

# Caring for the Experience

Phenomenological Discipline and Ethical Development

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A Comparative Study of EUDE (*Educación Universal para el Desarrollo Ético*) and  
Buddhaghosacārya's Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*)

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## THESIS DECLARATION

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I hereby declare that this thesis is of my own composition and that it contains no material previously submitted for any other degree of qualification. The work in this thesis has been produced by me, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text. I confirm that this thesis does not exceed the prescribed limit of 80,000 words, including the main text and any footnotes but excluding the bibliography.

Gilda Elizabeth Henriquez Darlas - March 2018

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This project was driven by curiosity sparked by provocation, as much as by discovery. The curiosity was originated by the paradoxical provocations between ethical development in human development and the long-standing question of decision-making in artificial intelligence. Seeking to bring something from the humanities into the field of artificial intelligence on this topic, I ended up doing the reverse, and now I dedicate my life to working with schools and children around the globe. Inspired by Buddhism, where I found many unexpected answers to my engineering questions, resulted in the design of EUDE (Universal Education for Ethical Development), and much later, the development of this thesis. One of the most precious gifts of this entire project was the journey I went on, which changed my understanding of the human mind, the human experience and human interaction.

Many things of a personal nature - not all of them positive - happened during my research, which I began in Oct 2011. Due to these unfortunate events, I was forced to take almost three years off from the project. However, two things remained constant and kept me going: my purpose of working towards decreasing human hostility; and my determination to design a conceptual and philosophical framework for EUDE so that the programme could be put into a dialogue with other fields in the humanities.

Achieving this was only possible thanks to many people, including friends, family, and the people in my foundation, who gave me constant moral and logistical support. However my special thanks go to Professor **Ram-Prasad Chakravarthi**<sup>1</sup> for believing in me, and for his guidance, patience and help, not just as a supervisor, but also as a friend who supported me in the most difficult times during the development of this project. I want to acknowledge how privileged and honoured I feel to have worked beside him, one of the brightest minds of our time. He made my journey one of continuous discovery and personal development, and

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<sup>1</sup> Ram-Prasad Chakravarthi Distinguished Professor of Comparative Religion and Philosophy at Lancaster University who was awarded with the FBA (Fellow of the British Academy) in 2017.

challenged my ego by pushing me to acknowledge my ontic reflections of EUDE. Indeed this was my strongest challenge but also one of my greatest rewards, since I was becoming very dogmatic about my programme.

I also wish to thank **Maria Heim**, a knowledgeable scholar of Buddhaghosacārya's work and an amazing guardian of his work but most of all a good friend. She spent time with me in Amherst in 2013, reading the *Visuddhimagga*, and since then she has helped me to see and understand the text from Buddhaghosacārya's perspective by showing me how to remain faithful to his work and not to vend it for my own purpose or interest.

My thanks also go to Lancaster University for being so accommodating and understanding during the difficult times in my personal life when I was writing this thesis. And to Barbara Mason who began as my proof-reader and became a good friend, pushing me continually to be more precise and accurate in my written English.

Last, but not the least, my acknowledgement and gratitude goes to all the children who made possible both the design of EUDE and this thesis. Without knowing it, they contributed greatly to crystallising what once was just a curious question. However my main gratitude goes to them for giving me the daily strength to continue with the project, for returning my hope in humanity, and for confirming my strong belief that working towards a more conscious and ethical human race is a goal worth striving for.

## ABSTRACT

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This thesis attempts to construct a conceptual philosophical framework for a pre-existing secular<sup>2</sup> programme of ethical development for children called EUDE, by comparing its main principles and practices with the Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*), the work of a 5<sup>th</sup> century CE Buddhist scholar named Buddhaghosacārya. The comparison will help to make coherent sense of the EUDE practices and provide a conceptual framework for its methodology. The resulting comparison of both programmes will show the importance of *phenomenological discipline in ethical development*, that is, the programmatic and practical strategies for developing an ethical response to interaction with others.

EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya share many of the same concerns and offer similar approaches to ethical development. They both address the conditions in experience that underlie moral choices and actions. Both work towards dismantling harmful conditions in experience through techniques that bring discipline, vision and understanding. Therefore, to a certain extent, the thesis is a comparative exploration of two practical disciplinary ethical programmes: The EUDE programme for children aged four to fifteen, and the *Vissudhimaggha* for Buddhist monks as well as the large virtuous (followers of *sīla*) Buddhist community. However, it is important to clarify that this thesis is more than a simple comparative exercise; it is a constructive effort to use Buddhaghosacārya's systematic phenomenological methodology to provide a conceptual grounding for EUDE. This is because, although up to this point EUDE has been a highly successful and practical programme, its conceptual and philosophical principles have yet to be fully systematised and articulated. In a fascinating and productive way, this Buddhist thinker helps in that endeavour.

My aim is to show how both programmes involve scrutiny of the conditions of thought and action as the means to make precise and structured interventions in ethical development. Their sustained attention to the psychological factors prior to decision-making or character formation allows for a very close comparative

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<sup>2</sup> By secular I mean that the EUDE programme is not advancing any particular religious doctrine, belief, or practice and is tailored to work in secular schools, that is, non-religious contexts.

project of identifying and analysing ethical resources. Thus, we will see how the techniques for analytical attention to the conditions in experience in both programmes makes possible systematic ethical change, underlying an important contribution to the study of an essential area of ethical development.

## Outline of Chapters

**Chapter 1 - The Prolegomenon** presents an overview of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya and highlights the key similarities of the programmes that drive the book to examine Buddhaghosacārya's work for the design of EUDE's conceptual framework. The chapter also shows that Buddhaghosacārya's work was not chosen without first researching the most relevant work published in the field of moral psychology, moral education/character formation, contemplative studies and Buddhist ethics. The chapter should drive the reader to understand why the existing work in these field areas are insufficient for framing the principles and the methodology of EUDE, paving the way for my presentation in the next three chapters, which shows how through Buddhaghosacārya's work the framing of EUDE is possible, highlighting the distinct methodology of both programmes.

**Chapter 2 and Chapter 3** provide an introduction to the programme of EUDE and the phenomenological methodology of the *Visuddhimagga*, so that the main principles to be compared in Chapter 4 become evident. Three points stand out in Chapters 2 and 3; a) the importance both programmes place on phenomenological discipline, b) their similarities regarding their understanding of human experience and the alignment of their techniques for removing harmful conditions in experience, and c) the significance for both programmes of forging such a similar disciplinary structure in ethical development. The problem as ever is how much to include and how much to leave out. I have had to assume some knowledge on behalf of the reader with regard to Buddhism and moral/ethical development.

**Chapter 4** brings out the comparison, through which a careful study of Buddhaghosacārya enables a systematisation of the concerns and assumptions that underlie EUDE's programme, but which have not hitherto been articulated for want of guidance from an appropriately sophisticated and sensitive philosophy. The range of concerns shared by EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya are presented

under three main comparative sections: a) the process for cultivating attention and concentration towards conditions in experience, b) Caring for the Experience by removing harmful thoughts and harmful emotions through the use of the techniques that reshape one's phenomenology by reinterpreting the subjective content of experience, and c) the ethical dimension, brought about by first caring for one's own experience. The central focus of this comparative chapter is to show how Buddhaghosacārya's detailed explanation of his practices systematically frames the secular programme of EUDE. As I said before, this is not a flat comparison but an explanation of how reading Buddhaghosacārya helps me articulate the radical distinct philosophical principles of human experience and ethical development of EUDE's programme. By this point, the reader should be able to see the main contributions that this comparative study brings to the field of lay ethics from both a philosophical and empirical perspective. Hence our conclusion in this chapter has the task of presenting the main contribution made by the thesis, which is how this study of phenomenological discipline in EUDE and the *Visuddhimagga* charts new ground in contemporary, secular ethics, character formation and contemplative education. This is done by showing: a) that analytical attention to the conditions of ethical action in both programmes, which involves a detailed parsing of experiences, is unusual – if not largely unprecedented – both in other traditional accounts of ethical development and in other modern programmes for ethical development in children, b) that in both practices, descriptive accounts of what occurs in experience, as well as the programmatic exercises for managing it, are notable for their sensitivity to the texture of the conditions and causes that prefigure ethical behaviour. These similarities, together with the rather unusual approach taken by both programmes, make a comparison between them fruitful for discerning the distinctive projects they undertake, and for charting this new direction when showing the importance of phenomenological discipline in the field of ethical development.

## **Methodology of the Thesis**

The methodology of the thesis is a combination of textual analysis of philosophical concepts and ethnographic reporting. Thus the thesis is a combining these two methods in a conceptual effort that draws on a Pali text without itself being an

example of Pali textual scholarship; I rely on Buddhaghosacārya's works in translation<sup>3</sup> (albeit with extensive explanation of his ideas from scholars with knowledge of Pali). My reading of Buddhaghosacārya's work at no time intends to use any passage of his work for assessing his personal traits, or thinking that they are the result of his own private knowledge, experience and opinion. I am treating his work, the *Vissudhimagga*, as a magnificent and practical way to arrange and present the complex and dry Pali *Abhidhamma* system - a task which, according to John Strong,<sup>4</sup> was assigned by an elder monk who asked Buddhaghosacārya to elaborate the Buddhist doctrine based on two verses of the following *Jaṭā Sutta* SN 7.6:

The inner tangle and the outer tangle this generation is entangled in a tangle. And so I ask of Gotama this question: Who succeeds in disentangling this tangle?

When a wise man, established well in virtue, Develops consciousness and understanding, then as a *bhikkhu* ardent and sagacious he succeeds in disentangling this tangle.

The originality of my reading of Buddhaghosacārya is not in making a contribution to traditional Buddhological scholarship. Rather, it is in asking in a sustained way how Buddhaghosacārya might continue to be of relevance in the contemporary world and in cultural contexts far beyond his own historical one. I do this by putting him in conversation with EUDE's programme of practical ethical development.

The pages that follow describe current practices and methods of EUDE for training mental discipline and bringing conscious attention to feelings, perceptions and concepts. These include the distinctive method of the Art of Questioning; that helps the children to refine discernment and inferential processes. Based on personal testimonies and more empirical methods of evaluating them, these practices appear to work. My concern is to explain how and why they work, and for that we turn, in particular cases, to Buddhaghosacārya. Since Buddhaghosacārya

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<sup>3</sup> For that, I am using Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010) *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, 5th ed., Kandy, Sri Lanka, Buddhist Publication Society.

<sup>4</sup> John S. Strong (2004) *The Relics of the Buddha*, Princeton University Press.



offers reflective consideration of how and why such practices work, and what they do, he can provide the conceptual framework for the methods EUDE has long been putting into practice. In other words, Buddhaghosacārya helps make EUDE conceptually coherent.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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Unless otherwise indicated, the references to the *Sutta Piṭaka* of the Pali Canon are to the Wisdom Publication edition, volume and page numbers.

AN	<i>Anguttara Nikāya</i> (Translation by <i>Bhikkhu</i> Bodhi, Wisdom)
BPC	Buddhist Pāli Canon
BPS	Buddhist Publication Society
DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i> (Translation by Maurice Walshe, Wisdom)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i> (Translation by I.B. Horner, PTS)
Exp.	<i>Atthasālinī: Buddhaghosacārya's commentary on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i> (Translation by Pe Maung Tin and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, PTS)
Iti	<i>Itivuttaka</i> (Translation by Peter Masefield, PTS)
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> (Translation by <i>Bhikkhu</i> Ñāṇamoli and <i>Bhikkhu</i> Bodhi, Wisdom)
SN	<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i> (Translation by <i>Bhikkhu</i> Bodhi, Wisdom)
PED	Pali-English Dictionary
PTS	Pali Text Society
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> (Translation by <i>Bhikkhu</i> Ñāṇamoli, BPS)

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# 1 PROLEGOMENON

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*Our moral appreciation is extraordinarily sensitive to our desires and passions, which should not surprise us since it is not exaggerating very greatly to say that our moral appreciation can only exist in the absence of our selfish desires, in the absence of exclusive love of SELF*

*R. Beehler, Moral Life*

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to construct a conceptual philosophical framework for EUDE's existing methodology of ethical development by comparing its main principles and practices - which aim at removing self-centred ontic assumptions of experience - with the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga, from now on Vism), the work of a 5th century CE Theravada Buddhist scholar named Buddhaghosacārya. Obviously, EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya have very different histories, purposes, and audiences. EUDE is a secular programme for school children that has been implemented in a wide range of social, economic, and cultural contexts but within the parameters of a modern educational setting, whereas Buddhaghosacārya was a monk developing a soteriological programme for full-time celibate Buddhist monastics. There is much that Buddhaghosacārya was concerned with, such as how these practices help one attain spiritual liberation, which I have set aside for the purposes of the thesis.

That said, EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya notably share an important range of concerns. These include: 1) descriptive accounts of what occurs in experience; 2) equipping practitioners/children with sustained attention in order to root out harmful conditions from destructive habitual thought patterns and reactions; and 3) dismantling egocentrism through a high degree of analytical attention that reconfigures how humans are part of a shared experience with others.

Thus the comparison aims at articulate the distinctive philosophy of ethical education that EUDE offers through a close examination of its similarities and its differences as a constructive effort to use Buddhaghosacariya's systematic phenomenological methodology to provide a conceptual grounding for EUDE. This will help to make coherent sense of the EUDE practices and provide a conceptual framework for its methodology. However this exercise will also be constructive in that through the comparison it engages Buddhaghosacārya's work and EUDE as collaborators in understanding many key aspects of moral development underlying an important contribution to the study of an essential area of ethical development. This will be done by presenting how both programmes work with the conditions in experience that underlie moral choices and actions, and how their techniques for analytical attention to the conditions in experience makes possible systematic ethical change, by working systematically on dismantling harmful conditions through practical techniques that bring discipline, correct seeing and understanding of one's own subjectivity. The resulting comparison of both programmes will show the importance of phenomenological discipline in the field of ethical development, and the importance of the scrutiny of the conditions of thought and action as the means to make precise and structured interventions in ethical development, which removes and dismantles self-centred ontic assumptions or experience. I will begin by presenting a brief introduction of EUDE and Buddhaghosacariya's work, followed by a review of the literature in five fields that my work draws on; moral psychology, moral/ethical education, contemplative studies, character formation and Buddhist ethics, in order see how EUDE's principles in *ethical development* charts new ground, by showing that while some of these diagnoses matches my concerns, they are less systematically methodological in articulating the disciplinary nuts-and-bolts of training attention than what we find in Buddhaghosacārya's work. These shared concerns in both programmes make possible a comparative study, and are the reason why the work of Buddhaghosacārya, the *Visuddhimagga* can provide the philosophical and methodological resources through which many of the principles of EUDE can be usefully articulated.

## 1.2 EUDE

EUDE<sup>5</sup> '*Educación Universal para el Desarrollo Ético*' (Universal Education for Ethical Development) is a secular programme of ethical education that I designed and first put into practice in 2001. It is implemented in schools and works with children aged from 4 to 15. Today the programme is implemented in 500 schools, in 8 countries, and in 3 languages.<sup>6</sup> EUDE has received awards<sup>7</sup> from different organisations, which have brought the programme into the national and international spotlight. It could be said that the EUDE programme is changing public policy in education in México and is in the process of doing the same in Brazil.<sup>8</sup>

I was trained as an engineer and became fascinated with the process of decision making when working in artificial intelligence. I took retirement from my career in order to focus on developing a programme for ethical development. I worked on the design of EUDE with the premise that as our conscious attention of experience becomes enhanced, our experience becomes more pragmatic and less driven by egocentric interpretations of experience. Egocentrism in EUDE is used to describe a person's subjective perception that distorts the conditions in experience with self-centred harmful interpretations and without acknowledging shared conditions when interacting with others.

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<sup>5</sup> EUDE is a non-commercial programme. In 2001 I acquired the Intellectual Property Rights: 03-2001-060412132000-01 and in 2007 I received the international copyrights.

<sup>6</sup> The systematisation of EUDE has been recorded in 28 books in three languages, English, Spanish and French, with a forthcoming version in Portuguese. The twenty-eight books are divided in five book guides for teachers, five book guides for children 4 to 7 years old, five book guides for children age 12 to 15, five book guides for parents, and one book guide for each of the five simulators. The three remaining books are the glossary of EUDE terms and definitions, the book of principles of EUDE and the book of EUDE's tools and techniques. This last three exist only in a Spanish version. Click on the following Link for full access to the material ([http://www.eudeglobal.org/redEude/biblioteca\\_admin.php](http://www.eudeglobal.org/redEude/biblioteca_admin.php)).

<sup>7</sup> Ashoka *fellowship* in Washington D.C. – 2008; the UBS *Visionaris* Award in Switzerland – 2010; the *Globalizer* Award, in Stockholm – 2011. It was nominated for the WISE Award, in Qatar – 2012 for Innovation in Education.

<sup>8</sup> Click on the following link

(<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/twgneahiq4wdmif/AABrYeqhCjtPflZ0YA5BIJZja?dl=0>) to see the official transcript between our Centre for Research in Ethical Development and the Minister of Education, which states that from September 2017, the use of EUDE in all technological centres and Universities in the state of Jalisco is official. Another official letter is attached to the same appendix stating that the use of EUDE in Kindergartens in San Antonio de Pinal is official and mandatory. This was approved in September 2016.



