
BUDDHIST TEACHINGS ABOUT THE MIDDLE: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE MAJJHE-SUTTA OF THE AṄGUTTARA-NIKĀYA

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ABSTRACT

The *Majjhe sutta*, which comes in *The Book of the Sixes* (*chakka nipāta*) of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, incorporates six interpretations (by six different elder monks) of the Buddha's phrase 'the middle'. Later, they await the verdict of the Buddha to make it clear whose understanding was the most reliable. After hearing a report of their discussion, the Buddha consented to all six definitions and further drove away their doubts by explicitly confirming the first monk's version. The term '*majjhena*', which means 'the middle' or 'Central Philosophy', occasionally appears in the Nikāya texts and is similar to the term '*majjhe*' ([in] the middle). Furthermore, while the term '*majjhimā*' symbolizes 'the middle path', the '*majjhe*' of the *Majjhe sutta* stands for neither of these two meanings. However, by using the term '*majjhe*', the sutta does present expositions akin to '*majjhena*' as 'Central Philosophy'. Thus, this paper proposes to compare the similarities and dissimilarities between 'the middle' (*majjhe*) and 'Central Philosophy' (*majjhena*). In addition, it aims to question the possibility of the setting up of a different middle teaching in the *Majjhe sutta*, one

which differs from the *Kaccāyanagotta sutta*. The scope of this paper addresses the “philosophical” aspect of ‘the middle’ in Buddhism.

Introduction

The *Majjhe sutta* acts as a commentary on a verse (#1042) of the *Tissametteyya sutta* in the *Pārāyana-vagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta*. The verse runs:

So ubh’anta-m-abhiññāya majjhe mantā na lippati
Taṃ brūmi mahāpuriso ti, so idha sibbinim accagā” ti.

Scholars have used various terms for translating ‘*majjhe*’. Fausboll’s translation is ‘the middle’ while N. A. Jayawickrama translates it as ‘in between’. K. R. Norman translates ‘*majjhe*’ as ‘the middle’. Among them, the most precise meaning for ‘*majjhe*’ would be ‘the middle’, that which rejects the two extremes. The aim of the verse is to refer to the two extremes and avoid being attached to either of the extremes as well as to the middle. The statement “by wisely not clinging to the middle” (*majjhe mantā na lippati*) refers to the early Buddhist teaching of the non-substantiality of Dhamma (*dharma nairātmyatā*) as described in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*. In other words, according to the *Kaccāyanagotta sutta*, the middle causality - *paṭiccasamuppāda* - or as later traditions suggested, *śūnyatā* (as the middle), are also to be avoided. Thus, the statement “by wisely not clinging to the middle” (*majjhe mantā na lippati*) is similar to “the doctrine also should be removed” (*dhammāpi pahātabbā*).

The six interpretations concerning ‘the middle’ offered by the monks are: the Cessation of contact, the Present (moment), feeling neither displeasure nor pleasure, Consciousness (which appears twice among these six) and the Cessation of personal existence.

01. Contact is an extreme, arising of contact is the second extreme, ceasing of contact is the middle (*phasso kho, āvuso, eko anto, phassasamudayo dutiyo anto, phassanirodho majjhe*)
02. The past is an extreme, the future is the second extreme, the present is the middle (*atītamaṃ kho, āvuso, eko anto, anāgataṃ dutiyo anto, paccuppannaṃ majjhe*)
03. Pleasure is an extreme, displeasure is the second extreme, neither displeasure nor pleasure is the middle (*sukkhā, āvuso, vedanā eko anto, dukkhā vedanā dutiyo anto, adukkhamasukkhā vedanā majjhe*)
04. Name is an extreme, Form is the second extreme, consciousness is the middle (*nāmaṃ kho, āvuso, eko anto, rūpaṃ dutiyo anto, viññāṇaṃ majjhe*)
05. The six senses are an extreme, the six objects are the second extreme, consciousness is the middle (*cha kho, āvuso, ajjhattikāni āyatanāni eko anto, cha bāhirāni āyatanāni dutiyo anto, viññāṇaṃ majjhe*)
06. Personal existence is an extreme, arising personal existence is the second extreme, ceasing personal existence is the middle (*sakkāyo kho, āvuso, eko anto, sakkāyasamudayo dutiyo anto, sakkāyanirodho majjhe*)

