, and inside it is like the interior of a *kosātakī* (loofah gourd). In those who possess understanding it is a little expanded; in those without understanding it is still only a bud. Inside it there is a hollow the size of a *punnāga* seed's bed where half a *pasata* measure of blood is kept, with which as their support the mind element and mind-consciousness element occur. That in one of greedy temperament is red; that in one of hating temperament is black; that in one of deluded temperament is like the water that meat has been washed in; that in one of speculative temperament is like lentil soup in colour; that in one of faithful temperament is the colour of (yellow) *kaṇikāra* flowers; that in one of understanding temperament is limpid, clear, unturbid, bright, pure, like a washed gem of pure water, and it seems to shine. As to *direction*, it lies in the upper direction. As to *location*, it is to be found in the middle between the two breasts, inside the body. As to *delimitation*, it is bounded by what appertains to heart. (Ñāṇamoli, p. 275)

See Warren 1950, p. 211, for the Pāli version.

- 5 – See Anuruddha's *Abhidhammaṭṭhasaṅgaha* (Narada 1968), for a similar view.
- 6 – The relevant quotation in full is as follows: *Yaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññādhātu ca vattanti, taṃ rūpaṃ manodhātuyā taṃsampayuttakānañ ca dhammānaṃ pūrejātapaccayena paccayo; manoviññādhātuyā taṃsampayuttakānañ ca dhammānaṃ kañci kālaṃ pūrejāta . . . kañci kālaṃ na pūrejātapaccayena paccayo* (Mrs. Davids 1921, p. 5; quoted, with minor variations, in Warren, p. 457) 'The materiality with which as their support the mind element and mind-consciousness element occur is a condition, and it is sometimes [as in the course of an existence] a condition, as pre-nascence condition, sometimes [as at rebirth-linking] not a condition as pre-nascence condition, for the mind-consciousness element and for the states associated therewith' (no. 85; Ñāṇamoli 1956, p. 617).
- 7 – . . . *hadayaṃ paṇḍāraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññānaṃ viññāṇakhando tajaṃ manodhātu* (Mrs. Davids 1904, p. 88).
- 8 – This is my literal translation. Mrs. Davids' rendering of it (1950, p. 254), "Thou who hast plunged in leafy lair of trees / Suffering nibbāna in thy heart to sink," is certainly more poetic, but is clearly a free translation. It is thanks to her great license as well that, as we shall see, the misleading entry has found its way into the PTS dictionary (p. 728, under *hadaya*) in the following words: "the heart as seat of thought and feeling, esp. of strong emotion (as in Vedas!) which shows itself in the action of the heart."

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

- 9 – Here Mrs. Davids, basing herself on Commentarial authority, states in a footnote: “Either by making an appalling sight of himself before the Buddha, or by uttering fearful sounds” (p. 265).
- 10 – The Buddha’s words in full in this section are as follows: *Na khvāhaṃ taṃ āvuso passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sasamaṇa-brahmaniyā pajāya so devamanussāya yo me cittaṃ vā khippeyya hadayaṃ vā phaleyya padesu vā gahetvā paragaṅgāya khippeyya. api ca tvaṃ āvuso puccha yad akankhāsi ti* (*Samyutta* I. 207). “I see no one, friend, in the whole world, be he Mara or Brahma, nor among gods or men with all the recluses and the brahmins, who is able to derange my mind, or split my heart, or take me by the feet and throw me over the Ganges; nevertheless, friend, ask according to thy desire” (Mrs. Davids 1950, p. 265).
- 11 – Even if we were to understand the two threats here as clearly referring to the physical and the mental, respectively, the association made is evident.
- 12 – It is possible that this list was arrived at by the Buddha through personal observation of his own mindbody through meditation, and/or by reference to the Indian medical texts of the time.
- 13 – It may be noted here that the material of this later work, as Warder points out (p. 203), is of “doubtful authenticity” as well.
- 14 – Even though Ñāṇamoli gives the reference as I.4, it should, in fact, be I.10. Incidentally, the reference on the next page (p. 498) to the *Paṭisambhidā* should be I.6 and not I.7 as given.
- 15 – See Ñāṇamoli, p. 497, for Buddhaghosa’s complex argument, which need not detain us here.
- 16 – “Let the reader not expect to find a thorough-going consistency in the Suttas” (Mrs. Davids 1936, p. 235).
- 17 – The apparent inconsistent usage by the Buddha need not mean that he was unsure of himself, given the extremely comprehensive ways in which he has explained complex phenomena (e.g., *nāmarūpa*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*). It may rather be that he used the concepts and terms that best befitted the task at hand, the type of listener (from the wise to the ignorant), the context (a congregation of his disciples vs. the battlefield, in which he advised kings), etc. In this connection, it is worthy to note, e.g., how we, too, in contemporary times, use terms such as *mind*, *thought*, and *consciousness* with both semantic overlap and mutual exclusivity.
- 18 – But see later in the third section below for another synonym used by the Buddha that is more relevant to the case being made.