After five years of designing EUDE, and another four years of formally researching its applicability in different schools and cultural contexts<sup>9</sup> I considered the possibility of using it to decrease 'hostility' in human interaction. The term 'hostility' in EUDE is defined as an attitude caused by self-centred interpretation of experience that manifests itself in inattentive negative judgments, generalisations, and dogmatic postures. Such attitudes prompt people to feel judged by another, or draw one person into blindly rejecting the other's ideas, which can sometimes result in physical aggression. The contrast to 'hostility' in EUDE is the sense of being invited to co-create a moment of shared experience with that other person. I thought it would be possible to enable self-regulation of our egocentric tendencies through the cultivation of mental discipline and conscious attention to our subjective interpretation of experience in a school context. Based on this premise, the first prototype<sup>10</sup> of EUDE was created with the purpose of promoting ethical development in children and teenagers. This first prototype was the crystallisation of the principles of EUDE converted into experiential laboratories (henceforth referred to as EUDE labs) designed first for children aged 4 to 6 years, then later on for teenagers aged 12 to 15. The EUDE labs encourage experimentation in ethical phenomenology: the feeling and texture of ethical experience as it develops and transforms the subject. In 2010 the programme began its global expansion by implementing EUDE labs in schools around the globe. This expansion happened despite considerable limitations that I encountered during the process of EUDE's

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<sup>9</sup> The programme was implemented in two different schools in each of the five countries that participated in this research - India (Bodhgaya), China (Chuxiong Yagashan City), France (Paris), Guatemala (Antigua) and Mexico (Mexico City). The research was run by CIDEL (Centre for Research in Ethical Development) in Mexico. It began in 2006 and ended in 2010. In each school, classrooms were divided in two: control group and pilot group. We ran the programme in the pilot groups and each year we ran a number of tests to see the differences between the two groups in each school in each country. The results are available in the following link only in Spanish.

For children age 4 to 7,

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/yoylnzhpxt694vl/Investigacion%20EUDE%20ni%C3%B1os.pdf?dl=0>

for children age 12 to 15,

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/32vljsrj0qmyu9j/Investigacion%20EUDE%20jovenes.pdf?dl=0>

<sup>10</sup> The name 'prototype' is used to indicate that EUDE's current programme is intended as the first stage for research that could produce other models, not restricted to education, for other areas of human development.

implementation.<sup>11</sup> In parallel, I was seeking to articulate its conceptual and philosophical framework.

I first conceived EUDE through my knowledge of artificial intelligence. Years later in 2001, when I was searching for models in educational psychology and ethical development that could shed light on my project, I encountered Mahāyāna Buddhism and was drawn to its emphasis on cultivating compassion. I was intrigued by the ways that Mahāyāna texts developed the psychological underpinnings for the ethical development of compassion. I also found the general Buddhist doctrines of the ‘Aggregates’ and ‘Dependent Origination’ useful for understanding the causes and conditions of experience. These are profound doctrines that I will explore in more detail in Chapter 3. This eventually led me back to the Pali Canonical *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, which is a formal system of how human consciousness may be understood to be constituted and work phenomenologically.<sup>12</sup> After studying the philosophical and psychological principles of *Abhidhamma*, I became deeply influenced by the way it presents the catalogue of mental factors (conditions) that underpin human experience.

The main principles and objectives of EUDE are expressed in the phrase ‘Caring for the Experience’, which means attending to the subjective conditions in experience while interacting in ‘The Space Between’. The experience in The Space Between refers to how human beings, in a dialogical encounter, co-create experience that in turn shapes both parties involved. EUDE focuses on how this co-created experience can be distorted by preconditions such as attachment, greed, and anger. Hence the techniques of EUDE are designed to work on those conditions by developing higher levels of conscious attention through mental discipline in order to reduce harmful self-centred interpretations of experience.

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<sup>11</sup> The limitations were related to lack of good nutrition, which resulted in children being unable to pay attention or to focus on anything for long, or even short, periods of time. Mental pathologies such as autism or Down syndrome among others were also an impediment which resulted in children being unable to discern what was said in the EUDE labs. Another important limitation was language. If children lacked a good understanding of language, it was almost impossible for them to follow up the stages of the art of questioning in the EUDE labs.

<sup>12</sup> I am not suggesting that the *Abhidhamma* be understood as a proto-scientific, reductive explanation of brain functions; its explanation concerns the experience of consciousness to itself, directed towards the moral transformation of that consciousness.

The EUDE labs work on ‘mental discipline’ (a term I will explore in Chapter 2) in a systematic way to habilitate conscious attention in different forms. EUDE’s techniques help children develop practices of analytical questioning which focus on the ever-changing causes and conditions that shape their experience. The goal is that through this analytical questioning, children will come to recognise, through ample discernment, that all descriptions of experience are subjective, in the sense that they are tied to one’s own presuppositions about their contents and implications. Disciplinary practices that reveal and call to attention past causes and conditions that shape present experience can help to prevent children from distorting ‘the experience’. Recognising the subjective perspective of experience helps children to avoid overlaying another’s particular experience with their own assumptions. All of these practices expose the common tendencies for humans to interpret experience with others in a way that seems to always refract something about the self. By removing a habitual notion of a monadic, autonomised, individual self from their interpretation of experience, the children become open to fresh inquiry into experience in a way that facilitates communication and ethical attitudes.

This first prototype was perfected through time and practice. Its growth was mobilised by its significant success in achieving its stated aims, but it lacked a philosophical framework that could explain and sustain its principles. As the programme grew, the need to understand EUDE in philosophical terms became essential, as did the need to communicate and explain its principles so the programme could be put in dialogue with other fields in the humanities.

Although I examined different fields, such as ethics, psychology, and education, I did not find resources in western tradition that could provide a conceptually coherent framework for EUDE. I therefore pursued Buddhist and ancient Indian thought more deeply and discovered Buddhaghosacārya. As I will explain in the next section, Buddhaghosacārya provides a deep and systematic programme for ethical development that is also focused on working with conditions in experience. Like the EUDE programme, Buddhaghosacārya was interested in emotions, perception, cognition, attention, and the disciplinary techniques used prior to decision-making and character formation. These are

expressed and well developed in his work *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*.

### 1.3 BUDDHAGHOSACĀRYA

Buddhaghosacārya was a 5th century CE Theravada Buddhist commentator who relied upon and expanded the complex and intricate disciplinary psychological system of the Pali *Abhidhamma* – a highly systematic and very detailed phenomenological and analytical treatment of experience – in the treatise the *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>13</sup> He is considered to be Theravada Buddhism's greatest traditional interpreter, and his fashioning of the Buddhist path remains deeply influential.

The *Visuddhimagga* is in one sense a commentary on the *Jaṭā Sutta* SN 7.6 mentioned before, and in another sense, a free-standing work regarding the compendium of, *Abhidhamma*. The Pali *Abhidhamma Pitaka* is a canonical body of texts that focuses on the nature of experience through specialised vocabulary and analytical methods. Both the *Abhidhamma* and the *Visuddhimagga* study experience with the aim of reducing, and ultimately eliminating, suffering. This includes illumination of the complex requisites and conditions for the cessation of suffering in all of its forms but, in particular, the suffering we cause ourselves. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* explores the nature of empirical experience through a twofold method of analysis (expounded in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*)<sup>14</sup> and synthesis (expounded in the *Paṭṭhāna*,<sup>15</sup> the last book of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*). These methods list the phenomena that occur in experience and catalogue their qualities and relations.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, the driest aspects of *Abhidhamma* are arranged into an intelligible whole to reveal a comprehensive framework that structures and

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<sup>13</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010) *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, 5th ed., Buddhist Publication Society.

<sup>14</sup> Rhys Davids, C. A. F., trans. (1923) *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics (Dhamma-saṅgaṇī)*, Royal Asiatic Society.

<sup>15</sup> U Narada, trans. (1969) *Conditional Relations (Paṭṭhāna)*, Pali Text Society.

details what Buddhaghosacārya takes to be the core aspects of the Buddha's teachings. The text offers practical instructions as it explains the *Nikāyas* and *Abhidhamma*. In this way Buddhaghosacārya's hermeneutics provide a complete and critical interpretation of the Theravada doctrine of *Dhamma*.<sup>16</sup>

Buddhaghosacārya presents his method for changing human experience through the triad of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and understanding (*paññā*). Morality means following moral precepts that make it possible to concentrate on the contemplative practices that lead to an understanding of human experience. For my purposes, Buddhaghosacārya's programme of disciplinary moral psychology is focused on many of the same, or similar, preconditions as EUDE. In addition, his developmental psychology offers an instructive comparative framework for interpreting EUDE. More specifically, as Maria Heim's<sup>17</sup> work on Buddhaghosacārya has shown, he offers very fine-grained attention to the antecedents of moral intention and agency. Heim's research is an important resource for this study.

## 1.4 PREVIOUS STUDIES

The study of moral and ethical development and its preconditions is more interdisciplinary in scope and method than most philosophical treatises in the field of moral theory. My project therefore concerns ideas and scholarly work at the intersection of four disciplines: moral psychology (both philosophical and psychological), intervention in moral education, contemplative studies, and Buddhist ethics. If moral psychology is the study of the determinants of moral behaviour, then *ethical development* refers to the reflexive and structured practices through which we come to examine our responses to questions of value

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<sup>16</sup> The term *Dhamma/dhamma* is a difficult word to translate, therefore I will not attempt to provide a single definition here. Instead, I will present the one used by Ñāṇamoli in *The Path of Purification*, where he notes that *Dhamma* is a word that can signify three things, "the *Dhamma* or Law (as discovered by the Buddha), (2) the *dhamma*, state, thing, phenomenon, (3) the mental object, mental datum (12th base)" (*Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli*, 2010, p. 779).

<sup>17</sup> Maria Heim (2014) *The Forerunner of All Things: Buddhaghosa on Mind, Intention and Agency*, Oxford University Press.

found in experience in order to bring about systematic transformation of our ways of relating to others. As I have explained, my work draws on intervention in moral psychology, moral/ethical education, character formation, contemplative studies and Buddhist ethics to explore such practices for change. While building on previous work in these fields, which I will describe in this section, my study of *ethical development* charts new ground.

#### **1.4.1 Moral Psychology**

Moral psychology is usefully defined by Doris and Stich, as a “discipline of both intrinsic and practical interest; uncovering the determinants of moral judgment and behaviour.”<sup>18</sup> My interest in the ‘conditions’ of ethical decision-making coincides with this emphasis on the determinants of judgment. Since EUDE is informed by a very practical interest in determining what these conditions are, and how to shape them, classical philosophical debates about whether humans are fundamentally altruistic or selfish, and driven by emotions or cognition, are not my principal concerns. Nor are questions of free will, the nature of empathy or ethical debates on consequentialism or deontological ethics. Although some of the classical virtue theorists have contributed to my knowledge of the development of moral habit and character, my concerns are with the psychology of attention in a manner not focused on a preconceived set or theory of the virtues.

While the Western philosophers of the eighteenth century, Adam Smith, David Hume, Anthony Ashley Cooper and Francis Hutcheson, developed a philosophical examination of many of the key “moral sentiments” that they deemed relevant to moral agency, this aspect of their thought has been relatively side-lined in western ethics. However, more recently, a more scientifically empirical approach to studying moral emotions and dispositions has gained ground.<sup>19</sup> Since those approaches are much closer to the practices of EUDE, it will

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<sup>18</sup> John Doris and Stephen Stich (2006) ‘As a Matter of Fact: Empirical Perspectives on Ethics’, in Frank Johnson and Michael Smith (eds.) *The Oxford Book of Contemporary Philosophy*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Recent work on the empirical study of ethics has challenged the primacy of rational deliberation in ethical actions. For this area of psychology see, for example, Jonathan Haidt (2001) ‘The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment’,

be appropriate to examine them. The key interest of EUDE is the reasons behind the formation of judgments, over-generalisations and dogmatic ideas in human experience, and the emotional and hostile attitudes they produce in human interaction. This could be equated with the following Buddhist terms: craving/desire (*lobha*), anger/hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). These are seen by classical Indian traditions as fundamental drivers of experience, and are considered the root causes of suffering and unwholesome acts. Buddhaghosacārya's techniques use careful attention (*yoniso manasikāra*)<sup>20</sup> to create the conditions in which they can be dismantled.

While some of the key terms listed above have been examined in the Western literature on moral psychology, others have not been thematised as such. There is, for example, a growing literature on hate (*dosa*). Arne Vetlesen has discussed the role of hatred and shown how it impacts moral agency. He has traced the origins of hatred to lack of self-esteem.<sup>21</sup> This is in contrast to Erich Fromm whose approach to hatred is based on a sado-masochistic attraction to authoritarianism that has a general background in Freudian theory.<sup>22</sup> Social psychologists such as Robert and Karin Sternberg<sup>23</sup> have discussed the various aspects of hate as manifested in hate ideologies and hate crimes. However, EUDE's work draws from thinking about hate in the Buddhist literature in ways that frame the role of hatred in morality somewhat differently from that of social theories. Hatred is examined not as a social problem, but as a process of distorting experience with egocentric ideas that are corrosive to the individual human person. Anger lies very close to hatred in Buddhist thought and is part of what is meant by *dosa*. One important difference between Buddhist thinking and much western thought on anger is that in the latter, anger is sometimes seen to have moral value, as an impetus to fight for social justice. As Robert Thurman, points

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*Psychological Review* 108:4, pp. 814-834. For the significance for philosophical ethics, see, for example, Kwame Anthony Appiah (2008) *Experiments in Ethics*, Harvard University Press.

<sup>20</sup> *Yoniso manasikāra*, careful attention, is attention that involves right means and the right path and that sees the impermanent in the impermanent (Ps.i.64). *Yoniso manasikāra*, means attention to conditions and to the conditionality of existence (Heim, 2014, p. 56).

<sup>21</sup> Arne Johan Vetlesen, (1994) *Perception, Empathy and Judgment, An Inquiry into the Conditions of Moral Performance*, Pennsylvania State University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Erich Fromm (1980) *Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought*, Harper Collins.

<sup>23</sup> Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Sternberg (2008) *The Nature of Hate*, Cambridge University Press.

out, “in the west, anger is seen as an inevitable part of life, an evil to be borne, not overcome.”<sup>24</sup> Thurman shows that Eastern philosophy regards anger differently as one of the three poisons that underlie all human suffering. In the same way, for both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya, anger is always corrosive to the human person because of how it distorts our awareness of our emotions and judgments. While it could be interpreted as an urge to give a psychological ontology of the consequences, EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya in fact look primarily at what anger and hatred do to people, which inexorably leads back to the phenomenological processes prior to decision-making.

While there is some literature on anger and hatred in the Western tradition, our other key categories – craving/desire and delusion – have not been studied as such in Western moral psychology. Desire has often been treated in modern psychology as a healthy, or at least a natural, component of human experience. Older Western traditions have treated gluttony or greed as morally problematic (it is one of the seven deadly sins, for example), while the Stoic tradition<sup>25</sup> was suspicious of unbridled desire. However, in the current literature on moral psychology, desire, and even its stronger form of craving, are not seen as moral problems unless they come to be viewed, or labelled, as addiction, and get treated as pathological in psychiatry. Delusion, a central category in the techniques of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya, is similarly not seen as having moral significance in western ethics. Rationality is assumed to be a basic property of moral agency, as for example in Kantian ethics. Where failure to be rational is identified as a problem, again it has been treated in pathological terms in the field of psychiatry. However, as I will show in Chapters 2 and 3, for EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya delusion is an active factor in distorting emotional and cognitive experience in ways that are immediately relevant for ethical experience. For both, delusion (*moha*) in perception causes feelings of craving/desire and anger/hatred - an outcome that both view as having immediate impact on attitudes and on ethical performance.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert A. F. Thurman (2005) *Anger: The Seven Deadly Sins*, Oxford University Press. p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> John Sellars (ed.) (2016) *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition*, Routledge.



The ethical education that the secular programme of EUDE encompasses, and the distinctive methods of Buddhaghosacārya, both aim at ethical action through phenomenological transformation. They both view attention to the conditions of experience as a way to reconfigure one's phenomenology and, as I will show in Chapter 4, by modifying thoughts and actions, both practices reflect an ethical concern for conduct. This performative ethical dimension of both practices leads me to examine the current intervention programmes in moral education in order to see and understand what is distinctive about EUDE's intervention in ethical development.

#### **1.4.2 Moral Education (Ethical Education)**

An early influential theorist Emile Durkheim stated, "Moral education should aim to inculcate morality, a set of socially shared precepts demanding specific kinds of behaviour or simply 'a body of rules that govern us.'"<sup>26</sup> The field of applied moral education as a form of intervention in the classroom is based on various theories of moral development starting from Jean Piaget<sup>27</sup> who posited six stages of moral development. His groundwork of cognitive reasoning was refined by Lawrence Kohlberg, the American psychologist who designed a moral education programme in the 1960s.<sup>28</sup> Kohlberg's highly influential theory of cognitive reasoning regarding fairness, rights, and justice does not simply represent "an increasing knowledge of culture values usually leading to ethical relativity", but a "transformation that occurs in a person's form or structure of thought."<sup>29</sup> Unlike Piaget and Kohlberg who were embedded in discussing logical and moral reasoning, the work of James Rest provides a framework for understanding moral behaviour divided into four components: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral decision-making, and moral action.<sup>30</sup> Rest advises using his framework "as a basis

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<sup>26</sup> Emile Durkheim (2012) *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*, Free Press of Glencoe, p. 54.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Piaget (1968) *Life in the Classrooms*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg (1970) 'Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education', in C. Beck and E. Sullivan (eds.), *Moral Education*, University of Toronto Press.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg and Richard Hersch (1977) 'Moral Development: A Review of the Theory', in *Theory into Practice*, 16:2, p. 54.