It should be noted here that although these six interpretations are given in the Pali version, the Āgama literature offers only five interpretations. Another significant difference between the Pali text and the Āgamas is that the latter do not offer a definition of ‘the middle’. Based on this, I would argue “the middle” as discussed in the *Majjhe sutta* has no categorical connection with the *Kcc* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. These interpretations evidently were dependent upon the intuition (*sakaṃ paṭibhānaṃ*) of each monk. On the other hand, these interpretations are not strong enough to lead us to conclude that the teachings of the *Majjhe sutta* are totally different from the *Kcc*. After examining the content of the *Majjhe-sutta* and the *Kcc*, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

1. The discussion between Kaccāyanavaccagotta and the Buddha took place after the discourse of the *Majjhe-sutta* in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*.
2. None of the six monks had learned the *Kcc* before they created their own interpretations on ‘the middle’.
3. There may be a significant likeness between ‘the middle’ and the Central Philosophy discussed in the *Majjhe-sutta* and in the *Kcc* respectively.
4. There might be dissimilarities between ‘the middle’ and the Central Philosophy discussed in the aforementioned sources.

‘The Middle[s] discussed in the *Majjhe Sutta*

The *Majjhe-sutta* is explicitly based on the *Sutta-nipāta*, a text which is considered one of the earliest parts of the Pali Canon. The doctrinal validity and reliability of the *Sutta-nipāta* places the *Parayana vagga* in a high position among the early texts. Also, four of the interpretations found among the six monks are related to the twelve-fold causality of *Paṭicca-samupāda* discussed in the *Kcc*: contact (01), feelings (03), name and form (04), six faculties (05). However, the two additional ones [time and personal existence (*sakkāya*)] are seemingly independent and the *Kcc* might have developed a different middle teaching in Buddhism. Since there is no known reason to suspect the *Majjhe sutta* as added later, a possible argument could be that these six interpretations came out before Kaccanavaccagotta met the Buddha and, thus, the six monks might not have been aware of the twelve links as being ‘the middle’. Another possibility is that the *Kcc* had already been taught as a discourse, but the six monks had not learnt of it. Or, they might have *intentionally* avoided the middle teaching in the *Kcc*. Regardless of which case happens to be correct, we can say that two independent interpretations arose among the six.

Contact-based Middle

In the first monk's interpretation, contact is considered an extreme, arising of contact is considered the second extreme, and the cessation of contact is the middle. The contact (*phasso*) and the cessation of the contact (*phassanirodho*) are common to the *Kcc* and appear in descending order (*saḷāyatananirodhā phassanirodho; phassanirodhā vedanānirodho*). As the *Kcc* remarks, the cessation of contact depends on the ceasing of the senses. However, the first interpretation declared in the *Majjhe sutta* undertakes a more comprehensive exposition than the teachings of the *Kcc*. Considering the framework of the *Majjhe sutta*, three steps can be deduced, the third one being cessation (of contact, consciousness, feeling and personal existence). This form of expression is similar to the third truth of the four noble truths and to the teachings of the *Sammādiṭṭhi sutta* (MN. sutta 9), which appears in the framework of the four noble truths. Thus, it is clear that the above has applied the framework of the four noble truths. The “cessation of the contact” found in the *Majjhe sutta* becomes “the middle”. The same ‘contact’ is met in the twelve links, which is known as the middle in the *Kcc*. Again, the cessation of contact appears to be the third step of fourfold contacts in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*.

The other notable factor here is, referring to all the above three sources, is its restriction to a philosophical perspective. Apparently, the *Majjhe sutta* does not discuss the practical path for going beyond the middle. The *Kcc* also is taken as a discourse describing the middle in its philosophical aspects. Also, in the third of the four-fold steps in the *Sammādiṭṭhi sutta*, we see that “cessation” should be taken in a philosophical sense, since it is the fourth step which explains the practical path required to cease what has originated.

Time-based Middle

The second monk's interpretation is based on the time. The past is considered an extreme and the future is considered another extreme. The present is the middle. A similar teaching found in the *Vibhaṅga-vagga* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* leads to understanding time to be the middle. Arahant Kaccāna proclaims:

How is one vanquished in regard to presently arisen states?
In regard to the eye and forms that are presently arisen,
one's consciousness is bound up with desire and lust ...
one delights in that. When one delights in that, one is
vanquished in regard to presently arisen states.

