

## Buddhist Wisdom and Human Transformation

Buddhist wisdom **Pa~a** (**P@li**), **Praj~@** (Sanskrit) differs from other kinds of wisdom indicated by the terms such as "understanding", "knowledge", "insight", and "intellect". So, Ven. Buddhaghosa, the celebrated commentator on the Pali canon, defines "**Pa~a**" in Buddhist context as follows:

"The understanding consisting in insight knowledge associated with profitable consciousness"<sup>1</sup> Further he explains that this particular mode of understanding is different from other modes of perceiving (**sa~j@nana**) and cognizing (**vij@nana**). Although the state of knowing is equally present in perception (**sa~a**), consciousness (**vi~@%a**) and understanding (**pa~a**) the **pa~a** can alone penetrate into the real nature of things - impermanence (**anicca**), unsatisfactoriness (**anicca**) and non-self (**anatta**).<sup>2</sup>

According to the traditional fourfold method of definition

- i. The specific characteristic of **pa~a** is penetrating the own-nature of states (**lakka%a**)
- ii. Its function is to destroy the darkness of ignorance which conceals the real nature of states (**rasa**)
- iii. Its manifestation is non-delusion (**paccup{h@na**)
- iv. Its proximate cause is concentration (**pada{h@na**)<sup>3</sup>

There are some specific subjects prescribed in the discourses as well as in Abhidhamma to penetrate through **pa~a** which are designated as states (**dhamm@**) related to the real nature of the world of experience. They represent almost all the basic teachings of Buddhism and the following are the most important doctrines considered as the soil in which **pa~a** grows:

- i. Five aggregates (**khandha**)
- ii. Twelve bases (**@yatana**)
- iii. Eighteen elements (**dh@tu**)
- iv. Faculties (**indriya**)
- v. Truths (**sacca**)
- vi. Dependent co-origination (**pa{iccasamupp@da**)<sup>4</sup>

**Pa~a** when compared with a tree, it is rooted in the soil represented by the above doctrines. Its roots are similar to the purity of moral behavior and the purity of mind. Its trunk is compared with the purities of views, doubts, path and non-path, practice and insight knowledge.