<sup>30</sup> James Rest (1983) 'Morality', In Paul Mussen (ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology*, 4: pp. 556-619.

for formulating objectives for moral education programmes.”<sup>31</sup> In Latin America, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire also made an important contribution to moral education, when he emphasised autonomy in moral development: “People should develop the skills to make moral reasoning and moral judgment independently; this moral development helps people in becoming autonomous subjects.”<sup>32</sup> Manuela Guilherme notes that Freire’s work has been used to emphasise the social and cultural context of moral education.<sup>33</sup> Wiel Veugelers argues that “Freire’s constructive and social view on learning and the active role of the learner and his experience in it can be considered what is now referred to as social constructivism.”<sup>34</sup> In moral education, social-constructive views are found in the work of Mark Tappan<sup>35</sup> and Helen Haste.<sup>36</sup>

More recently, Bernard Williams has expressed the view that moral education should equip people with the ability to engage in human interactions as a minimal ethical requirement in the most expansive and least controversial way. By minimal, Bernard means, “To shape their behaviour in some degree to social expectations, in ways that are not under surveillance and not directly controlled by threats and rewards. Call this ... (the minimal version of) living in an ethical system.”<sup>37</sup> Edward A Wynne and Kevin Ryan state that moral education should be about enculturation,<sup>38</sup> while David Carr views the aim of moral education as “motivating members of a group to follow that group’s shared normative guidelines.”<sup>39</sup> However a study by Bart Engelen, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer and Niels van de Ven argues that any potential interventions in moral education should not simply equip people to comply with functionally adequate standards of

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<sup>31</sup> James Rest (1986) *Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory*, Praeger. p. 618.

<sup>32</sup> Wiel Veugelers (2017) ‘The Moral in Paulo Freire’s Educational Work: What Moral Education can Learn from Paulo Freire’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 46:4, p. 406.

<sup>33</sup> Manuela Guilherme (2017) ‘Freire’s Philosophical Contribution for a Theory of Intercultural ethics: A Deductive Analysis of his Work’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 46:4, pp. 422-434.

<sup>34</sup> Wiel Veugelers, 2017, p. 417.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Tappan (1998) ‘Moral Education in the Zone of Proximal Development’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 27:2, pp. 141–160.

<sup>36</sup> Helen Haste (2004) ‘Constructing the Citizen’, *Political Psychology*, 25:3, pp. 413–440.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard Williams (2002) *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, Princeton University Press, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> Edward A Wynne and Kevin Ryan (1993) *Reclaiming our Schools: Teaching Character, Academics, and Discipline*, Merrill.

<sup>39</sup> David Carr (2008) ‘Character Education as the Cultivation of Virtue’, in L. Nucci and D. Narvaez (eds.), *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, Routledge. p. 32.

decency, but enable them to develop a more critical aspect of moral agency, that is, “capacity for critical distance and reflection.”<sup>40</sup> They add, “Moral education can and should make the ethical perspective of the subject - the person being educated - more structured, more salient to his or her first personal perspective and therefore more ‘navigable’.”<sup>41</sup>

The review of the theorists quoted above points to a lack of agreement on the subject of what moral education is, or what it should be. Warren Nord and Charles C. Haynes have noted that “there is not a lot of agreement about what moral education should be,”<sup>42</sup> and no “discipline” of moral education seems to be providing answers to this problem. Kohlberg explains that his theory is complex and insufficient to the task claimed by applied moral education.<sup>43</sup> If we further consider that moral education is constituted by psychology, philosophy and education and also the domains of religion and/or family, we end up seeing an important problem when it comes to designing intervention programmes. In countries that are both religiously observant and/or religiously diverse, applications and interventions in moral education trigger apprehension and controversy, as does the terminology used in such programmes. In some countries character formation or citizenship are terms used to dilute the link between morality and religion. This was the case of EUDE when it was implemented initially in Latin America, where the use of ethical development instead of moral development was more appropriate given than in Mexico morality is strongly linked with religion. Freire in Brazil encountered a similar problem because when he was writing morality was strongly linked with militarism.<sup>44</sup>

Without confronting the full dimension of the moral education debate and its controversies, which is not the focus of this thesis, I move to the key areas covered by the current intervention programmes in moral education proposed for

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<sup>40</sup> Bart Engelen, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer and Niels van de Ven (2018) ‘Exemplars and Nudges: Combining Two Strategies for Moral Education’, *Journal of Moral Education*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Warren A. Nord and Charles C. Haynes (1998), *Taking Religion Seriously across the Curriculum*, ASCD Publications, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977, p. 58.

<sup>44</sup> For further references, see Oscar Espinoza (2017) ‘Paulo Freire’s Ideas as an Alternative to Higher Education Neo-Liberal Reforms in Latin America’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 46:4, pp. 435-448.

enacting ethics. This should highlight from a psychological and pedagogical point of view what areas have so far been addressed by moral education in order to see the potential room for EUDE's contribution in the field.

#### **1.4.2.1 Character Formation**

Today, many character education programmes<sup>45</sup> exist for both schools and organisations, some of which are commercial, some non-profit. Michael Cook explains that moral or ethical education in the workplace “aims to assist professionals to carry out the task entrusted to the profession as honourably and correctly as possible, the first step might be to develop moral self-awareness or moral sensitivity.”<sup>46</sup> Thus interventions in moral education in organisations include dialogical ethics,<sup>47</sup> or moral imagination,<sup>48</sup> narrative ethics<sup>49</sup> and virtue ethics<sup>50</sup> or explorations about particular ideas of thinkers in a specific environment, such as the unusual application of Michel Foucault's ideas on art-of-living for ethics education in military context,<sup>51</sup> or the resolution of conflict in the workplace by Helge Hoel and Sabir I. Giga.<sup>52</sup> The effectiveness of management interventions as explained by Karen Vintages advocates for a way of life in which people become more self-aware. She explains that this would imply “that we discover ourselves in our concrete situation.”<sup>53</sup> Nord and Haynes argued on the

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<sup>45</sup> For more references see <https://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/resources/organizations>.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Cook (2013) *Issues in Military Ethics, to Support and Defend the Constitution*, SUNY Press.

<sup>47</sup> See Bert Molewijk, Maarten Verkerk, Henk Milius and Guy Widdershoven (2008) ‘Implementing Moral Case Deliberation in a Psychiatric Hospital: Process and Outcome’, *Medical Health Care and Philosophy*, 11:1, pp. 43–56.

<sup>48</sup> See Patricia Werhane and Michael Gorman (2005) ‘Intellectual Property Rights, Moral Imagination, and Access to Life Enhancing Drugs’, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 15:4, pp. 595–613.

<sup>49</sup> See H. L. Nelson (2014) *Stories and their Limits: Narrative Approaches to Bioethics*, Routledge. See also Tom Wilks (2005) ‘Social Work and Narrative Ethics’, *British Journal of Social Work*, 35:8, pp. 1249–1264.

<sup>50</sup> See Geoff Moore (2005) ‘Humanizing Business: A Modern Virtue Ethics Approach’, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 15:2, pp. 237–255, and Peter Olsthoorn (2008) ‘An Ethics Curriculum at the Netherlands Defence Academy, and some Problems with its Theoretical Underpinnings’, in P. Robinson, N. de Lee and D. Carrick (eds.), *Ethics Education in the Military*, Ashgate, pp. 119–132.

<sup>51</sup> Eva van Baarle, Desiree Verweij, Bert Molewijk and Guy Widdershoven, (2018) ‘The Relevance of Foucauldian Art-of-Living for Ethics Education in a Military Context: Theory and Practice’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 47:1, pp. 126–143.

<sup>52</sup> Helge Hoel and Sabir I. Giga (2006) ‘Destructive Interpersonal Conflict in the Workplace: The Effectiveness of Management Interventions’, paper given at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester.

<sup>53</sup> Karen Vintges (2001) ‘Must We Burn Foucault? Ethics as Art of Living: Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault’, *Continental Philosophy Review*, 34:2, pp. 166.

other hand that moral education in a school environment is an umbrella term for two quite different tasks and approaches. The first, what might better be called “moral ‘socialization’ or ‘training’, is the task of nurturing in children those virtues and values that make them good people.”<sup>54</sup> That involves instilling desired moral virtues, modelling, moral exemplars and narratives. The second task of moral education is “to provide students with the intellectual resources that enable them to make informed and responsible judgments about difficult matters of moral importance.”<sup>55</sup>

Prominent authors focusing on moral character education such as Thomas Lickona<sup>56</sup> and Wynne and Ryan<sup>57</sup> have stressed the importance of moral role models. Kohlberg also emphasised the value of interacting with role models who embody higher stages of moral reasoning, as a pedagogical method. Recently, the role that an appeal to moral exemplars can play in this respect has been analysed both by philosophers such as Kristina Kristjánsson,<sup>58</sup> and Linda Zagzebski,<sup>59</sup> and by psychologists such as Sara Algoe and Jonathon Haidt,<sup>60</sup> and Benoît Monin, Pamela Sawyer and Matthew Marquez.<sup>61</sup> Narratives embedding moral exemplars have been used to affect behaviour. Engelen et al. explained that the effect on behaviour is “not achieved merely by informing subjects about some historical event or explaining the reasons behind the moral exemplar’s actions. Instead, it is the focus on a single, salient case that enables exemplar stories to trigger emotional responses that motivate action.”<sup>62</sup> For Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, narratives “have a larger behavioural influence than less immediate, recent and vivid information. By making use of salience and emotion, exemplar stories thus predictably generate desirable outcomes more effectively than the

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<sup>54</sup> Nord and Haynes, 1998, p. 149.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Lickona (1991) *Educating for Character: How Schools can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, Bantam.

<sup>57</sup> See Wynne and Ryan, 1993.

<sup>58</sup> Kristina Kristjánsson (2007) ‘Measuring Self Respect’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 37:3, pp. 225-242.

<sup>59</sup> Linda Zagzebski (2017) *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>60</sup> Sara Algoe and Jonathon Haidt (2009) ‘Witnessing Excellence in Action: The Other-Praising Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude and Admiration’, *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4:2, pp. 105-127.

<sup>61</sup> Benoît Monin, Pamela Sawyer and Matthew Marquez (2008) ‘The Rejection of Moral Rebels: Resenting Those who do the Right Thing’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95:1, pp. 76-93.

<sup>62</sup> Engelen et al., 2018, p. 6.

mere provision of abstract information and arguments.”<sup>63</sup>

With regard to instilling desired moral virtues, many theories<sup>64</sup> of moral education discuss the implications of values such as tolerance, honesty and/or respect, together with two other recurring themes of religion and civil citizenship.<sup>65</sup> However these contributions seem to be more concerned with what people should think and how they should act, than how they actually enact and understand those values. Yet critical questions must be asked about who is supposed to define what these values are, whether the definition of them should be our focus of attention, and whether those values should be understood and enacted. Moral virtues such as respect and tolerance are widely used as key values in moral education, and are a good example of how moral education is largely divided into two principle strands: one philosophical and/or theoretical, the other empirical. I agree with the position of Trine Anker and Geir Afdal that philosophy should be used as an interpretive tool or device, not as a source of normative definition, and that “different ethical theories became dialogical partners in different stages of the research but a dialogical partner that had no a priori primacy in deciding the correct or proper understanding of the values.”<sup>66</sup>

EUDE finds moral judgment problematic when it is used to judge others as a way to validate or invalidate their behaviours based on arbitrary or subjective definitions of the virtue values. EUDE finds this ‘judging others’ in any form the cause of much hostility in human interaction, which is precisely one of the subjective conditions that children need to learn to dismantle and re-arrange in a less harmful manner. This brings an important distinction concerning the purpose of EUDE, which is not to instil social justice or moral and political values. The reason for this is not because they are not important, but because EUDE’s focus is on the children’s prior phenomenological transformation when it comes to

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<sup>63</sup> Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1973) ‘Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability’, *Cognitive Psychology*, 5:2, pp. 207–232.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. Frank Willems, Eddie Denessen, Chris Hermans and Paul Vermeer (2010) ‘Citizenship Education in Religious Schools: An Analysis of Tolerance in Catholic Schools from a Virtue Ethical Point of View’, *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 31:2, pp. 215–229.

<sup>65</sup> See Graham Haydon (2006) *Education, Philosophy and the Ethical Environment*, Faber and Faber.

<sup>66</sup> Trine Anker and Geir Afdal (2018) ‘Relocating Respect and Tolerance: A Practice Approach in Empirical Philosophy’, *Journal of Moral Education*, 47:1, p. 57.

enacting ethics. And it does that by equipping the children with higher levels of attention and discernment, a process that enables them to understand their subjective construction of experience and transform it. Paulo Freire argues that imagination plays an important role for this task, “Imagination can help people to develop new perspectives; imagination is both cognitive and motivational.”<sup>67</sup> However, as we shall see in Chapter 4, EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya treat imagination primarily for the purpose of using it as a tool to dismantle harmful conditions in experience.

This leads us to a review of the usefulness of moral education interventions. For Kohlberg and Hersh “much of the moral development research in schools has focused on moral discussions as the vehicle for stimulating cognitive conflict.” But they warn that such discussions if used too often, “will become pedantic.”<sup>68</sup> They add that “The classroom discussion approach should be part of a broader, more enduring involvement of students in the social and moral functioning of the school.”<sup>69</sup> Rather than attempting to inculcate a predetermined and unquestioned set of values, teachers should challenge students with the moral issues faced by the school community as problems to be solved, not merely situations created by a “just community.”<sup>70</sup> They note that “moral judgment is a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral action,”<sup>71</sup> since other variables come into play such as emotions, and a general sense of will, purpose or ego strength. They conclude: “moral judgment is the only distinctive moral factor in moral behaviour but not the only factor in such behaviour.”<sup>72</sup>

More recent research in this field has uncovered several effective and ineffective approaches. In the US, for example, a report released in 2010 under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education<sup>73</sup> found that the majority of the

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<sup>67</sup> Paulo Freire (1994) *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving the Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, p. 34.

<sup>68</sup> Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977, p. 57.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Social and Character Development Research Consortium (2010) *Efficacy of Schoolwide Programs to Promote Social and Character Development and Reduce Problem Behavior in Elementary School Children* (NCER 2011–2001), Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

programmes in character formation have failed to prove their effectiveness. This failure has been attributed to functional and ideological problems such as lack of agreement on what constitutes effectiveness,<sup>74</sup> lack of evidence that it does what it claims,<sup>75</sup> and a conflict between what good character is and the way that character education proposes to teach it.<sup>76</sup> It has also been attributed to differing standards in methods and objectives, supportive studies that overwhelmingly rely on subjective feedback based on general self-reported values rather than on specific and structured feedback about actions based on phenomenological transformation, the pervasive problem of confusing morality with social conformity, lack of common goals among character education programmes and the dissensions in the list of values among character education programmes themselves. These together constitute the criticism that there is nothing to character education that is either fundamental or universally relevant to students or society.<sup>77</sup>

Recent character formation studies have therefore spawned many questions related to the methodologies most appropriate to moral education when it comes to enacting ethics. These questions lead us to the second main line of intervention: the empirical analysis of moral education. Engelen suggests that any intervention along these lines should include the three aspects of what Durkheim calls “autonomy”<sup>78</sup> and what Kohlberg views as a way to stimulate people to move towards more critical and independent stages of moral development.<sup>79</sup> These aspects are described as “striving towards ideals that transcend the ordinary and recognizing those who come closer than most to realizing these ideals,” which they describe as a source of motivation. This motivation involves “going beyond the collectively shared ‘body of rules’, it requires independent thinking about what is

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<sup>74</sup> Christopher A. Was, Dan Woltz, Clif Drew (2006) ‘Evaluating Character Education Programs and Missing the Target: A Critique of Existing Research’, *Educational Research Review*, 1:2, pp. 148-156.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Davis (2003) ‘What’s Wrong with Character Education?’, *American Journal of Education*, 110:1, pp. 32-57.

<sup>76</sup> Richard A. Fables, J. Fulse, N. Eisenberg, T. May-Plumlee, F. Scott Christopher (1989) ‘Effects of Rewards on Children’s Prosocial Motivation: A Socialization Study’, *Developmental Psychology*, 25:4, pp. 509-15.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Smagorinsky and Joel Taxel (2005) *The Discourse of Character Education: Culture Wars in the Classroom*, Routledge.

<sup>78</sup> See Durkheim, 2012.

<sup>79</sup> See Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977.



socially required and expected.”<sup>80</sup>

In what follows in this thesis we will learn that attention to the conditions of experience and discernment are the chief methods, or techniques, of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya. It is only by seeing and knowing what is present in one’s own experience that understanding of our subjectivity can be changed and harmful conditions dismantled. Although not directed towards exploring conditions in experience, the concept of attention has only recently gained ground through the current practice of mindfulness. Several important works have brought the application of mindfulness to public attention, including those of Daniel Goleman<sup>81</sup> and Richard Davidson.<sup>82</sup> Jeff Wilson’s historical account of the recent American appropriation of Buddhist meditation<sup>83</sup> is a useful chronicle of these trends. This leads us to consider the contributions of contemplative studies.

#### **1.4.2.2 Contemplative Studies: Two Paradigms**

The last twenty years has seen an expansive growth in the number of contemplative programmes and the study of their efficacy. While this new field is diffuse and the research on it is as yet largely inconclusive, it has gained in popularity rather rapidly. Whereas theologians and scholars of the humanities have been studying contemplative practice and theory for centuries, the now-dominant paradigm for the study of meditation is scientific, and a very recent phenomenon in the development of contemplative studies over the last two decades.

Contemplative science is the scientific study of first-person and third-person data on the effects of contemplative practices (drawn largely from Eastern religious traditions) on brain physiology, neurochemistry, genetics, and behaviour. Evan Thompson defines first-person methods of inquiry as “practices that increase an individual’s sensitivity to his or her own experience through the systematic

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<sup>80</sup> Engelen et al., 2018, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel Goleman (1995) *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam.