This contends that one who hopes to reach the supra-mundane stage has to cut off attachment to the present moment. In other words, the supra-mundane state could be perceived beyond the present moment. How could this teaching be compared to the *Majjhe-sutta*? The statement “*ubhantamabhiññāya*” means “knowing both past and future” and “*Majjhe mantā na lippati*” means to go beyond the present moment.

In addition, the *Attadaṇḍa-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* also imparts the same teaching “he who has passed beyond sensual pleasure here, the attachment which is hard to cross over in the world, does not grieve, [and] does not worry. He has cut across the stream, he is without bond”. Further, this commentary also provides the explanation as “not clinging to the middle means, not attaching to the objects like forms even in the present moment.” In addition, the commentary of the *Bhadrāvudha mānavapucchā* defines the present to be ‘the middle’. Similarly, the *Jatukaṇṇimānavapucchā* also contains the same teaching.

Feeling-based Middle

Pleasurable feeling is here considered one extreme, painful feeling is considered as the second extreme, and neither displeasure nor pleasure (*adhukkhamasukha*) is the middle. In the synthesis of the above three, a connection with the *Kcc* appears based on the occurrence of ‘feelings’ (*vedanā*), which are elsewhere (see: D.iii.216) divided into three. However, ‘neither displeasure, nor pleasure’ cannot be shown to be acting as ‘the middle’ of *vedanā* in the *Kcc*. Nevertheless, it is claimed that the cessation of the feelings, or the holder of *adukkhamasukha* or *Upekkhā*, ought to cross one more step. Pertaining to this, the *Aṭṭhakanāgara sutta* shows that the fourth *Jhāna* centered on *upekkhā* leads to the attainment of Nibbāna. Accordingly, a person going beyond the fourth *Jhāna* (*majjhe mantā nalippati*), and entering Nibbāna would be in the middle.

Name and Form-based Middle

The name (*nāma*) is considered an extreme, form (*rūpa*) is considered a second extreme and consciousness is the middle. The *Kcc* suggests the possibility of ascribing consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as the link of the middle. However, *viññāṇa*’ in Buddhism is a difficult concept to understand because it is used in multi-contexts.

The question here concerns which perspective of the *viññāṇa* could be defined as the middle. The commentary of the *Majjhe-sutta* interprets that “in the middle is called the relinking-consciousness and the rest of consciousness placed between name and form arisen depending on name and form.” The first part of this interpretation could be accepted. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the ‘*viññāṇa*’ found in the *Majjhe-sutta* appears in two different contexts. Therefore, it is presumed that the ‘*viññāṇa*’ (placed between name and form) implies the birth consciousness only. As the *Mahānidāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* shows, consciousness depends on the name and form and vice versa. Especially, understanding that name and form are two extremes which should be avoided, and

going beyond the birth consciousness (in the sense of not clinging to the relinking), should be understood as not clinging to the middle.

Six-Senses-based Middle

The six-senses are considered one extreme, the six-objects are considered the second extreme, and consciousness is in the middle. According to the commentary of the *Majjhe-sutta*, the *viññāna* found in this context is called the Kamma consciousness.

Both the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and the *Kcc* contain the links of name and form and six sense faculties. The dissimilarity regarding the six sense faculties in the above *suttas* only regards the format followed by the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*, which explains the six sense faculties within the framework of the four noble truths. However, the six-sense-faculties-based middle in the *Majjhe-sutta* corresponds to the third step of the four-fold framework in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*. However, there is no structural similarity between the *Majjhe sutta* and the *Kcc*. Yet, it should be noted that cessation of the six sense faculties is identical for all the above three sources. It indicates that the *Majjhe sutta* was not a discourse which appeared accidentally in the *Sutta pitaka*, and it could well be taken as a variant on the way of teaching the Middle as that found in the *Kcc*.

Personal existence-based Middle

The sixth and last interpretation is based on personal existence. Personal existence (self-body or five aggregates) is considered one extreme, arising of personal existence is considered the second extreme and the middle is the cessation of personal existence. The *Kcc* does not give any relevant account of personal existence (*sakkāya*). The *Sakkāya*, a synonym for the five aggregates, and its arising leads to extremes. By this explanation, the middle is known to be the cessation of personal existence (aggregates). However, the *Sakkāya-sutta* in the *Samyutta-nikāya* presents sizable evidence to understand personal existence through the structure of four noble truths. As the this *sutta* has explained, the way to

cease the personal existence is based on the noble eightfold path. Also, the *Cūḷavedalla-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* gives a similar account on the ‘cessation of personal identity’ (*sakkāyanirodha*).