- 19 – I have, of course, not checked out every reference to *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* in a reference work like the Pali Concordance. Such a task, well beyond the needs of this essay, might indeed be a fruitful endeavor for someone who wishes to pursue the matter.
- 20 – Warder (p. 23) determines that the *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, *Aitareya*, *Kauṣītakī*, and *Taittirīya* Upaniṣads “alone are strictly canonical *Veda*.”
- 21 – Evidence for this is that some of the Upaniṣads themselves were influenced by Buddhist teachings. For example, we find that the later Upaniṣads “dispense with supernatural gods or a God and explain the universe out of itself” (Warder, p. 32).
- 22 – Even though Buddhaghosa himself “nowhere shows his knowledge of Upanishads” (Law 1946, p. 33), the *Buddhaghosuppatti* records a tradition of Buddhaghosa’s knowledge of Sanskrit being tested on the eve of his departure from Sri Lanka (back to his homeland in India). It even preserves a specimen of the Sanskrit verses he was able to compose impromptu (ibid. p. 41).
- 23 – Buddhaghosa, e.g., tells us that a certain Vaṅṅīsa and Punna, disciples of the Buddha of his time, were born of Brahmin parents, and that at least the former was versed in the three Vedas (Law, p. 97). Many from this same background and persuasion engaged the Buddha in dialogue as well, as challengers or inquirers, Vaṅṅīsa and Punna being examples of those who eventually came under his tutelage.
- 24 – *kasmin nu tvañ cātma ca pratiṣṭhitau stha iti. prāṇa iti* (Radhakrishnan 1953, p. 243) ‘On what are you and [your] soul based? On the in-breath’.
- 25 – In the physical sense: *prāṇo vā aṅgānaṃ rasaḥ* ‘life-breath is the essence of the limbs’ (*BU* I.3.19; Radhakrishnan, p. 160). In the nonphysical sense: *[mṛtyuḥ] ... nāpnot yo’yaṃ madhyamaḥ prāṇaḥ* ‘death did not take possession of him who was the middle breath’ (*BU* I.5.21; R, p. 181).
- 26 – I have here in mind the parallel case of the letters *a*, *u*, and *m* (*akāra*, *ukāra*, *makāra*)—making up *aum*—being afforded such a ritual quality, as, e.g., in the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* (699, 8).
- 27 – See Karunadasa 1967, p. 66, for additional Vedic and other sources.
- 28 – E.g., Warder’s extensive work, *Indian Buddhism* (1970), based on a critical study of the literature of the different schools of Buddhism, in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Chinese, does not even have a reference in the index to this topic, or even to *hṛdaya* (the terminology being given by Warder in Sanskrit).

- 29 – While the question of just what the Buddha’s actual words were will likely never be resolved, I agree with Warder’s view (chap. 7) that the mention by name at the First Council is at least indicative of a Sutta’s antiquity.
- 30 – Professor Leonard Priestley of the University of Toronto, however, observes (in personal communication) that the material is not identical in all the versions.
- 31 – Here *kāya* is used in the sense of ‘body’ (*rūpa*) and not as a collective term for *phassa*, *vedanā*, and *saññā* (*supra*).
- 32 – The asterisk here means, ‘does not occur in the literature’.
- 33 – See Davids and Stede, p. 285, for the complete entry.
- 34 – *na bhangakkhaṇe ṭhpeti sayama bhijjamānattā, khīyamāno viya vaṭṭisneho dīpasikhaṃ; na ca anupālanapavattanaṭṭhapanānubhavavirahitaṃ, yathāvuttakkhaṇe tassa tassa sādhanato ti daṭṭhabbaṃ* (W, p. 378).
- 35 – Others in the list of twenty-two faculties (*indriya*) are as follows: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, [bodily] pleasure, [bodily] pain, [mental] joy, [mental] grief, equanimity, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, understanding, I-shall-come-to-know-the-unknown, final-knowledge, and final-knower (chap. XVI, no. 1; Ñāṇamoli, p. 559). It should be noted, however, that the eye, ear, nose, and tongue, unlike the rest in the list, seem to be localized.
- 36 – Note also Buddhaghosa pointing out that the ‘life faculty’ serves as the only materiality of ‘non-percipient’ beings: *Asaññīnaṃ rūpato jīvitindriyanavakaṃ evā ti* (chap. XVII; N, p. 478; W, p. 192). Again, there is no reference to a ‘heart faculty’.
- 37 – The full argument in support of *hadayavatthu*, given prior to the lines quoted, goes as follows: “But the logical reasoning should be understood in this way. In the five-constituent becoming, [that is, in the sense sphere and fine material sphere,] these two elements have as their support produced (*nippahanna*) derived matter. Herein, since visible-data base, etc., and nutritive-essence, are found to occur apart from what is bound up with faculties, to make them the support would be illogical. And since these two elements are found in a continuity that is devoid of the femininity and masculinity faculties [i.e., in the Brahma world], to make them the support would be illogical too. And in the case of the life-faculty. . .” (ibid.).
- 38 – It may also be noted here that because the misrepresentation of the Buddha appears in the Abhidhamma, it provides further evidence to the scholarly claim that the Abhidhamma is of later origin.

39 – See Barasch 1993, pp. 58 ff., for an update of the literature, which has now come to identify neuropeptides—“stars scattered through the bodily firmament” as he puts it, as the “information molecules.”

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Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri

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