<sup>82</sup> Richard J. Davidson (2012) *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*, Penguin, Random House.

<sup>83</sup> Jeff Wilson (2014) *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture*, Oxford University Press.

training of attention and self-regulation of emotion.”<sup>84</sup> Third-person evidence has been greatly facilitated by the development of neural imaging technology. The aim of contemplative science is to develop through experimentation different ways of using contemplative practices in health care, therapy and education. Its models for studying the effects of contemplative practice are behaviourist and physicalist (such as finding evidence of neuroplasticity).<sup>85</sup>

One team of scholars led by Davidson, a neuroscientist pioneer in this field, defines contemplative practices as ways of training the mind to develop concentration and attention, to manage stress, anxiety and emotion, and to cultivate self-knowledge and compassion, initially through discipline, with the hope that such skills will eventually become automatic:

Contemplative practices such as meditation and yoga are structured and socially scaffolded activities that train skills by placing some constraint or imposing some discipline on a normally unregulated mental or physical habit. A defining characteristic of such practices is that they require individuals to exercise volitional control to sustain the focus of attention on particular objects (such as the breath) or mental contents (such as the suffering and relief from suffering of particular individuals). Other objects of attention focus may include moment-to-moment fluctuations in the “stream of consciousness” in order to develop the ability to concentrate, to effectively understand and manage stress and emotion, to gain knowledge about oneself, and to cultivate pro-social dispositions. With such sustained practice, complex skills like mindfulness and empathy likely become routinized at neural and mental levels and, subsequently, regulate behaviour more or less automatically by being highly accessible and available.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Harold Roth (2011) ‘Contemplative Studies’, in *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies*, State University of New York Press, p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> For more information, see Joan Y. Chiao (2018) *Philosophy of Culture Neuroscience*, Routledge.

<sup>86</sup> Richard Davidson, J. Dunne, J. Eccles, A. Engle, M. Greenberg, P. Jennings and D. Vago (2012) ‘Contemplative Practices and Mental Training: Prospects for American Education’, *Child Development Perspectives* 6:2, pp. 146-153.

Thus, contemplative practices as defined in contemplative science consist of training the mind to enhance faculties like concentration and attention in order to access self-knowledge and handle stress.

It is important to note that the current key studies of contemplative science focus on contemplative practices that come from classical Indian traditions, particularly Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. John Dunne, a scholar of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, defines contemplative practice as “a set of techniques that are explicitly articulated, that can be traced back to a tradition that has been transmitted over several generations and that aims for some form of manipulation of the body and or mind for specific kinds of outcomes.”<sup>87</sup> He further asserts: “Desired outcomes are behavioural transformations tied to some kind of ethical framework”<sup>88</sup> and notes: “it is important that the practice be connected to a long-standing tradition that has passed the test of time and is cautious about throwing the net wide open and letting anything be defined as contemplative practice.”<sup>89</sup>

The Buddhist practices – principally from Tibetan Buddhism - that are incorporated in contemplative science include various and diverse methods for the cultivation of meditative states, such as one-pointed meditation, which is most commonly practiced through mindfulness of breathing and contemplative insight. The Tibetan Buddhist teaching of “mind-training” focused on handling unskilful emotions, transforming them, then cultivating skilful ones, is the major focus of contemplative science along with concentration (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*).<sup>90</sup> Contemplative scientists are studying the effects of different kinds of meditation practices and how they can be applied to different contexts according to the effects produced.

It is important to note that the scientific study of contemplative practices has been made possible by the development of the neuro-phenomenological

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<sup>87</sup> John Dunne, < <http://fpmt.org/mandala/archives/mandala-for-2014/january/an-interview-with-buddhist-scholar-john-dunne-on-mindfulness/> > (Accessed: 7/7/2015).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> B. Alan Wallace (2002) ‘The Spectrum of Buddhist Practice in the West’, in Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann (eds.), *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*, University of California Press, p. 45.

approach.<sup>91</sup> This approach to the study of the brain has opened doors for dialogues between neuroscientists, religious practitioners, health practitioners and scholars of religions. The scientists and scholars of religions who participate in the contemplative science are usually trained in some form of contemplative practice from the Buddhist tradition. Scientists such as Allan Wallace,<sup>92</sup> Matthieu Ricard,<sup>93</sup> Francisco Varela,<sup>94</sup> Jon Kabat-Zinn,<sup>95</sup> Richard Davidson,<sup>96</sup> and religious studies scholars, such as Anne Klein and John Dunne,<sup>97</sup> all have a personal engagement with Buddhism. Thus, contemplative science can be viewed as an interdisciplinary effort of intellectuals and religious practitioners interested in both religion and science.

The main venue for this integration of science and contemplative practice is perhaps the Mind and Life Institute, founded in 1987 by the neuroscientist Francisco Varela and attorney R. Adam Engle. Its purpose is “to pioneer collaboration between scientists and contemplatives, the world’s most experienced experts in introspection and mental training, with the conviction that such collaboration could potentially be very beneficial to both modern science and to humanity in general.”<sup>98</sup> The Institute has succeeded in bringing together scholars of religion, scientists, and religious practitioners, including the 14th Dalai

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<sup>91</sup> Neurophenomenology refers to a scientific research programme, which aims to address the hard problems of consciousness in a pragmatic way. It combines neuroscience with phenomenology in order to study experience, mind, and consciousness, with an emphasis on the embodied condition of the human mind. The field is linked to fields such as neuropsychology, neuroanthropology and behavioural neuroscience (also known as biopsychology) and the study of phenomenology in psychology. The term was coined by Charles Laughlin, John McManus and Eugene d’Aquili in 1990. However, the term was appropriated and given a distinctive understanding by the cognitive neuroscientist Francisco Varela in the mid-1990s. See Francisco Varela (1996) ‘Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem’, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 3:4, pp. 330-49.

<sup>92</sup> Allan Wallace was ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk by the Dalai Lama in 1970 and practiced in a traditional setting for fourteen years. Following the advice of the Dalai Lama, he disrobed and went on to earn an undergraduate degree in physics and the philosophy of science at Amherst College, then a doctorate in religious studies at Stanford.

<sup>93</sup> Matthieu Ricard is a Buddhist monk with a doctorate in molecular genetics.

<sup>94</sup> Francisco Varela, was a renowned biologist, neuroscientist and a long time Tibetan-Buddhist practitioner.

<sup>95</sup> Jon Kabat-Zinn has a doctorate in molecular biology. He is a mindfulness meditation practitioner and a student of Buddhist teachers such as Thich Nhat Hanh and Zen Master Seung Sahn.

<sup>96</sup> Richard Davidson has a doctorate in personality, psychopathology, and psychophysiology and is a long-term associate of the Dalai Lama.

<sup>97</sup> Anne Klein has been a practicing Buddhist since 1971; John Dunne occasionally teaches for Buddhist communities and is an academic adviser for the Raniung Yeshe Institute.

<sup>98</sup> See Mind and Life Institute. <http://www.mindandlife.org/about/history/> (Accessed: 7/7/2015).

Lama, for the purpose of exchanging knowledge and experience, and sharing practices and methodologies. This partnership with the Dalai Lama has resulted in the formation of the contemplative science programme in universities such as Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, Rice university in Houston, Texas, and the University of Wisconsin, where scientists work together with monks to research the effects of meditation and mindfulness on the human body, on the mind, and on social interaction, using the neuro-phenomenological approach.<sup>99</sup> In neuroscience laboratories, religious practitioners provide first-person subjective data and also become subjects of third-person experiments. In addition, historians of religion provide knowledge of the contemplative practices and traditions in their original context, and as described by traditional texts. As the research has progressed, contemplative scientists have begun to develop different applications for the contemplative practices in the fields of education, health, and psychotherapy.<sup>100</sup> Some of the researchers involved are also beginning to take an interest in other, non-Buddhist religious practices.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> A good example of a Contemplative Science programme is the studies (ECCS) founded at Emory University in 2006. Its mission is “to explore contemplative practices and traditions through interdisciplinary dialogue across the sciences and humanities for the advancement of research, clinical practice and education.” See, ‘About the ECCS’, <[http://www.emory.edu/ECCS/about\\_us/index.html](http://www.emory.edu/ECCS/about_us/index.html) (Accessed: 7/7/2015). ECCS partners with the Dalai Lama and the Drepung Loseling Tibetan-Buddhist Monastery in Atlanta to develop research on, and understanding of, contemplative practices and their applications in different fields. It offers classes on Western and Buddhist perspectives on mind-body interactions, Buddhist meditation and mindfulness practice (taught by Buddhist monks), and Buddhist philosophy. It also conducts research on the use of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for depression and autism, on the use of meditation and mindfulness for the relief of stress, and on the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to explore different brain states that occur during focused meditation, with an emphasis on utilising first-person input from the subjects. An example of the clinical applications of ECCS research is the joint study with the University of Colorado, led by Sherryl Godman and Sona Dimidjian, on MBCT as an intervention in neonatal depression. See ‘Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for the Prevention of Perinatal Depression’, <<http://www.emory.edu/ECCS/research/index.html>> (Accessed: 7/7/2015). Another pioneer in the field of researching clinical applications for its findings for health, education, and other social contexts is the Centre for Investigating Healthy Minds (CIHM) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison led by Richard Davidson. He founded this centre having been challenged by the Dalai Lama, to “apply the rigor of science to study positive qualities of mind.” The CIHM currently has research projects in three different categories: Behavioural and neural correlates of pro-social behaviour, meditation/compassion training, mental and physical health, and illness and development education. For more information, see the website for the Centre for Investigating Healthy Minds. <<http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/cihmCenter.html>> (Accessed: 7/7/2015).

<sup>101</sup> These include: centring prayer as taught by Trappist Monk Fr. Thomas Keating, yoga, transcendental meditation, tai chi, and other practices that are now considered as contemplative.

Among these different programmes, the one closest to our area of interest is the research of contemplative practices in teaching and learning. With the collaboration of the French neuroscientist Antoine Lutz, Davidson's team has been researching the usefulness of contemplative practices in the field of teaching and learning. They explain that "although contemplative practices help to develop skills such as focused attention, emotional balance and qualities such as compassion in students, further research needs to be done with the various practices and their applications to develop concrete programs of application."<sup>102</sup> They further add, "Research shows that positive self-regulatory skills associated with emotion and attention, which are critical to academic success, can be strengthened through contemplative practices. These practices are shown to induce functional and structural changes in the brain, and support pro-social behaviours such as kindness and compassion in young adults. This evidence suggests the need for more focused, programmatic research to identify which forms and frequencies of practice may be most beneficial."<sup>103</sup>

These research programmes suggest important implications for contemplative practices in the field of education. However, while recent research shows that contemplative practices can be helpful in enhancing the quality of education by assisting in areas such as emotional and social development for students, contemplative scientists also emphasise that further research and experimentation is still required to develop contemplative pedagogy in general. Some of the contemplative programmes developed by contemplative scientists for the field of education are only in pilot phases. Contemplative scientists highlight the need for more research on age appropriateness, frequency, the kinds of practices required for desired outcomes, and ways to deal with the outcome transformations by contemplative practices that can be difficult to handle for students. This research is needed before contemplative practices can be applied in classrooms from primary to higher education.<sup>104</sup> Dunne notes that currently, we cannot know whether contemplative practices work for everyone. His concern is that there has never been a culture where everyone has meditated, and he has

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<sup>102</sup> Davidson et al, 2012, p. 149.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 151.

<sup>104</sup> See Davidson et al., 2012.

pointed out that even in Tibet, which probably has the highest percentage of meditators, a maximum of thirty to forty per cent of people meditate in an institutional setting. His view is that there is not enough scientific research to justify applying contemplative practices universally in classrooms. He also emphasises that much research by humanistic scholars remains to be done for the proper translation and transference of the contemplative practices from their traditional settings to western culture.<sup>105</sup>

We can sum up the state of this area of science by suggesting that given the relative newness of the field and the difficulty of creating scientific measures for human contemplative experience, and given that studies of the efficacy of such practices are still in their infancy, it is not yet clear whether, or to what degree, contemplative practice is effective either in health or education. Davidson and his team note that, “at present, these proposals concerning contemplative practices in education are speculative, and there is little evidence of their effectiveness. We call on researchers from a variety of disciplines to join in the study of their efficacy. As in all areas of evidence-based practice, the use of carefully designed randomized clinical trials will be a key part in legitimising such efforts, as will careful qualitative analyses documenting processes of change in a deep and rich way.”<sup>106</sup>

While the science of this area is still in its infancy, it does show promise and I am watching closely the development of the empirical study of contemplative practice, and its increasing use in clinical and educational interventions. EUDE has also been subjected to several control-group empirical studies - as stated at the beginning of this chapter. However, for the purposes of this thesis, my dominant paradigm for studying contemplative practices is not this recent scientific paradigm, but the older approach to disciplinary psychology with which humanistic fields have long been engaged. Some limits to the scientific paradigm should be noted. It is evidence-based, and what counts for evidence is physical changes in the brain measured with modern technology, and changes in behaviour measured by various social-scientific models of measurement. First-person data is valued, but only to the extent that it can be verified by neuroimaging data or

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<sup>105</sup> See Dunne, 2015.

<sup>106</sup> Davidson et al, 2012, p. 152.

behaviourist data. The current prestige and stature of science can result in unexamined “scientism”, which takes the methods and results of science as the only valid form of knowledge. Older models of exploration and methodologies from the ancient traditions that offer quite different paradigms for study can be forgotten, overlooked or dismissed because they do not fit scientific methods.

While I have learnt a good deal from the recent scientific contributions to contemplative practice, I locate this thesis in a humanistic paradigm that centres on a phenomenological discipline that works with the subjectivisation of experience and its effect on ethical development, as embraced in EUDE’s concepts of Caring for the Experience and The Space Between. Disciplines in the humanities explore experience in a way that does not require a reductive approach; nor are their theories and practices subject to the validity of how they perform on modern social scientific measures such as quantifiable data. Religious texts speak to human experience in ways different from the claims to value based on scientific validation, or on “pharmaceutical” models of clinical interventions. With EUDE, I am proposing a philosophical engagement that is not based on the logic of outcomes in the modern clinical context, because EUDE’s method at this point is more interested in where and when the process of its practices and techniques is to be applied and established, and how that process is conceptually coherent.

I therefore locate the thesis in the field of the humanities in which close analysis of an ancient text makes possible philosophical engagement with its ideas. A philosophical engagement with the content of The *Visuddhimagga* is neither a matter of seeking its scientific verification nor a matter of endorsing it as religious truth. The text offers its own principles and intellectual methods for interpreting experience and its changes; these methods resist being subsumed into or subjected to the scientific paradigm. It would be risible to subject this religious text to the quantifiable data-analysis used in neuroscience, or to the methods of social-scientific analysis. In fact The *Visuddhimagga* has its own measures and strategies for pursuing its claims, and investigating them is the work of humanistic disciplinary tools, which apply very well to EUDE’s paradigm.



### 1.4.3 Buddhist Ethics

Buddhist ethics is a large and diffuse field, including applied and social ethics, as well as the more philosophical formulations, which are my central concern. Frank J. Hoffman and Mahinda Deegalle note in their introduction that, contrary to the view that Buddhism lacks philosophical argumentation, once we examine the philosophical content and philosophical meaning of Pali Buddhism we find possible applications for contemporary concerns in modern society.<sup>107</sup> Peter Harvey draws on texts of the main Buddhist traditions, and on historical and contemporary accounts of Buddhist moral views to provide an overarching introduction to the various forms the field of Buddhist ethics is taking.<sup>108</sup> At the philosophical level, some of the most influential work has been concerned with how Buddhist ethics (often taken holistically as some single, pan-tradition and trans-temporal entity) maps onto western moral theories, such as deontology, consequentialism,<sup>109</sup> or virtue ethics.<sup>110</sup>

Despite the existence of considerable resources on moral psychology within Indian Tibetan Buddhist traditions, it is an area that has been surprisingly neglected in the existing scholarly literature, although de Padmasiri de Silva,<sup>111</sup> Shundō Tachibana<sup>112</sup> and H. Saddhatissa<sup>113</sup> have contributed valuable (though largely descriptive) accounts of key features of Theravada understandings of morality (*sīla*), meditation, and human psychology.<sup>114</sup> With regard to meditation, Winston King's book on Theravada meditation is a very useful resource on specific contemplative exercises.<sup>115</sup> Compassion, given its importance in Mahāyāna texts,

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<sup>107</sup> Frank Hoffman and Mahinda Deegalle (1998) *Pali Buddhism*, Routledge, p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> Peter Harvey (1990) *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>109</sup> Charles Goodman has suggested that at least the Mahāyāna tradition of Śāntideva or Asaṅga suggests a consequentialist approach. See Charles Goodman (2009) *Consequences of Compassion*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>110</sup> Damien Keown offers a good example in his attempt to apply natural law theory and a teleological virtue ethic to the Theravāda tradition in Buddhism as an explanation of its ethics. See Damien Keown (1992) *Buddhist Ethics, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>111</sup> Padmasiri de Silva (1991) *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*, Macmillan.

<sup>112</sup> Shundō Tachibana (1926) *The Ethics of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>113</sup> H. Saddhatissa (1970) *Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism*, Allen and Unwin.

<sup>114</sup> Padmasiri de Silva (2002) *Buddhist Ethics and Society: The Conflicts and Dilemmas of our Time*, Monash Asia Institute.