Further, defining *sakkāyanirodha*, the *Cūḷavedalla sutta* asserts, “it is the remainderless fading away and ceasing, the giving up, relinquishing, letting go, and rejecting of that same craving.” Although this interpretation of the *Majjhe-sutta* is identical with the teachings of *Sammaditthi sutta*, it is impossible to find anything which establishes a direct connection with the middle discussed in the *Kcc*.

The Development of Different Middles in Early Buddhism

The question remains as to why the Theravada or Mahayana do not refer to the *Majjhe-sutta*. Though we find this in the *Samyutta Āgama*, substantial evidence has not come to light that this *sutta* was used by Sanskrit scholars to describe the middle in Buddhism. In portraying the middle, the Theravada treatises refer to the *Kcc* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. For instance, the *Paññābhūmi niddesa*, the most essential chapter of the *Visuddhimagga*, refers to the *Kcc*. Obviously, the middle teachings in the *Majjhe-sutta* were disregarded in the most famous Theravada treatises. However, the commentator of the *Cullaniddesa* (a commentary on the *Pārāyana-vagga*), Venerable Upasena, was not interested in applying the *Kcc* to describe the two extremes and the middle. His response manifests how he disagreed with the traditional belief in defining the middle. On the other hand, it can be possible that Venerable Upasena might have been influenced by the opinions of the elders as explained in the *Cullaniddesa*. Disagreements were common among the reciters regarding the doctrinal and historical interpretation. Therefore, by not referring to the *Kcc*, and portraying the middle in the *Cullaniddesa* or its commentary, it can also be inferred that the authors of these texts followed a different tradition from the group who adopted the *Kcc* to explain the middle. However, this leads to a speculation that Venerable Upasena practiced a specific tradition that followed a typical [early] Buddhist doctrine.

Further, there were certain elders who understood the middle in contrast to the *Kcc*. An assumption that can be drawn from this is that the chain of Dependent-Origination was a teaching applied in response to the Brahmins or the monks who entered the Buddhist order from Brahmin families. As Venerable Rahula suggests, the Buddha predominately applied two types of expositional ways to substantiate the concept of non-self (*anatta*). One of them was the chain of Dependent-Origination that, according to Collins, the Buddha introduced to oppose the Brahmins' teachings. While the Buddha was referring to Dependent-Origination to explain the middle, the listeners were Brahmins or monks from Brahmin families. For instance; in the *Kcc*, the listener (Kaccāyana) was a Brahmin. In the *Dhammadāyāda-sutta*, the Buddha addressed Arahant Sāriputta, who was from a Brahmin family. Also, certain *suttas* in the *Nidāna-saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* like *Aññatara*, *Jāṇussoni*, *Lokāyatika*, which do not record the details of the listeners also presumably were delivered to Brahmins. Except for the above sources, no other reference in the Pali Canon that holds the term '*Majjhena*' in the philosophical sense of 'the middle' could be found. The reason for this could be that the method in twelvefold causality was more familiar to Brahmins in understanding the middle in Buddhism. This point can be fortified with a view proposed by Joanna Jurewicz in one of her articles. She argues that the *paticcasamuppāda* in Buddhism was directed against Vedic ideas. As just mentioned, Collins also notes that the twelve-fold Dependent-Origination was applied to oppose Brahmanism. As Taber argues, the Buddha learnt the Vedas either second or third-hand during his ascetic period. It is obvious that Buddhism incorporated many non-Brahmanical methods. We might therefore suggest that the way of understanding the middle in Buddhist teachings by non-Brahmins was different because they were freer from dogmas than the Brahmins. Thus, it is clear that the commentator Upasena evaded the *Kcc*, which explained the middle to a Brahmin using the *paticcasamuppāda*, while Buddhaghosa referred to it. Accordingly, I suggest that these six monks in the *Majjhe-sutta* were from non-Brahmin families. And furthermore,

their way of elaborating the middle might have been followed by the different groups of elders like Upasena.

Conclusion

This discussion shows that the *Majjhe-sutta* significantly developed a verse which appears in the *Tissametteyya-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* and led to six new varied interpretations. The well-known middle, the chain of Dependent-Origination revealed in the *Kcc* of the *Samyutta-nikāya* varies from ‘the middle’ that comes to light in the *Majjhe-sutta*. This demonstrates that there are multiple methods for understanding ‘the middle’ in Buddhism.

However, the *Majjhe-sutta* shows similarities with the *Kcc* in relation to the contact-based, name-and-form-based, six-senses-based, and feeling-based middles while the other two remain independent. I understand that feeling, six-senses-based and personal identity are closer to the format of the four noble truths than the *paṭicca-samuppāda*. The time-based middle is identical to that we find in the *Bhaddekaratta-sutta* (MN. sutta 131). Also, *sakkāyanirodha*, *saḷāyatana-nirodha* and *viññāna-nirodha*, which became the middle are similar to the teachings in the third step of the four noble truths. This careful analysis indicates that the Pali canonical literature holds various (philosophical) teachings concerning the middle, and there is no justification for considering Dependent-Origination to be the only way to understand ‘the middle’ philosophically in Buddhism, because it was especially directed against the Brahmins. The non-Brahmin followers were familiar with different middles (like cessation of contact or cessation of feeling) because their thoughts or views were not influenced by Vedic or Brahmanical teachings, particularly, with the belief of a creator or Ātman.

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Abbreviations

A	Aṅguttara-nikāya
A-a	Aṅguttara-nikāya aṭṭhakathā
BD	Buddhist Dictionary
Bv-a	Buddhavamsa aṭṭhakathā
D	Dīgha-nikāya
D-a	Dīgha-nikāya aṭṭhakathā
Kcc	Kaccāyanagotta-sutta
M	Majjhima-nikāya
M-a	Majjhima-nikāya aṭṭhakathā
MMK	Mūlamadhyamakakārikā
Nidd	Niddesa aṭṭhakathā
PED	Pali English Dictionary
S	Samyutta-nikāya
Sn	Suttanipāta
Sn-a	Suttanipāta aṭṭhakathā

END NOTES

¹ D. Andersen & H. Smith, *Suttanipāta*, (London: Pali Text Society 1913), 199.

² V. Fausboll, *A Collection of Discourses* (Oxford: Sacred Books of the East 1898) 183.

³ N. A. Jayawickrama, *The Sutta Nipata (the text and translation)* (University of Kelaniya : Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies 2001), 389.

⁴ K. R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses*, (Oxford: Pali Text Society 2001), 132.

⁵ D. Andersen & H. Smith, *Suttanipāta*, 198.

⁶ “*Bhikkhave, kullūpamo mayā dhammo desito nittharaṇatthāya, no gahanatthāya. Kullūpamaṃ vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desitaṃ, ājānantehi dhammāpi vo pahātabbā pāgeva adhammā.*” M I, p134 [Bhikkhus, when you know the Dhamma to be similar to a raft, you should abandon even good states, how much more so bad states. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha [Majjhimanikāya]*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society 1995) 229.

⁷ See MMK 24.18 [*yaḥ pratīyasamutpādaḥ sūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe*].

⁸ See MMK 13.8, where it is suggested that anybody who holds on to emptiness as a view is “incurable”.

⁹ E. M. Hare, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings [Aṅguttaranikāya]*, (London: Pali Text Society 1955) 285.

¹⁰ Ibid 399.

¹¹ See *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston; Wisdom Publication 2012) 1766. Bhikkhu Bodhi is to be credited for comparing these two sources. His reference could be the first note on this point by a Pali scholar.

¹² <https://suttacentral.net/lzh/sa1164>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ O. Hinuber, *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, (Berlin :Walter de Gruyter 1996), 49-50. / B. C. Law, *A History of Pali literature*, (New Delhi : Motilal Banarshidass 1933), 42. / K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, (Wiebaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1983), 63.

¹⁵ *saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso/passapaccayā vedanā/viññāṇapaccayā nāmarupam* L. Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya* II (London: Pali Text Society 1888), 1.

¹⁶ In addition to this, the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the MN also occurs; *nāmarūpasamudayaḥ saḷāyatana samudayo, nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatana nirodho.*, V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. vols. I. (London: Pali Text Society 1993), 52.

¹⁷ L. Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya* II. 2.