<sup>115</sup> Winston L. King (1980) *Theravada Meditation; The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga*. Pennsylvania State University Press.

has attracted more attention. Scholars working on compassion such as Jay L. Garfield, David J. Kalupahana, Steve C. Hayes, and the Dalai Lama have discussed its value and rationale in various forms of Mahayana Buddhism with less focus on the moral dimension.

Certainly the most influential thinking about compassion and moral development is that of the Dalai Lama. In *Ethics for the New Millennium*, he describes a “universal ethic”, based on the idea that all humans desire happiness and have a built-in capacity for goodness. However, this basic capacity becomes distorted by afflictive emotions. The Dalai Lama also belongs to the long tradition of Tibetan thought that centres on moral intention as the focus for understanding ethics and shaping moral disposition. He emphasises that curbing “harmful impulses and desires” is the key to shaping correct moral intention,<sup>116</sup> and explains that “when our intentions are polluted by selfishness, by hatred, by desire to deceive, however much our acts may have the appearance of being constructive, inevitably their impact will be negative, both for self and others.”<sup>117</sup> While this diagnosis matches my concerns, his work is less systematically methodological in articulating the disciplinary nuts-and-bolts of training attention than what we find in Buddhaghosacārya’s work.

Although, as we have seen, a large amount of research has done on Buddhist ethics, Buddhaghosacārya is distinctive among Buddhist thinkers for his extensions and for his detail method for moral psychology. His work the *Visuddhimagga* is one of the Buddhist tradition’s most programmatic treatments of experience and, as previously stated, its concerns about the preconditions of moral experience align closely with those of the EUDE programme. In addition, Buddhaghosacārya has clear and precise methods for examining experience not unlike, interestingly, those used in engineering. But he goes further than describing methods of attention, feeling, perceiving and conceptualising, to provide an overarching philosophical coherence for these processes of disciplinary moral psychology, thus the conceptual resources on which many of the principles of EUDE can be usefully articulated. For these reasons, Buddhaghosacārya’s work is useful to me, as I

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<sup>116</sup> Dalai Lama (1999) *Ethics for the New Millennium*, Penguin Putman Inc., p. 26.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

describe EUDE's practices and underlying conceptual principles. However, EUDE is, and will remain, a secular programme to be used in many diverse contexts in the modern world.

## 2 EUDE (PROGRAMME IN ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT)

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*EUDE me ha ayudado a tener más cercanía con lo que digo, menos orgullo en lo que hago, pero sobre todo más consciencia de lo que pienso.<sup>118</sup>*

*(María Paula 12 años)*

### 2.1 THE PRINCIPLES OF EUDE

As explained in Chapter 1, EUDE was created as an outcome of a two-part concern: (i) how self-centredness or egocentrism in human interactions develops, and (ii) how a person might be less driven by that self-centredness. In my case ‘reverse engineering’ worked best. By that, I mean that working out the second of the two questions by the creation of the first EUDE prototype had also answered the first question, albeit without a fully articulated conceptual framework, which is precisely the reason why EUDE now needs a sustainable philosophical framework. But what it is important to highlight here, is that the practices of EUDE did not need to derive from a prior theoretical framework. EUDE is the result of practice and ethical action.

All of EUDE’s practices expose the common tendencies of humans – in the fresh and flexible phenomenology of children – to interpret experience with others in a way that seems to always refract something about the self, in other words, an egocentric tendency. By egocentric, I mean thinking about, and acting in, the world according to ‘a self-centred ontological assumptions of experience’. In other words, ways of interacting with the world that are oriented to thinking that we hold the truth about phenomena.

In applying EUDE we saw that, by removing the habitual notion of individualistic or monadic views from children’s interpretation of experience, they

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<sup>118</sup> Translation of what Maria Paula, age 12, said when she finished the programme: “EUDE has helped me to be aware of my actions, to be less arrogant in what I do, but above all to be more conscious of my experiences”.

become open to fresh inquiry into experience in a way that facilitates communication and social interaction. In EUDE this was translated as Caring for the Experience (*el arte de cuidar la experiencia*), which means both (1) paying careful attention to the subjective content of experience and (2) dismantling harmful interpretations of it. As one's consciousness of those conditions becomes enhanced, one's experience becomes more factual and less driven by egocentric suppositions and concerns. It also became evident when applying EUDE that when children were in a state of acting in self-interest and self-centredness, seeing their own subjectivisation was not yet accessible to them. As a result, the assumption was that untrained conscious attention makes the person incapable of seeing their own subjectivisation of experience; reflecting on its particularities becomes almost impossible, seeing the harmful components of it even more so. As a result the person seems to be in constant ontological assumptions about reality, and makes all kinds of generalisations and dissocial constructed judgments. Therefore, untrained attention was viewed in EUDE as opening the door to the common tendency of humans to be ruled by self-centred assumptions and self-interested motivations, which corrupt and condition human experience with the potential for hostility<sup>119</sup> during human interaction. Here was EUDE's paradigm portrayed as a disciplinary challenge, where the ethical quality of experience seemed to be loosely attached to the notion of how the content of experience is seen and interpreted. There is, therefore, a sense in which self-centred assumptions of experience are seen as a barrier to Caring for the Experience and consequently caring for 'others'.

This challenge became the most important consideration when designing the EUDE prototype. I realised that pushing against the limits of self-interest first required a gradual move within the realm of self-centredness and individuation; in other words, it required first moving the children from seeing experience as a generic ontic assumption about reality to seeing it as a subjective interpretation of its conditioning content. This required a self-reflective methodology from where to

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<sup>119</sup> 'Hostility' in EUDE is used to highlight the use of self-centred ontic assumptions about phenomena that we experience. These assumptions manifest themselves in judgments, generalisations, dogmatic postures or even physical aggression. Such attitudes normally trigger or prompt one party to feel judged by the other, and cause them to be drawn into affirming the other person's ideas. The contrast to 'hostility' is the sense of being invited to co-create a moment of shared experience with that other because dogmatic assumptions are not present.

break down, explore and analyse their subjective content of experience. The idea was that by seeing the particularities of experience the children could break down assumptions and generalisations and be free of harmful conditioning. The result was a two-stage process where principles of Artificial Intelligence,<sup>120</sup> together with some Buddhist principles, were applied, as I have already highlighted it in Chapter 1.

The first stage, 'Caring for the Experience' uses progressive experiential activities that develop mental discipline and conscious attention towards the content of experience enhance by sharpening both the children's enquiry and their discernment into the subjective components of experience, in order to break down, explore and dismantle the habitual tendency to generate dogmatic thinking, generalisations or judgments. By focusing discerningly on the particularities of experience, it was possible for the children to interact without reading a self-centred interpretation of experience that generates the problematic sense that they are autonomous and monadic individuals.

The second stage refers to what I have named caring for The Space Between (*el espacio entre*). The Space Between incorporates the basic EUDE insight into the possibility of the selfless nature of experience between humans. EUDE does not regard experience as something that happens between two autonomous, independent or individuate beings in interaction; it assumes that the agents and experiences involved are themselves constructed and reshaped second-by-second through the experience. The figure below represents this principle.

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<sup>120</sup> The relation between Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Psychology is not new. There is a long history of attempts to work side by side. However there is no evidence of work done in an educational context. For further reference to Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Psychology see Gabriella Daróczy (2010) 'Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Psychology', *Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Applied Informatics*, Eger, Hungary, 1: pp. 61-69.

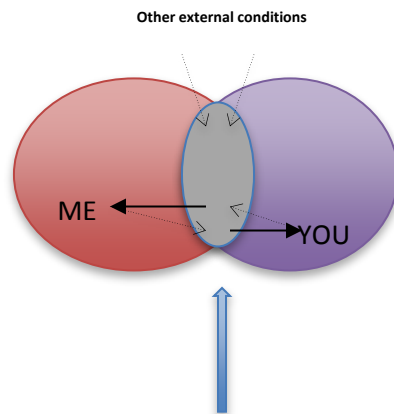


Figure 1- The Space Between

Therefore, The Space Between can be understood as a flow, where manifestations of each person are simply interdependent and in constant co-creation. Hence two aspects were taken into consideration when designing the prototype: the process (the levels or stages) and the methodology (the techniques). The levels should gradually progress from self-centred generic assumptions or interpretations of experience, to the children seeing their own subjective nature, to them finally seeing the co-created nature of experience - The Space Between. The methodology should enhance a discerning enquiry into experience and open up options for discernment that can help to reshape the feelings and language when one child interacts with another, or others, thereby reducing hostility.

In EUDE we explain that when egocentric interpretations have been dispelled, the children are able to co-create without any motivation to generate ontological reflexions, or grasping the content of experience as 'it is me', or 'this is mine', or 'it is you', or 'this is yours'. The core of The Space Between in an ethical sense helps the children to avoid overlaying the particular experience of others with their own assumptions, which in EUDE is seen to be the cause of hostile interaction. The aim in The Space Between is for the children to look not at each other, but in the same direction together.

EUDE's basic formula, in fact, answers the two questions that triggered the design of EUDE in the first place - as stated at the beginning of this section - the more conscious attention and mental discipline one develops, the more it is

possible to lessen self-centred motivations. There can then be an accurate expression of what one is experiencing, which will lead to a decrease in human hostility. This clearing away, dispelling, or absence, both depends upon, and makes possible, sensitivity to one's experience. That is the condition for the conscious attention practice on which the whole process of EUDE depends. But what conscious attention also makes possible in the process of EUDE is seeing The Space Between and consequently being able to care for it.

The next section describes the process of EUDE's prototype for education in the form of experiential laboratories (EUDE labs)<sup>121</sup> where the children work every day cultivating and developing the conditions that produce alterations in their interpretation of experience and their attitudes towards it. The important ethical consequence of this interpretation is a lessening of hostility in their actions, as we shall see.

## **2.2 FIRST PROTOTYPE - (EUDE LABS FOR CHILDREN)**

The EUDE prototype brings about systematic transformation with the aim of regulating the natural human inclination to interpret experience in a self-centred manner. This process of transformation, or what we call 'self-regulation', is defined as the result of habilitating conscious attention and developing mental discipline in a systematic way through the EUDE labs.

The EUDE labs are not concerned with the passive reception of lessons in ethics, nor are they merely instructional; they are pragmatic and functional practices that over time restructure interpretations of experience. The EUDE labs refer to a set of experiential activities and mutually-dependent techniques. Through them the children habilitate conscious attention and enhance mental discipline; a process that, with constancy and consistency, shows itself to be an enactive procedure for change.

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<sup>121</sup> Note: All the dialogues between the children and teachers used in this chapter were recorded on videotapes during the four years of formally researching the applicability of EUDE in different schools and cultural contexts.



In the EUDE labs, the children learn to see, identify, experiment with, and change, the harmful subjective content of experience, thereby sharpening their inferential thinking (which will be examined in detail later in this chapter) and opening up their options for ample discernment. They also learn how to reflect on the feelings triggered by self-centred interpretations of experience manifested in actions, as well as on the feelings produced by the absence of self-centred interpretations. They learn how to identify remorse versus guilt - a distinction in their feelings that we see as important. In EUDE the children learn that guilt entails victimisation based on egocentric or self-centred ideas, while remorse is a mechanism that alerts them to having hurt others. In sum, the EUDE labs encourage experimentation with conditions during dialogical encounter with others: the feeling and texture when seeing the conditions in experience as it develops and transforms them as subjects of the experience.

The EUDE labs show the children the moments when they need to pay close and careful attention, and observe how to engage with their subjectivity. The EUDE labs do not tell them how to behave in an experience, but simply give them the training and practice to look at the conditions of experience closely enough to dispel interpretations that motivate egocentric activity.

The whole process is divided into three Years and three Levels, and uses three Techniques. These techniques work across all three levels in parallel over the three academic years. Each Year is named to indicate its main focus, that is:

Year I - Subjectivity

Year II - Inter-Subjectivity

Year III - Integration

The three Levels are:

- (i) Sustained Focus Attention and Careful Concentration (*el arte del enfoque*)
- (ii) Caring for the Experience (*el arte de cuidar la experiencia*)
- (iii) Caring for The Space Between: Accompanying the Co-Created Experience (*el arte del acompañamiento en el espacio entre*)

Each of the levels works as a platform for the next. In other words, each level serves as the support or a precondition for the next one. Thus, the levels are not random, but arranged in a precise order leading to specific goals.

Each Technique has its particularities depending on the level where it is applied. The three Techniques, each practiced in a lab session of 50 minutes, consist of:

- (a) Meditation
- (b) The Art of Questioning
- (c) Quantifications and Abstentions.

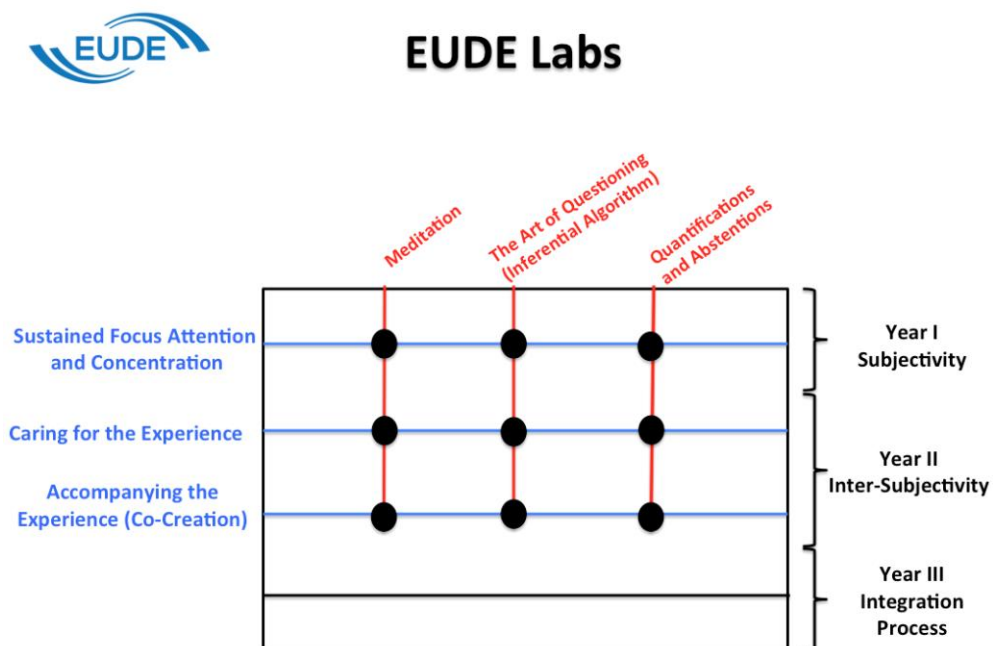


Figure 2 - The Matrix of EUDE Levels and Techniques

This matrix above shows the structure and process of the EUDE labs that enhance mental discipline and habilitate conscious attention in children. The three techniques, or what we could also name generic templates<sup>122</sup> for working with experiences, are mutually dependent and work together in each lab, where they need to be balanced: i.e., the emphasis in each technique is the same. The three techniques need to be applied outside the lab as well as inside. This means that the children have to practice at home what they have learned in the lab. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the help of a manual that has activities for parents at home.

**Year I**, named 'Subjectivity',<sup>123</sup> is devoted to enhancing the necessary mental discipline for sustained focus and concentrated attention towards the subjectivisation of experience. The purpose is to remove the habitual notion of ontic and monadic interpretation of experience and to work with language so that it can represent a well-inferred and discernible process based on what is factual and present in experience. We name this process Change of View (*cambio de mirada*), in other words, changing the angle in order to see one's own subjective experience rather than seeing an ontic idea of it.

**Year II**, termed Inter-Subjectivity, is to make the children aware of their common tendency to interpret experience with another in a way that seems to always refract something about the self, and to make them aware of how that common tendency becomes stronger when the other's habitual inclination brings their own subjectivity in the form of self-centred ontic ideas and self-motivated interpretations into a common shared space (The Space Between) where both co-create the experience, and are reshaped by that experience in return.<sup>124</sup> Hence, the children learn not only how to deal with their own inclinations towards self-centred ontic interpretation of phenomena, or egocentric motivations in a

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<sup>122</sup> I use the term template when referring to a generic process that can be used with different experiences in order to work with their particularities.

<sup>123</sup> Subjectivity here is used specifically to mean what forms a person and what a person is reflexively aware of, such as perspectives, concepts, language, feelings, beliefs, ideas and desires.

<sup>124</sup> This could be equated with the following comment by Dermot about Taylor: "persons are embodied, socially embedded, inter-subjectively involved, historically conditioned agents and respondents, which he defines as embodied agency." See Dermot Moran (2009) 'The Phenomenology of Personhood: Charles Taylor and Edmund Husserl', *Colloquium* 3: p. 87.

dialogical encounter with others, but also how to resist the inclination to use them when others bring their own self-centredness into experience. Thus in this inter-subjective<sup>125</sup> encounter they learn how to deal with those conditions, how to care for them, and how to accompany<sup>126</sup> the conditions during their dialogical encounters with others.

**Year III**<sup>127</sup> is named 'Integration' because it is during this year that the EUDE labs are substituted with workshops where the children become habituated to practicing in different settings what they have learned. This practice helps them to use focused attention, as well as to preserve it in all their experiences at all times, so that well-inferred and discerning processes become a habitual way of interacting with others. The more the children enhance these kinds of interactions, the more awareness they create about the conditions of experience, and the more they reaffirm their self-regulation. The three years of EUDE labs and workshops are accompanied by the three techniques that in a balanced form bring about phenomenological transformation.

**(a) Meditation** enhances the sustained and focused attention and concentration of the children. The meditations used by the EUDE labs are of various types ranging from focus attention<sup>128</sup> to visualisations, insight meditation and contemplation. Tai

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<sup>125</sup> The term is used here to mean a shared subjectivity during a dialogical encounter with others that shapes our ideas and relations in return.