¹⁸ It is assumed that the *Majjhe sutta* has used a more standard methodology than the *Kcc* by using a three-lined illustratable method. As it records, *phassokho, āvuso, eko anto, phassasamudayo dutiyo anto, phassanirodho majjhe*. It runs parallel to the structure of the four noble truths and evaded the fourth (path of cessation of the suffering) only. Further, the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* can also be drawn on

to back up the above suggestion. The only thing we find as a different teaching in the *Majjhe-sutta* from the *Sammādiṭṭhi sutta* is the fourth step of the process. Consider the underlined areas *Chayimāni, āvuso, āyatanāni – cakkhāyatanam, sotāyatanam, ghānāyatanam, jivhāyatanam, kāyāyatanam, manāyatanam. Nāmarūpasamudayā saḷāyatanasamudayo, nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho, ayameva ariyo atthaṅgiko maggo saḷāyatananirodhagāminī patipadā.* V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. I. 52.

¹⁹ “Let not a person revive the past or on the future build his hopes; for the past has been left behind and the future has not been reached. Instead with insight let him see each presently arisen state; let him know that and be sure of it, invincibly, unshakably”, trans. Nānamoli Bhikkhu & Bodhi Bhikkhu. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 1039.

²⁰ Ibid 1048.

²¹ D. Andersen & H. Smith, *Suttanipāta*, 199.

²² K. R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses*, 123.

²³ *Majjhe ce no gahessasīti paccuppanne rūpādidhammepe na gahessasi ce.*, H. Smith, *Suttanipāta- aṭṭhakathā*, III. (London: Pali Text Society 1984), 568.

²⁴ D. Andersen & H. Smith, *Suttanipāta*, 213. / **Uddham adho tiriyañcāpi majjheti. Uddhanti anāgataṃ; adhoti atītaṃ; tiriyañcāpi majjheti paccuppannaṃ.** L. de La Vallée Poussin, and E.J Thomas, *Niddesa II*. (London: Pali Text Society 1917) 151.

²⁵ **Yaṃ pubbe taṃ virosehi, pacchā te māhu kiñcanaṃ;**

Majjhe ce no gahessasi, upasanto carissasi., D. Andersen & H. Smith, *Suttanipāta*, 213.

²⁶ *Vedanāpaccayā taṇhā.*, L. Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya II*. 16.

²⁷ *Tisso vedanā – sukhā vedanā, dukkhā vedanā, adukkhamasukhā vedanā.*, Carpenter, J. E., *Dīghanikāya*. eds. vols.III. (London: Pali Text Society, 1976), 216.

²⁸ *Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsati pārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja vihāsiṃ.*, V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. I. 21.

²⁹ According to this sutta, the Buddha realized that when consciousness does not go beyond name and form to condition other factors such as the six sense bases etc, then beings are not born again. As long as consciousness and name and form mutually condition each other for their emergence, they live, die and are born again. This realization of the Buddha again implies that if the cause (mental formation) of both consciousness and name-and-form does not appear, then, one can completely stop the entire wheel of suffering., Abhayawansa Kapila: 163

³⁰ Once, it is found in the chain of Dependent Origination. Again, it comes as a part of five aggregates. Next, it appears as the connection of the inner sense and external object. The *Sumangalavilāsinī* throws light on the term *viññāṇa*. This text solves the controversial concept by interpreting *viññāṇa* as ‘Nibbana’ (*‘Viññāṇam anidassanaṃ, anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ/Ettha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati./Ettha dīghaṇca*

rassañca, aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubham;/Ettha nāmañca rūpañca, asesam uparujjhati;/ Viññāṇassa nirodhena, etthetaṃ uparujjhatī'ti. T. W. Rhys Davids, & J. E. Carpenter, *Dīghanikāya*. I. (London: Pali Text Society 1975), 222.

³¹ *Catutthavāre viññāṇaṃ majjheti paṭisandhiviññāṇampi sesaviññāṇampi nāmarūpapaccayasamudāgatattā nāmarūpānaṃ majjhe nāma.*, H. Kopp, *Āṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī)*. III. (London: Pali Text Society 1966), 404.

³² “‘Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpa’nti iti kho panetaṃ vuttaṃ, tadānanda, imināpetam pariyāyena veditabbaṃ, yathā viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. Viññāṇaṃ hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātukucchismiṃ samuccissathā’ti? “No hetam, bhante”. “Viññāṇaṃ hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ okkamitvā vakkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ itthattāya abhinibbattissathā” ti? ‘No hetam, bhante’”. “Viññāṇaṃ hi, ānanda, daharassevasato vocchijjissathakumārakassa vā kumārikāya vā, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ vuddhiṃ virūlhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjissathā” ti? “No hetam, bhante”. “Tasmātihānanda, eseva hetu etaṃ nidānaṃ esa samudayo esa paccayo nāmarūpassa – yadidaṃ viññāṇaṃ” T. W. Rhys Davids, & J. E. Carpenter, *Dīghanikāya*. II. (London: Pali Text Society 1966), 62. Moreover, this opinion can be understood by a metaphor found in the commentary of the same sutta thus; *Yathā hi rājā attano parisam niggaṇhanto evaṃ vadeyya – “tvaṃ uparājā, tvaṃ senāpatīti kena kato nanu mayā kato, sace hi mayi akaronte tvaṃ attano dhammatāya uparājā vā senāpati vā bhavēyyāsi, jāneyyāma vo bala”nti; evameva viññāṇaṃ nāmarūpassa paccayo hoti. Atthato evaṃ nāmarūpaṃ vadati viya “tvaṃ nāmaṃ, tvaṃ rūpaṃ, tvaṃ nāmarūpaṃ nāmāti kena kataṃ, nanu mayā kataṃ, sace hi mayi purecārike hutvā mātukucchismiṃ paṭisandhiṃ agaṇhante tvaṃ nāmaṃ vā rūpaṃ vā nāmarūpaṃ vā bhavēyyāsi, jāneyyāma vo bala”nti.* T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter, & W. Stede, *Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sumaṅgalavilāsini)*. II. (London: Pali Text Society 1971), 502.

³³ In addition to this interpretation, the commentary posits another two definitions; whatsoever consciousness which obtains the actions of the internal faculty or faculty of the mind is embodied in this context as ‘viññāṇa’. Otherwise, it would be considered as the javana consciousness. H. Kopp, *Āṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī)*. III. 403.

³⁴ *Chayimāni, āvuso, āyatanāni – cakkhāyatanaṃ, sotāyatanaṃ, ghānāyatanaṃ, jivhāyatanaṃ, kāyāyatanaṃ, manāyatanaṃ. Nāmarūpasamudayā salāyatanaṃ samudayo, nāmarūpanirodhā salāyatanaṃ nirodho, ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo salāyatanaṃ nirodhagāminī paṭipadā,* V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. vols. I. 52. It is obvious that the Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta indicates the cessation of the six faculties. It is based on the cessation of name and form. Nevertheless, the *Majjhe-sutta* does not hold any corresponding teaching to this format and it signifies that the cessation of the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is the way to cease the two extremes based on six senses.

³⁵ Although Venerable Nyanatiloka suggests that it cannot be accepted as ‘own body’ (*Buddhist Dictionary*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society 1980: 288.)

which derives from sva+kāyo [like Sajjhāya; Sajjhāya would be formed by sva+adhyāya I assume that it is possible to admit as the term Sakkāya is etiologically based on sva+kāya or own body which is rejected in Buddhism.

³⁶ This statement can be seen even in the *Dīgha-nikāya* J. E. Carpenter, *Dīghanikāya*. I. 216.

³⁷ *Sakkāyoti pañcupādānakkhandhā.*, Kopp, *Ānguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī)*. III. 992/*Esa sakkāyo yāvatā sakkāyoti yattako tebhūmaka-vaṭṭasaṅkhāto sakkāyo nāma atthi, sabbopi so esa sakkāyo, na ito paraṃ sakkāyo atthīti paṭisañcikkhati* I. B. Horner, *Majjhimanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Papañcasūdanī)*. IV. (London: Pali Text Society 1976), 67. Anyway, I am in doubt whether the *Majjhe-sutta* takes into account ‘Sakkāya’ to be the view of personality. Notably, Sakkāyaditṭhi or ‘personality view’, would be better to understand with sixty-two views of the Dutiya Isidatta sutta (*Yāni cimāni dvāsaṭṭhi diṭṭhigatāni brahmajāle bhaṇitāni; imā kho, gahapati, diṭṭhiyo sakkāyaditṭhiyā sati honti, sakkāyaditṭhiyā asati na hontī*” ti). In case of this, I postulate that this sutta suggests ‘the personality’ (Sakkāya) only.