<sup>126</sup> This term will be explained more fully later.

<sup>127</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, Year III is not particularly relevant. It consists of workshops whose purpose is to reaffirm what the children have learned. Thus I will limit myself to a brief explanation that gives the reader an idea of the whole programme.

<sup>128</sup> Studies have shown that children are better able to control their selective attention a) because of the importance they place on information (Wright, J.C. and A.C. Vliestra (1975), 'The Development of Selective Attention: From Perceptual Exploration to Logic Search', *In Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 10:), b) because of the presence of their teacher (Raessi, P., and Baer, D. (1984) 'Teacher Controlled Attention Pattern in Formal and Developmentally Delayed Preschool Children', Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, 92nd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada), and c) with activities that are self-controlled (Larson, R. and Kleiber, D.A. (1993), 'Structured Leisure as a Context for the Development of Attention during Adolescence', *Loisir et Société/ Leisure and Society*, 16:1, pp. 77-98). However Semrud-Clikeman et al. (1999) explain that little is known about interventions that may increase children's abilities to selectively focus attention. However in the EUDE labs we have seen an increase not only in the ability of children to maintain focus attention but also in their ability to change the object of their attention at will. Kabat-Zinn suggests that careful attention allows children to perceive multiple perspectives of a situation, to recognise the novelty of current information, to become aware of the context of the information, and to better understand the information through the creation of new

Chi, which is included as part of the meditation, is run throughout the first two years of the programme, each dance changing in accordance with the process of the programme. This means that a dance at the beginning of the programme will serve to enforce the focus attention on the children's body and thoughts, while a dance during the second year of the programme will be interactive and require a strong concentrated attention as well as interaction with others. A clear distinction between focused attention and concentrated attention is made during the entire programme. Although I am aware of the on-going research in education, psychology, neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience and neuropsychology regarding focus and concentrated attention, I am using the terms and defining them for the purpose of helping the children to understand the different aspects of Meditation Technique. Hence, we explain to the children that 'focus' means to see something purposefully and intently, blocking out everything else. We normally add that *"maintaining focused attention on something implies not being distracted; it means keeping the senses and our body at a standstill."* Then we explain that *"only when focused attention is achieved can concentrated attention arise."* Concentrated attention, we explain, *"is the capacity to examine in great detail the object of our focused attention. It is the capacity to see what normally we do not see, it is a way to discover and examine a new universe of elements and conditions in experience that normally escape awareness."* In general the children get excited at the idea of exploring this new universe, which helps them to start practicing the technique with enthusiasm. The cultivation of focused attention - as we explain to the teachers - is important because it is the condition for concentrated attention, and concentrated attention becomes the platform from where the Art of Questioning can take place.

**(b) The Art of Questioning** is the heart of EUDE's programme. Its aim is to change the angle from where we see and interpret experience, or what in EUDE is termed '*cambio de mirada*' (change of view). Breaking rigid, fixed paradigms helps the children to see carefully and with clarity the content of experience, initiating a fresh enquiry that sharpens their inferential thinking and opens up their options

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categories (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This explanation describes very well what we have witnessed with the children in the EUDE labs.

for ample discernment. In EUDE, to know how to question and what to question is an integral part of the labs. This questioning works in three different modalities: (A) teacher to child, (B) child to its own subjective nature - (*cambio de mirada*), and (C) child to The Space Between (*el espacio entre*) when interacting with others. In other words, EUDE cultivates the prompting of learning how to question, and what to question. What teachers are doing all the time in the EUDE labs is modelling how to question and what to question in a way that invites the children to ask themselves about what they are experiencing. At more advanced levels of the programme they learn how to ask questions that invite the other to focus and reflect more carefully on The Space Between. This technique is at the core of our practice; it helps the children to examine the temporality<sup>129</sup> of their experience, changing (*cambo de mirada*)<sup>130</sup> the object of their attention at will and dismantling any harmful content of experience. The other two techniques - Meditation and Quantifications/Abstentions - also use the Art of Questioning, for example, visualisations and analytical meditations where the child is in a monologue, purely applying the Art of Questioning to himself, or herself.<sup>131</sup>

Language also plays a key role.<sup>132</sup> The EUDE labs show the children how to articulate questions and answers that will help them make inferences free from ontological interpretations of experience, and open up their discernment. They realise that when they focus on an ontological idea of a person, the language they use in their questions become personal and full of judgments, but when they focus on their experience of that person the questions are impersonal because they can only refer to the conditions in the experience. They realise the importance of where to place their attention and recognise how easy is to relapse into seeing a self-centred reflections of experience when not guarding the mind.

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<sup>129</sup> EUDE treats focused attention as temporally indexed, which is focusing on past events or present events. Past events normally are already contaminated with self-centred feelings and ideas, so in EUDE reference is made to past events while keeping in mind present conditions, as opposed to replacing present conditions with self-centred ideas from past events.

<sup>130</sup> Changing the object of their conscious attention means looking at what is being said and not at who said it. It means describing not persons or events, but the experience we have of them.

<sup>131</sup> This will be explained in more detail later.

<sup>132</sup> Linda Bain explains that subjective knowledge requires more than experience – it requires reflection about experience. Proper communication about one’s experiences is an essential element of reflection. For more information, see Linda Bain (1995) ‘Mindfulness and Subjective Knowledge’, *Journal Quest*, 47:2, pp. 238-253.

During the three years, the degree of complexity in the art of questioning experiences increases considerably, thus ‘simulators’ are used to help the children understand what they are about to learn. A simulator<sup>133</sup> is a kind of template where the children can objectively place the experience, break it down and explore and analyse its content,<sup>134</sup> through the Art of Questioning. The first two simulators in a series of five are named after the two Levels they represent: Caring for the Experience (*El arte de cuidar la experiencia*) and The Space Between (*El espacio entre*). The first simulator is played during the last two trimester of Year I, and the second simulator is played in Year 2 of the programme. They will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4. However a simple explanation will be beneficial in this chapter so that we understand how the children break down experience and analyse, reorganise and reinterpret its subjective content in order to remove harmful thoughts and harmful emotions. The other three simulators, which are played in Year III of the programme, are templates of The Space Between with specific contexts: Ecological (*ecológico*), Social (*sociológico*) and Ideological (*ideológico*).

We know that each experience that is placed in the simulators and in life is different. Although the children learn how to play with questions and improvise as they go along, a template<sup>135</sup> of questions is used as a basic structure. The template includes three types of questions: Identification, Contrast and Reflection. The focus of these questions is always directed to the content of experience (Year 1) or to the content of The Space Between (Year II) when interacting with others; the questions are never directed to phenomena. Thus in EUDE a question will never be formulated as “*What is your description of Pedro?*” The questions will be more like “*What is your experience of Pedro?*” Although the template for the Art of

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<sup>133</sup> In Piaget’s words, “all development emerges from action; that is to say, individuals construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment.” For more on this subject, see Rheta DeVries, and Betty Zan, (1994) *Moral Children: Constructing a Constructivist Atmosphere in Early Education*, Teachers College Press. EUDE’s simulators play an important role in the children’s experiential practice; they learn, test, reconstruct and are reshaped by their own decisions, as well as by the actions of others, and by the conditions presented in a variety of contexts by each simulator.

<sup>134</sup> See Appendices I to III for information on the simulators.

<sup>135</sup> This template of questions is based on a reductionist form of relevant questions used as a template in artificial intelligence. For further information see Janell Straach and Klaus Truemper (1999) ‘Learning to Ask Relevant Questions’, *Journal of Artificial Intelligence*, 111: pp. 301-327.

Questioning is fixed and is what the teacher models, the children learn to craft improvisation in each experience. This crafting becomes an art, and this is the reason we call this technique the Art of Questioning.

**(c) Quantifications and Abstentions** develop in children the capacity to see and contrast the immediate emotional outcome (comfort and discomfort) of the presence or absence of harmful thoughts such as judgments, generalisations or dogmatic thinking.

It is important to point out that although the teachers will only use the Art of Questioning as a tool for running the EUDE labs, no greater or lesser emphasis is placed on any particular technique, since each is equally important and should run in parallel with the others. I will now turn to a programmatic description of the EUDE labs. The description is based on direct contact with the children and writing up their encounter while respecting, recording, representing - at least partly on its own terms - the irreducibility of the children's experiences in the labs.

### **2.2.1 Year I - Subjectivity (*cambio de mirada*)**

The objective of the EUDE labs during this first year is to discipline the mind and increase sustained focused attention in experience and careful concentration into the subjective content of experience. To achieve this, the programme is divided in three parts, each part representing one trimester in the academic year. In the first trimester the children learn to know where their focus of attention is, how to maintain it and how to redirect it at will. We use different objects to generate experiences on them. The objects range from inanimate to animate, people or events. They can be present or they can come from their memories. In the second trimester the children learn to identify the difference between content of experience perceived through the senses and content which is the result of a self-centred emotional interpretation of that experience. In the third trimester the children learn how to reshape their language so that they can describe what they see in their experience rather than what they do not see but assume about phenomena.



### 2.2.1.1 First Trimester - Focus Attention

(a) **Meditation:** Sensory. The children are asked to close their eyes and pay attention to all the sounds around them. This process is repeated for the other senses. This part of the programme has two purposes. The first is for the children to develop an increased conscious awareness of their sensory capacity and their recognition of outside conditions; the second is to for them to maintain concentration on one object for long periods of time. The children begin by focusing for periods of three minutes; by the end of the second trimester they have increased to about 25 minutes. The result is that they are more aware of the present and more sensitive to their surroundings.

**Tai Chi:** During this first trimester, the children practice simple movements. The aim is to introduce them to this ancient practice and sharpen their focus attention through the practice of it.

(b) **The Art of Questioning:** At this first level, the Art of Questioning centres on helping the children to identify the object of their focus attention and constantly redirecting them to the chosen object. We might ask them to look at a painting, or a person, or a life object, then to draw what they see. But, if there is an airplane and they start drawing a dragon we then ask them first to identify where their object of their attention is. When they have done that, which normally is in their imagination or their memory, we then ask them to identify what the object we asked them to focus on is. Once they identify that it is the painting in front of them, we then ask them what needs to be done, in which case they erase what they have drawn and start again. An example where a child's focus attention seems to be on the painting but is not, is when a painting shows a house with three windows in it, but the child only draws one. When asked to identify how many windows he/she sees in the painting, the answer normally is one. When asked again after being encouraged to look more carefully, the response is "*three*"<sup>136</sup> followed by, "*but my gran/mum's house only has one,*" or "*my house only has one.*" When the child is then asked, "*What is the object of our attention right now?*" the usual answer is

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<sup>136</sup> Note: All the dialogues of the children and teachers in this thesis are the result of our research. The material is available in Spanish in the format of voice recording and/or videotapes.

*“the painting.”* The teacher ends with a final question, *“and where should our focus attention be right now?”* and the child’s response is to start correcting his/her drawing. This exercise increases in complexity during the trimester. The same principle is followed with the rest of the senses.

At this level of the programme, the questions used by the teacher focus on guiding the children in two ways: to identify where their attention lies and where it should be, and to re-direct their focused attention at all times, thus helping them become acquainted with terminology and with the form of questioning that will be used at a future time in the EUDE labs.

**(c) Quantification:** The children are asked to count different things while interacting with their environment. This counting is focused on sensations, thoughts and actions. The sensory part includes such practices as counting how many people with blue eyes are seen during the day, or how many sounds of bells are heard. Action counting is with bodily movements, for example: how many times a child moved his/her left arm or how many times he/she pointed a finger at someone, or how many times he/she pulled funny faces, and so on. The exercises are normally done during the EUDE labs, although sometimes the children are asked to count for a particular period of time outside the EUDE labs, such as at dinner with the family at home, or on their way home after school, or in the supermarket. The aim is for them to develop their sensory awareness, their focus attention and their careful attention to the moment of their experience where they observe and count.

#### ***2.2.1.2 Second Trimester - Getting to Know our Subjective Experience***

**(a) Meditation:** The meditation techniques used in EUDE are cumulative. That is to say, the sensory meditations from the first period continue to be practised regularly during the second period in order to maintain the continued clarity of their perception. In this trimester meditations are divided in four groups designed to match the four stages of the Art of Questioning.

***First Group:*** Observing Thoughts and Sustained Focus Attention. The children close their eyes and wait until a thought or idea arrives. Once this

happens, they seek to separate themselves from the thought and simply observe it. They then classify it into one of the three heuristic<sup>137</sup> boxes they have created in their mind: past thoughts, future thoughts or fantasy thoughts. The main purpose is for the children to learn how to observe their own thoughts and how to maintain focused attention on present conditions for longer periods of time.

A further Meditation in this group refers to checking how many times the children lose their focused attention to present ambient conditions. For EUDE the mind, like a computer, never escapes from functioning in the present. The programme seeks to keep the children focused on the same subject of experience, whatever this may be. An example is given below:

On one occasion the teacher asked Juan,<sup>138</sup> *"Have you been in the present moment during the meditation?"* He replied, *"Yes."* The teacher then asked him, *"Did you have thoughts?"* He responded, *"Yes."* The teacher replied, *"I don't understand. If you had thoughts, then that means your attention was not in the here and now."* Juan explained, *"A thought came to meet me here - pointing at his head - so I welcomed it and paid attention to it. I didn't stop breathing. I was just focused somewhere else, then the thought went away and I was left again with just my breathing."*

Juan is making it clear that attention and concentration operate only in the present moment, but they can focus on different subjects either internal or external, past or present, or even fantasies. What the teacher really wanted to highlight was: *"try keeping your focus attention on the same object for longer. If it is an image, stay with it longer, if it is your breathing stay with it longer, but be aware of where your focus attention is at all times and control it."*

**Second Group:** Changing the Subject of our Attention. This meditation focuses on identifying the link between feeling and thoughts. For example, the teacher will ask the children to close their eyes and visualise a happy or unhappy

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<sup>137</sup> What I mean is that these boxes do not represent some theory of what thoughts are; they are simply easily understood types with the aid of which children can learn to observe their own thoughts.

<sup>138</sup> Juan is a four-year-old boy from Guatemala.

event, or the image of an object they like or dislike very much. The teacher then asks them to identify what feeling that thought brings about. Next, they are asked to open their eyes and see if the feelings are still there. If the answer is “*yes*” - which it normally is - the teacher asks them to identify the reason for it, since the object of attention or event is no longer there. Then they are asked to look at the candle in front of them for ten seconds. When asked again if the feeling is still there, the majority of the children will now say “*no*”. The idea is for them to realise that feelings are attached to experiences, but also to be aware of the effect feelings have on their present experiences if the subject of their focus of attention does not change. In the Art of Questioning - the next technique - this is followed up by having the children do exercises where they train to move the object of their focus of attention at will, experimenting so that they realise how the feelings shift to the new conditions as soon as the object of their focus of attention changes. The control of this shifting is the sole purpose of these meditations, since the analytical process of those feelings is a more advanced and elaborate process in the Art of Questioning. This will be explained in the section on Abstention.

***Third Group:*** Seeing the Conditions. The purpose of this set of meditations is for the children to connect with the ‘chain of causality’. They work with a simple object, such as a pencil, and reflect on all the things that had to happen and all the people that had to be involved in order for them to be holding that pencil in their hand (a tree, a woodsman, a factory, a store, and so on). They identify these elements through an analytical process, the last part of which consists in acknowledging that they themselves are part of the experience. This is usually the most difficult realisation for them: *Who sees the pencil? Who names the pencil? Who holds the pencil?* Gradually they begin to see how their presence constitutes one of the conditions of the experience. This prepares them for a later stage, Caring for the Experience, where it is indispensable that they understand their own participation. This process is carried out with objects, people and events, but most importantly with language and its concepts.

***Fourth Group:*** Conditionality. The teacher tells the children to close their eyes, and then says a word. With their eyes closed they focus on that word and see what it evokes in their thoughts until the teacher asks them to open their eyes. In

the present moment, the only outer object of their experience is the word they hear, but the point here is to analyse the inner subjects they might come up with; comments from their parents, or about a film they have seen, or an experience they may have had. They gradually come to realise that they construct the meaning of that word by making reference to what they have experienced previously that each past experience in relation to the same word is very different. Sometimes the teacher will use words that the children will not have heard before so that the role past experiences play in making sense of language becomes evident.

**Tai Chi:** The dance here has the same purpose as in the previous trimester, except that movements are now more sophisticated and the children need strong sustained focus attention and concentration.

**(b) Art of Questioning.** This trimester centres on four distinct stages. The first stage is the separation between mental object (*objeto mental*) and real object (*objeto real*). The mental object is an image that contains the subjective interpretation of the children's experience. The real object refers to the present phenomena that the children are experiencing. In the second stage the children are taught to compare their subjective interpretation (mental object) of experience with the mental object of others, so that they can realise that the subjective interpretation of experiences of others is different from their own, and that the only way they can know how others interpret experiences is by asking questions about the content of those experiences. In the third stage the children break down the mental object (image) in order to examine the content of their experience and where that content comes from. In this stage the children begin to see the distinction between their subjective experience of phenomena and the self-centred, egocentric assumptions they made of that experience, assumptions that refer to ontic reflections and summaries that the children make of people and events based on their emotional impressions. During the fourth stage they identify the problematic aspect of those self-centred assumptions when they express them through language.

It is important to note that in EUDE we never ask children to analyse or explore the real object (phenomena); on the contrary, EUDE's techniques are

geared to focus only on the subjective content of their mental object (image). I should emphasise that the programme is not interested in having the children explore metaphysical assumptions about reality; it seeks instead to encourage them to explore how to interpret the subjective content of their experience, freed of harmful ontological assumptions that cause all kinds of generalisations and judgments. Although I am aware that this terminology is philosophically problematic, it is used merely as a pedagogical tool. As a point of note, this is precisely the conceptual terminology that the thesis aims to clarify in later chapters. I will now consider specific examples that will exemplify each of the four stages of this trimester.

**First Stage.** The children begin making the distinction between real object and mental object through a reflexive process. For example the teacher asks the children to see an object and to close their eyes and check if they can see the object in their minds. Then the teacher instructs them, *“Open your eyes and listen clearly. The object I have in my hands, we will call the real object (objeto real). Now close your eyes and visualise it in your mind. The object you visualise on your mind, we will call the mental object (objeto mental) or mental image.”* After clarifying this, the teacher applies the distinction in relation to different experiences. For example, if the children are talking about a glass of orange juice, they may come up with thoughts such as: *“it is orange juice. I like it. I don't like it.”* They are then prompted to think about where their thoughts come from with questions such as, *“Where in the container does it say ‘orange juice’ (beyond its being a container with a liquid inside)?”* Or, *“where does liking or disliking the liquid come from?”* Or *“Is it from the juice itself or is it from your mental image?”* The children are thus guided to reflect on their thoughts and to identify where those thoughts originate. They finally come to understand that the *“juice I like or don't like”* is not a condition of the juice itself (real object), but a condition from their own subjective interpretation (mental object). The point being made is not to judge whether their subjective response is right or wrong, but for them to identify where and what is the object of attention that caused that particular interpretation.

**Second Stage.** The children compare their own subjective interpretation (mental object), with the subjective interpretation of a companion with questions

such as: “*Is the glass of orange juice you have in your mental image the same as the glass of orange juice in the mental image of the child next to you?*” “*Can we know if the orange juice is disliked or not in the other child’s mental image?*” “*Is the other child interpreting the same thing you are interpreting, although you are both seeing the same object?*” Sometimes the answers the children give are affirmative, sometimes they are negative. Regardless, we continue to question them: “*How do you know? Can you know what the other person is thinking?*” And vice versa “*Can the other person know what you are thinking?*” The ideal answer (and the one we are pursuing) is for the children to say: “*I don’t know.*” At this point they can begin to identify their assumptions about the other and recognise that subjective interpretations do not necessarily coincide with what others are actually interpreting. They also realise that they do not actually know what others are thinking. When asked by the teacher “*If you don’t know, what you have to do?*” they conclude that the only way they can know is by asking questions. In other words, they are being encouraged to engage in the first step of the Art of Questioning, which is the identification process.

The children are now aware that they can only know what someone else is thinking if they ask, and that others will know what they are thinking if they verbalise it. At this point are we talking about the natural emergence of what is called ‘theory of mind’<sup>139</sup> where the children realise that others have thoughts and knowledge, and that what they themselves think and know is not necessary what others think and know. However, the task of EUDE is more specific; it is to get the children use this evolutionary development, and make it an ethical task. In so doing, they stop making self-centred assumptions making themselves clearer to others by being more explicit about their own subjective interpretation of experience. In a rudimentary way they begin making efforts to express what they actually experience, although they do not yet have the sophisticated language this task requires – their language will be reshaped and refined in the third trimester.

***Third Stage.*** This stage is centred on working exclusively with the origin of the subjective content of experience where the children learn that the subjective

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<sup>139</sup> Paul Harris, Carl Johnson, Deborah Hutton, Giles Andrew and Tim Cooke (1989) ‘Young Children’s Theory of Mind and Emotion’, *Cognition and Emotion* 3:4, pp. 379-400.

constructed mental object does not come about in isolation. In the case of the orange juice example, the children are led to recognise that their thought that the orange liquid in a container is actually orange juice (after having in fact tasted it to prove their assumption) is based on previously acquired information (their mother, for example, having given them orange juice before).<sup>140</sup> At this point, they begin to understand that liking or disliking is subjective perception of the sensory object, and cannot describe the present object but only the sensory experience they have of it. The example below shows how this is achieved:

A group of twelve children were practicing this process of identifying the inside or outside elements of a poster comprising three Disney characters, Pluto, Mimi and Donald. The children began by saying, *"Lines and forms are objetos reales (sensory perceived); the names Pluto, Mimi and Donald are learned; in our memory box."* Then Carlitos put up his hand and said, *"Beautiful."* When the teacher asked him if *"beautiful,"* was in the present object or in his perception of the object, he said *"in the object."* The teacher then said that she believed him but she could not see it, so encouraged him to come closer and help the class see it. When he got close, he raised his finger and after a while said, *"It is there"*, pointing to the entire poster. The teacher then told him that she could not see it and needed more help from him. The session of the EUDE lab for that day ended and Carlitos was left with encouragement to help the teacher. A week later, he went to her and said, *"Miss, I know why you couldn't see it."* The teacher asked why, and Carlitos replied, *"Because it wasn't there."* When the teacher queried, *"Where was it then?"* Carlitos pointed to his head and said, *"Here in my mental image."*

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<sup>140</sup> This transmission has been addressed in theories of mind and emotions where, as explained by Vygotsky, language is a key vehicle for the transmission of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1986). In addition Ruffman, Taumoepeau and Perkins (2012) note that features of maternal input serve to assist children's prediction of people's actions and their understanding of the social world. However, in the EUDE labs we want children to recognise the conditions of subjective language and its impact on human interaction, as well as how much they are formed by it. In other words we want the children to see one important aspect of human conditionality.



In the labs, the children also realise that the information they possess was given to them by other human beings, that it is learned rather than just being their own, and that it includes language and the meaning of words. They also learn that the mental image is dependent on the amount of information they have about their object of attention, so if they are presented with an object they have never seen before, their mental image will be different than if they have full information about the functions and characteristics of that present object. During this training period we make sure that the children play enough with this contrast so they can understand how their mental object is conditioned and context dependent. Furthermore the children see how the subjective appearance also changes according to their emotions, for example if they are happy, and good memories are attached to the Disney poster, their response will be positive. But if a child is in a bad mood and/or the memory of Disney brings bitter emotions because a trip was cancelled at the last minute for example (as happened to one of the children in the class) then the description of the Disney characters will not be as positive as the other descriptions, and they can see how the mental image can depend on their emotional state and be triggered by present moods or based on past experiences.

They also realise that the child next to them learned different things about the same object, and, therefore, each person's expressions of experience stem from different previous life experiences and will be interpreted differently. One of the activities conducted at this level is to give the children a word and have them draw what that word suggests to them. Afterwards, they compare their drawings with those of their classmates, and see how different the representation of the mental object is in each of the drawings. After working with inanimate objects, words are given for live objects, such as cat or dog, and eventually, human beings, such as mum, dad, friend etc.

***Fourth Stage.*** This stage is about breaking down<sup>141</sup> the mental image in order to make the distinction between subjective interpretations of experience and

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<sup>141</sup> It is at this point that the teacher uses the first simulator 'Caring for the Experience', due to the complexity of this process. The full explanation of how it works will be addressed in the next section and in Chapter 4.

the self-centred ontological assumptions about the real object (*objeto real*). The children soon grasp the problematic aspects of those assumptions and realise that replacing the factual conditions of experience by self-centred assumptions can lead to quarrels. The reply of Carlitos given above contrasts with the responses to the same poster of another group of children who were not involved in the EUDE labs. When asked the same question, "*What do you see?*" some of them began an argument. One child said, "*Pluto is my favourite character because he is funny.*" Another said, "*Pluto is not my favourite character because he is foolish.*" Then the first replied, "*He is not foolish, you are foolish, he is funny.*" These reactions demonstrate that they were not responding to the question asked because their focus of attention was pointing to two different self-centred ontic assumptions of Pluto character. The disagreement came about because both believed that their ideas represented the reality of the Pluto character. This meant that the children could not agree with each other's ontic assessment - which opened up the possibility for a hostile interaction.

**(c) Quantification:** The children are asked to count for a short period of time, for example, at dinner time or before going to bed, how many times they talk about their mental object or how many times they refer to the real object. They are also asked to count how many times they thought about wanting something or disliking something, or how many times they wanted to kiss their mother or hit their brother or sister. This counting is sometimes done during the EUDE lab and sometimes as homework, but always for short periods of time and normally for no more than an hour. The example below represents what the children have achieved at this point in the programme.

Joris was five years old when this event happened and it was his mother who provided the testimony. He had just received a pony from her. The pony as many people witnessed, was not a beautiful pony, and they told Joris that it was ugly. One day his mother came to him when he was brushing his pony and said, "*Son, I know the pony isn't beautiful. And I know that people are saying so. I just want you to know that I wanted you to have a pony but I didn't have much money, so this is the only one I could afford.*" Joris looked at his mum, then at his pony and replied,

*“Mum, ugliness or beauty is here (he pointed to his head) so if people see an ugly pony in here (pointing again to his head), what can we do? The thing is that in here (pointing again to his head) I see a beautiful pony, so that’s ok, Mum.”*

Is Joris’s response a kind of relativistic view? Is he just acknowledging that it is acceptable for anyone to think what they like? Joris is, in fact, not simply giving voice to relativism, but pointing out that the comments come from different objects of attention and do not represent reality; instead they are subjective interpretations of the experience of a pony. How to deal with the self-centredness of others is another matter, which requires different skills that will be developed in Year II of the programme. For now, it is important to note that Joris understands that the pony is neither beautiful nor ugly, and that those expressions are merely personal judgments based on self-centred assumptions of phenomena.

### **2.2.1.3 Third Trimester - Redirecting Attention and Reshaping Language (cambio de mirada)**

Our final trimester concerns working only with the problematic content of the mental image (*objeto mental*). First the children work on redirecting their attention to the factual content of experience when it leaps into self-centred assumptions of phenomena. Second they work with language, and learn how to truthfully express their experiences away from their ontic assumptions about phenomena, which requires sustained concentration and careful examination of their object of attention. They begin with a dialogic encounter with themselves so that later they can have a dialogical encounter with others, free of self-centred ontic assumptions. More importantly, from now on, the children will use these skills to guide themselves through the immense ocean of human experiences. Their goal will be to learn how to question themselves. That questioning is first performed in the form of a dialogue with themselves during meditation, then in interaction. The aim is to faithfully and truthfully represent their subjective experience through language.

To achieve this we use three distinctive labs. **The first labs** are practices that deal with cultural ontic assumptions termed generalisations, such as, “all

*politicians are corrupt*” or “*women don’t know how drive*”, etc. In these labs the children learn how the Art of Questioning works so that they can apply it by themselves in the next set of labs. **The second labs** deal with descriptions of people and events using visualisations when meditating. **The third labs** deal with interactions with others in the form of debates, or round tables. As a methodological device we use two pieces of cardboard – one red and one white – that are set on the floor in front of each child. A red piece of cardboard represents a self-centred assumption of phenomena; a white piece of cardboard represents the absence of it. The children use the pieces of cardboard as a compass where they can objectively see where their focus attention is being placed. It is here that their way of expressing what they want to say is reshaped with what is named in the EUDE labs the language game (*juego de lenguaje*). The language game has two ways of labelling a sentence, either ‘*subjective*’, or ontic ‘*assumptions*.’ The former represents the sensory perception of present objects, people and events; the latter represents self-centred interpretations of objects people and events in the form of judgments, generalisations or dogmatic ideas. It is by examining sentences that the children know which piece of cardboard to stand on. They will also know that by changing their object of attention their language will change and thus, they will move from one colour cardboard to the other. The role of the teacher is vital in this trimester because his (her) way of questioning the children needs to prompt self-questioning.

**(a) Meditations:** Two types of meditation are used at this point in addition to the previous meditations, which the children keep practicing at random intervals.

***First Meditation.*** The teacher asks the children to close their eyes and to try and visualise themselves, keeping sustained attention on that image as long as they can. We found that for teenagers, visualising themselves is highly problematic – they normally only see half of themselves, or a body without a head. For younger children, however, this is not the case; they tend to report seeing themselves complete without much problem.

***Second Meditation.*** This meditation is not used until the children are in stage two of the Art of Questioning in this trimester. They need to understand how

to play with the questions before doing this meditation. This will be explained in detail in the section on the Art of Questioning in the first labs. Here I will confine myself to describing the meditation.

We ask the children to visualise themselves. Once they can see themselves, then they are asked the following question: *“think of a person you really like and tell me how you would describe that person.”* A child might think of his/her mother and the answer to his/her own question might be *“My mum is the best mum in the whole world.”* They ask questions until they come to realise that they really do not know enough mums to reach that conclusion, which stems from their self-constructed emotional interpretation. They realise that to say the *“best”* mum, when they only know one, eliminates the possibility of comparison. After that, they reduce the parts of the sentence to the point where the sentence can be sustained. They begin to change the object of attention by being aware that it is not mums they should describe, but their experience of their mum. The change of view (*cambio de mirada*) implies changing their object of attention – it is not the object per se I am describing but my experience of it. By now the children know that they do not know the other; the only thing they can know - because it is the only thing available to them - is their own experience of things, and that includes mum.

Through the questioning process that we will see that in the next section, the children begin to work out how to express their experience of mum. To do that they need to maintain strong focus attention exclusively on the experience of mum, and not leap to judgments about that person or make sweeping generalisations, or run over the experiences of others in order to emphasise their emotionally-constructed ideas. Hence they begin the reconstruction of what they want to say based on the factual experience of their mum. The final sentence may look like this; *“I love mum; she is so good to me.”*

This meditation is applied to people they like, people they dislike, or people they rarely know. After that they can play with past events following the same process.

**Tai Chi:** In this trimester, the dance is interactive. This means that the children will be dancing with a partner (classmate). This is a key dance because the children are introduced to the unexpected movements of their partner. The level of attention required is high, and a high degree of concentration is required in each movement of the dance.

**(b) The Art of Questioning:** At this level the children begin to practice how to identify then dismantle 'cultural generalisations', for example "*all politicians are corrupt*" or "*all men are macho*." The point here is for the children to realise that they cannot talk about politicians, or men, or indeed anything, separate from their own experience of these people or things. The following example will show how the process of the Art of Questioning is thought out in the first set of the EUDE labs. The children apply the same techniques during the meditation labs, first with the guidance of the teacher, then by themselves. The teacher sets an example such as the one below:

*If I say 'all politicians are corrupt' I first check what and where my focus of attention is, so I will ask myself, 'how many politicians do I know'. My answer will be that I don't know any. If I don't know any, how do I know that all politicians are corrupt? I don't know that either. All I know is what I read in the newspapers and hear it on television and from other people. So, I do not have a direct experience of politicians. I only know what others know, don't I? 'Yes' I answer to myself, and then I focus on the factuality of my experience. So, what can I say about that? I can only say that my experience of them is that, 'I heard on the news the names of some politicians who were accused of being corrupt.'*

As a way of making these labs more dynamic for the children, especially those in the 4 to 5 age group, we use the pieces of cardboard. The teacher will stand on the red cardboard when his/her object of attention is the other. He/she will move to the white cardboard when describing his/her experience of that other.

After an example like the one above, the teacher will give a different phrase to the children and ask them to do the same. Then they do it with a phrase of their

own. When they finally understand the pattern for these exercises, the teacher will move to the meditations where the children will have a dialogue with themselves to analyse sentences like this referring to people or past events.

***During Interaction*** These labs are more sophisticated than the previous ones because the children are interacting with others when doing the exercises, whereas the previous ones were practiced during meditation. Here, we use the language game of EUDE and the cardboard pieces, so the children have more objective material to play with. The example below provides an illustration.

If I am walking with a friend and a dog suddenly comes to me, frightening me because I am afraid of dogs, I might say, “*all dogs bite and are terrible animals.*” That will be considered in EUDE’s language game to be an unsustainable sentence, a corrupted self-constructed piece of data lacking careful attention to one’s own experience that causes wrong inferences. A contrasting sentence would be, “*a dog called Ruffo bit me when I was five, and since then I have been wary of dogs.*” This sentence will be considered in EUDE’s language game as objective to one’s own experience. Through these labs the children increase their conscious attention to their object of attention that corrects these distortions.

In the example of the dog above, the first sentence, “*all dogs bite and are terrible animals*” is inductively open. Drawing on the programming language of Artificial Intelligence, EUDE will call it a ‘corrupt statement’. I cannot know all dogs, I can only talk about the ones I know, and “*terrible*” is based on my experience with one single dog, Ruffo. Therefore, I cannot say that all dogs are terrible. In fact, to say that Ruffo is terrible is also a corrupt statement, since it is based on what I cannot know and not on what is only available to me – my own experience. I can say that my experience with the dog was terrible, but not that the dog is or was terrible, since that is a personal judgment expressed as if it were a fact about the dog, rather than an expression of what I have constructed out of my experience. In fact, I do not know what the dog is like, or how he behaves in other circumstances, or in other conditions, since all I know is that an incident occurred when I met him. The first sentence is hostile and opens up the possibility for a dispute with my audience; it also conditions and creates predispositions about

further encounters with dogs. For example, if I think all dogs are terrible, my next encounter with a dog will be unpleasant, and I might kick the dog or run away. In both scenarios the chances are that the dog will bite me, and if that happens, quite possibly I will end up saying, *"You see, I told you, dogs are terrible animals."* Thus my previous thoughts will be reaffirmed, potentially resulting in thoughts such as, *"dogs are so bad, they should be exterminated."*

The second sentence *"A dog named Ruffo bit me when I was five, and since then I have been wary of dogs"* requires a change of object of attention (*cambio de mirada*) in order to be simply a description of my past experience. It might be inferred that dogs have the potential to bite and, given that this animal is a dog, it therefore has the potential to bite. Potential does not mean it will bite, since I cannot assume that biting will be the natural outcome or is the only possible condition. This statement, in contrast to the previous one, opens up the possibility of experiencing something new with this dog, and gives the boy the chance to interact without conditioning the experience with hostile judgments.