³⁸ *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodho? Yo tassāyeva taṇhāya...pe... ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, Sakkāyanirodho Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā? Ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo. Seyyathidaṃ – sammāditṭhi...pe... sammāsamādhī. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*”ti., Feer, L., *Samyutta-nikāya*, IV. (London: Pali Text Society, 1894)159.

³⁹ Ñānamoli Bhikkhu & Bodhi Bhikkhu. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 397 “*Yo kho, āvuso visākha, tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo; ayaṃ kho, āvuso visākha. sakkāyanirodho vutto bhagavatā*” ti V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. vols. I. 299.

⁴⁰ The two together: since any given states are produced without interrupting the [cause-fruit] continuity of any given combination of conditions, the whole expression “dependent origination” (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) represents the middle way, which rejects the doctrines...., Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, II, (London: Pali Text Society, 1972)12.

⁴¹ *Ubhantamabhiññāyāti ubho ante abhijānitvā. Mantā na lippatīti paññāya na lippati.* [‘*Ubhantamabhiññāya*’ means: having known both ends. ‘*Mantā na lippatī*’ means: By wisely not clinging to (the middle)] H. Smith, *Suttanipāta- aṭṭhakathā*, 588.

⁴² *Ko ubhantamabhiññāyāti ko ubho ante abhiññāya jānitvā tulayitvā tīrayitvā vibhāvayitvā vibhūtaṃ katvāti – ko ubhantamabhiññāya. Majjhe mantā na lippatīti majjhe mantāya na lippati, alitto anupalitto nikkhanto nissaṇṇo vipparamutto visaññutto vimariyādikatena cetasā viharatīti – majjhe mantā na lippati.* Vipassana Research Center, *Nidd II (Miyān)* 41.

⁴³ Controversies among Theravadins regarding doctrinal or cultural issues were common in history. For instance; the Madhuratthavilāsīni suggests that Prince Siddhatta experienced the ‘four sights’ in a single day. Nevertheless, the others say that

it happened in monthly intervals (*Dīghāyukā bodhisattā vassasate vassasate atikkante jiṇṇādīsū ekekaṃ addasaṃsu. Amhākaṃ pana bodhisatto appāyukakāle uppannattā catunnaṃ catunnaṃ māsānaṃ accayena uyyānaṃ gacchanto anukkamena ekekaṃ addasa. Dīghabhāṇakā panāhu – “cattāri nimittāni ekadivaseneva disvā agamāsī” ti.*, I. B. Horner, *Madhuratthavilāsini nāma Buddhavaṃsa - aṭṭhakathā*, (London: Pali Text Society 1978), 279. This explicitly shows that there were different opinions among the Theravada tradition. Thus, it is not hard to assume that Venerable Upasena, the author of the commentary of the *Cullaniddesa*, held a different opinion on the two extremes and the middle.

⁴⁴ “The doctrine of *Anatta* or No-Soul is the natural result of, or the corollary to, the analysis of the Five Aggregates and the teaching of Conditioned Genesis {*Paticca-samuppada*, W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. (New York: Grove Press 1974), 52.

⁴⁵ “In considering the teaching of Dependent Origination, which Buddhism used to oppose Brahmanism on the conceptual level, it is crucially important to distinguish between the general idea of conditionality, and the twelve-fold series which has come to be the traditional way in which the teaching is expressed.” S. Collins, *Selfless Person*. (Cambridge: University Press 1982), 106.

⁴⁶ In this sutta, Arahant Sariputta extended the teachings that had been delivered by the Buddha in brief. It is an example to understand this point clearly.

⁴⁷ In the *Khandha-saṃyutta* we find the term ‘majjhena’. Nevertheless, it can be confirmed that it was a direct quotation from the *Kcc* of the *Nidāna-saṃyutta*.

⁴⁸ See Pali Text Society Journal (2000) 170

⁴⁹ “Certainly, the Buddha did not formally study the Veda, for he was not a Brahmin; he was not qualified. Had he heard the Veda recited? Did he know Sanskrit? Perhaps he heard sermons based on Vedic texts given by other religious teachers, perhaps indeed the teachers he studied Yoga under shortly after his renunciation (though other Brahmin teachers are mentioned in the canon).”, John Taber (*Buddhist Studies Review*, 30.1 2013) 134

⁵⁰ Buddhaghosa and ācārya Nāgārjuna both referred to the *Kcc* or the *Nidāna-vagga* that contained the teaching of Dependent-Origination, and both were Brahmins. See MMK XV.7

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