While doing this analysis the children stand on the red cardboard and only move to the white cardboard when they begin the description of their own experience. They move back to the red cardboard only if they fall back into trying to describe the person or event rather than their experience of it. If the children fail to realise that they are falling back- at the beginning normally they do not realise it – the teacher will get them see what their object of attention is by using contrasting questions. Since the questioning that the teacher will model here is what the children will use later in Year II in Accompanying the Experience, an example of this questioning will be given in that section.

The rephrasing allows the children to see the conditions of the experience, which is the first step. Without seeing these conditions, the children cannot work with them. Next is an identification process. The children separate and identify what belongs to the present and what does not by asking questions that bring contrast into focus. An example would be, *"Is this dog in front of me named Motita the same as Ruffo? Am I still five years old? Are the signals and movements of this animal the same as the one that bit me?"* and so on. They ask these questions



carefully and attentively, rather than allowing fear from past experiences to overtake thinking and emotional responses by getting in the way of this new and present experience.

In making this contrast, the children are set to see the conditions of experience in the here and now, which enables them to identify the conditions that are not part of the experience because they are not present. This is the case with the individual parts of a thought such as: “*Ruffo*,” “*all dogs*” or “*terrible*.” The child may create unsustainable thoughts out of habitual patterns<sup>142</sup> but will abstain from saying them, because he/she realises that these thoughts cannot be sustained with the present facts of experience. In our experiential EUDE labs, when a child begins to restrain him/herself, from using these unthinking and unreflective statements, it is not because he/she is in a specific mode of abstention, or is restraining him/herself from saying these things, but because conscious attention of the present conditions is being developed.

In Chapter 4 where we draw comparisons with Buddhaghosacārya, we will locate the type of restraint or abstention to which this specific mode of conscious attention belongs. It is sufficient here to say that abstention in the EUDE labs happens because of increasing self-awareness in the children.

In Year I, the children soon learn that mental inclinations for self-centred assumptions of experience appear more quickly than their ability to dispel them, so they begin to understand the importance of practicing sustained focus and concentrated attention in experience. They also learn the importance of not dropping their guard, which would expose the common tendencies to interpret experiences with self-centred ideas based on trying to define the indefinable simply because is not available to them. Thus, changing their focus attention to the

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<sup>142</sup> Henning Peucker, explains that habitual tendencies “stand in a dynamic process of arising and changing; lived-experiences with their meaningful correlates rise from the background of consciousness into the center of attention and sink back, yet they do not totally disappear, since they are kept as habitual acquisitions (*habituelle Erwerbe*). Thus, the person has an individual history in which previous accomplishments always influence the upcoming lived-experiences.” Henning Peucker (2008) ‘From Logic to the Person: An Introduction to Husserl’s Ethics’, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 6:2, pp. 307-325. See also Dermot Moran (2014) ‘Defending the Transcendental Attitude: Husserl’s Concept of the Person and the Challenges of Naturalism’, *University College Dublin and Murdoch University*, 7: p. 47.

only option available to them - experience - is a skill that needs constant and consistent training.

**(c) Quantification:** The set of activities for this trimester concerns language. For example, the teacher asks the children to pick a time during the day, such as lunchtime, and then tells them to count one of the following during that period:

- How many judgments am I making, or am I judgment free?
- How many times do I generalise or not generalise?
- How many times do I say bad words or nice words?
- How many times do I say nothing when someone asks me a question, or how many times do I reply?
- How many times do I give an answer that is unrelated to the question, or how many times am I assertive?

The aim is to bring awareness to the child not before or after the experience, but during it. This serves two purposes: to increase awareness of what the child thinks, sees, hears, says and does, and to increase the capacity for being focused and sustaining concentration.

**(c) Abstention:** It is only in the third trimester that work with Abstention begins. This is because the two previous trimesters are a platform for this technique. Abstention requires a degree of attention and object capacity to identify the object of our focus attention. Once the children have practised the process of Identification, Abstentions can be introduced. The children are asked to avoid generating (or verbalising) judgments from one day to the next, and encouraged to utter their thoughts without judgments or generalisations. This is also done in steps: first with inanimate objects, then with living beings and finally with human beings. The '*emocio-metro*'<sup>143</sup> ruler plays an important role at this point. The children assess how they feel when they make judgments and how they feel when

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<sup>143</sup> The '*emocio-metro*' ruler is a physical scale made and designed by the children, which they carry with them most of the time. It is used as a tool to prompt them to examine and describe how they feel. The '*emocio-metro*' ruler asks how a child feels about a specific incident in his or her experience on a scale of 1 to 10; with 10 being the most positive feeling they can imagine having and 1 the most negative.

they refrain from making them. Focused attention now has to do with the relationship between the use of judgments, generalisations and emotions. As the children internalise these processes, they are able to focus their attention more and acknowledge more clearly what is happening in their interactions.

Abstinence here is different from the way the term will be used in Year II of the programme. At this stage we normally ask the child to abstain from something that harms, or that causes conditions that are hostile to the experience. For example: if the child says; *"I wanted to hit my sister three times; I only did it once, the other two times were only thoughts,"* the request will be, *"when you next think of hitting your sister, at least on one of the occasions try not to do it and see what happens with the whole experience. See how it ends. Set on your 'emocio-metro' how you feel on scale from 1 to 10."*

Based on their assessment of their feelings about an incident (*"I feel a 6 about having hit Juan in a fight"*) the techniques of The Art of Questioning can begin. These questions are designed to help the children re-examine and reassess experience by offering a wider set of perspectives from which they can view an incident, such as *"Did you notice that Juan had a bruise on his face where you hit him? How do you think the other children observing the argument felt when they saw you hit him? What might Juan's mother say when she sees his bruise?"* The Art of Questioning is an effort to enrich the field of data that the children might need to consider as relevant to their feelings, including offering perspectives that may cast their own perspective and its accompanying feelings in a different light. The aim is to enhance the children's observations, to help them notice, in a detailed and concrete way, the experience of those affected by the incident in question. As the questions and perspectives available to the children are enhanced, they often adjust their assessment of their feelings. In the example given, Juan might be expected to feel less sanguine about having struck another child. He might lower his score of positive feeling from, say, six to three, once he is invited to consider alternative angles of this incident and some of the broader ramifications of it. This is carried out through gentle questioning; at no time do we lecture the child, judge his/her feelings, or engage in moral judgments. Instead the aim is to develop their capacities for observation by gradually expanding their field of vision.

Thus the '*emocio-metro*' is used a tool to help the children become aware of their feelings. For the teacher, it can be used as a gauge to assess what kinds of questions might be useful to prompt reflection on their experience. If one line of questioning is not drawing the children to reconsider the positive feeling of a hurtful action, then that line of questioning is not helpful. The exercise also allows us to model the idea that the children's feelings can change when they engage in broader questioning and reflexion, enriching their understanding of themselves by seeing the harmful subjective aspects of their own experience with more clarity.

We have found that over time, the children come to internalise the '*emocio-metro*' as a useful way to 'check in' with what they are feeling, and to gain some distance from the feeling itself as they learn to stand back from it and assess it. This alone is a valuable skill-set for the development of their awareness. We have also found that often the children learn to further internalise the kinds of questions a teacher might ask of them about their experience, and through this process become more reflexive about their emotions and the conditions for those emotions.

In conclusion, the EUDE technique 'Abstention', together with the '*emocio-metro*'<sup>144</sup> ruler has several specific functions. It gets the children to dial down positive feelings about hurtful actions so that they can then recognise that what they now feel is remorse (a lower reading with regard to the hurtful action). This allows them understand that they need to act in such a way that they do not get into remorseful states – remorse here being the feeling that comes from starting with a high positive number for a hurtful action. When they understand the ramifications of an action, they can dial the number down. So they practice

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<sup>144</sup> In regards to "how far children are able to report their own emotions accurately, especially when those emotions are based on a misconstruct", Paul Harris (2014) explains that depending on how we identify our emotions, two different outcomes seem feasible. One is based on our inner feeling, a particular pattern of psychological arousal based on classical theories of Darwin's evolutionary approach; the other is an inextricable link between appraisal processes and emotional experience. Harris defines the appraisal process in two steps a) an accurate retrieval of how the event was first viewed and b) an inference as to what the children would have felt if the event had not been misconstructed. The *emocio-metro* in EUDE labs is certainly in line with the second form that Harris proposes, the appraisal process, although we take it further by using it as part of a larger scheme. For further discussion on the Harris study, see K. Hansen Lagattuta (2014) 'Children and Emotion: New Insights into Developmental Affective Science', *Contributions to Human Development*, 26: pp. 113-117.

Abstention from those hurtful actions, which results in higher positive numbers on their meter – but for the opposite reason than before. The positive feeling that results is exemplified by Hanna (age 13) in the example below:

*I catch myself going into my habitual defensive mood, and I automatically abstain from doing it. Instead, I see the experience and respond to it without being overtaken by my emotional attachments - I cannot avoid doing this anymore. Sometimes I miss the defensive attitudes because they were funny, but I feel it is better this way: I feel 7 (on the emocio-metro), and that is good.*<sup>145</sup>

### **2.2.2 Year II - Inter-Subjectivity (The Space Between)**

By this point in the programme the children have developed a good degree of mental discipline. By that, I mean sustained focus and concentrated attention on their experience, its content and their language. They have become more observant and more attentive to what other people say. They are more precise when they talk and more thoughtful before they answer a question.

Parents quite often report that when spoken to, their child takes longer to answer or respond. When they do respond, their language is more precise and their sentences tend to be concrete. A father shared the following experience with us. I was having a chat with Daniel, who was five<sup>146</sup> at the time, and asked him a question. He closed his eyes and after few seconds I asked him, “*Why don't you answer me?*” Daniel used to react without thinking and often with anger, but on that occasion he put his hand up and without opening his eyes said, “*Dad, I'm thinking.*” Daniel eventually answered his father's question. The children explain that because they become more aware of where their attention needs to be, they take more care when describing their experience, and this process takes time.

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<sup>145</sup> This is the original text in Spanish: “Es que no puedo hacer el reto de observarme cómo soy cuando estoy a la defensiva, porque en cuanto me cacho que voy caer en esa postura. Como que en automático me abstengo, y ya no reacciono, sino que observo la experiencia y respondo de manera que mis apegos no me atropellen. ¡Como que ya no puedo evitarlo! Y a veces extraño ponerme a la defensiva porque era divertido, pero siento que es mejor hacerlo como lo hago ahora, me siento como un 7 de bien”.

<sup>146</sup> One year has passed since the incident reported by the Daniel's father, so Daniel's age at the time this was reported was 6 (nearly 7).

This does not mean that the children stop behaving like children, or that they stop playing with their classmates, or become isolated - which indeed was one of our initial worries. On the contrary, their interactions increase, but their perceptions are more refined, their language more factual and precise. More importantly, judgments about others begin to be absent from their language. Thoughts become clearer, listening and understanding more acute. These are normally the outcomes at this stage of the process.

The Art of Questioning also begins to integrate into their everyday way of thinking. For example, when saying of someone she or he is 'ugly', they now understand that ugliness is a subjective experience and cannot be ascribed as a feature of another person. They learn to express their experiences in a more accurate way. In the earlier example, Carlitos realised that a more precise way to state his experience of the poster, rather than the poster itself, was by saying: "*The poster with Disney characters is one I like very much.*" By expressing his experience with the poster in this way, Carlitos was showing that he had done the *cambio de mirada* (change of view). At this stage it is expected that the children will begin to change their language to reflect their change of view. The sentences now reflect an absence of judgments; they do not make the poster to be anything. The children realise that judgments such as ugliness as a feature of the other will only come about if their object of attention is their self-centred interpretations of that other. This realisation made during human interaction takes the children to another level of awareness, which by now they are just about beginning to practice, as the example of Pili shows. Pili, who is 12 years old, was having a conversation with her sister and became upset by something her sister said. Pili then began telling her that she was not a good sister and was always causing her problems. Pili reported that she then stopped and said, "*Sorry, that isn't what you are and neither is this the experience I always have with you. What I want to say is that I didn't like what I heard, it made me feel uncomfortable and I didn't know how to deal with it, so I got angry.*" When the teacher asked Pili what happened, and what made her to stop, she said "*I noticed I was standing on my imaginary red cardboard and it was getting bigger, then I heard me asking myself, Where is your*

*view pointing at, - as we do in our meditations. I then realised I was talking about her and not about my present experience with her, so I stopped."*

This example shows that by this point the children are beginning to work directly with objects of attention, language and inferences that are not helpful. They also know that they cannot talk about the other, because the other is only available to them through experience. They cannot, therefore, find any aspect of the components of the experience with that other that can be indicated as ugly or beautiful, or good or bad. Consequently, the language they use begins to reflect the process of redirection and attentiveness.

The questions now are whether the children can deal with the other's self-loaded interpretations, and whether they can keep focus and not been dragged into their habitual patterns of self-centred assumptions. Are they ready to turn around the other's manifestations of language, full of judgments and generalisations based on emotional interpretations? The answer, at this point of the programme is that they are not yet ready to do that, as we have seen in the example of Pili. The task of the EUDE labs in Year II thus becomes one of helping the children in two specific ways. The first is to keep the subject of attention absent of dogmatic thinking, which includes judgments and generalisations, and to guard that the experience is manifested in a proper expression of assertiveness through language while in a dialogical encounter with others. I termed this first process *El arte de cuidar la experiencia* (Caring for the Experience). The second way of helping the children is to move them one step further, expanding their object of attention from just seeing the experience to seeing a shared space, *el espacio entre* (The Space Between) each time they are in a dialogic encounter with others. Standing on that shared space, one child invites another to stand beside him/her. The goal is not to look at each other, but to look in the same direction together, and co-create a moment of shared experience. I termed this process *El arte de acompañar la experiencia* (Accompanying the Experience).

In Year II the practice begins of directing the children to contemplate the experience, and to get so close to it through the process of questioning, that they should be able to identify what is, and what is not, in it. This closeness to the

details of the shared space helps the children to highlight missing pieces of information, and question the accuracy of their inferences. As a consequence, their inferential thinking is sharpened, and their options for ample discernment when interacting with others opened up. This process, called 'Self-Regulation', is the method for decentralising egocentric patterns. Ximena was six years old and had just finished the second year of the EUDE programme. Her mother came to the school to share her story.

Ximena was doing her homework on the breakfast table when her mother started preparing a sandwich for Ximena's packed lunch. Ximena went closer to her mother and asked, "*Mum, what is your favourite dish?*" Her mother said, "*Chicken Queen.*" Then Ximena asked again, "*If you had that for dinner every day would you still like it as much?*" Her mother replied, "*No, of course I wouldn't.*" Ximena then added, "*Do you think we would all feel the same if we ate the same thing every day?*" Ximena's mother immediately looked at the sandwich she had been preparing and realised that for the past two weeks she had made the same ham and cheese sandwich for Ximena. She apologised and changed the sandwich filling for something else. Ximena sat down again and carried on with her homework.

Ximena was showing a lack of the usual tantrums. Her approach showed that she did not know why her mother was doing what she did, and she did not assume anything. Instead, she took her mother through exploratory questions. Ximena was able to make her mother realise what was happening, without having an argument with her, without a hostile attitude, and without assuming that her mother was purposely preparing the same sandwich to annoy her, or thinking that her mother did not love her enough. Another reaction Ximena did not have was sarcasm in her approach (children at that age normally do not have a way of being sarcastic with such sophistication).<sup>147</sup> She had a genuine interest in knowing and finding out what was going on, and she set up the right conditions by using the Art of Questioning, which was well ingrained in her by that point. She gently questioned

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<sup>147</sup> Melanie Glenwright and Penny Pexman (2010) 'Development of Children's Ability to Distinguish Sarcasm and Verbal Irony', *Journal of Child Language*, 37:2, pp. 429-51.



her mother until she realised that something was wrong. At the same time Ximena also realised that her mother was unaware of these repetitions. In the end the situation was sorted out with three well-placed questions. Ximena represents an excellent example of how Caring for the Experience and Accompanying the Experience is put into practice.

It should be emphasised that the first two years of the EUDE labs are fundamental and a key part of the programme, so we put the concepts into practice for as long as necessary. The pace of the programme depends on the progress made; the children are not moved to the next level until they are deemed to be ready for it. Hence, Caring for the Experience, which normally follows a six-month timetable, could be extended to the whole year. The impact on behaviour is the key concern, not the duration of the programme.

### ***2.2.2.1 First Semester - Caring for the Experience***

**(a) Meditations:** These are divided into two sets. The first set is termed Analytical Meditations; the second set is termed Interactive Meditations.

In the first set, the children are asked to put an object in front of themselves, and questioning begins:

- What conditions are needed for this experience to come about?
- Are they themselves part of those conditions?
- Can they change or remove some of those conditions (including themselves) and see if the experience would remain the same?

We normally use the example of a rainbow with them to exemplify what they have to do. First they look at the external conditions that constitute the rainbow; the sun, the rain. Then the internal conditions; I know it is a rainbow because I know about rainbows, but I also know there is a rainbow because I can see it from where I am standing. They then check their mood or feelings to see if these have something to do with the way they experience the rainbow, for example; 'I am happy, therefore the rainbow is beautiful', 'I am angry or depressed, so who cares about the rainbow'. The purpose of this type of meditation is for the children to

realise the concept of mutual dependency, and the role they themselves play when observing or interacting with an object or living things, or people and/or events. During the semester this Meditation is done with objects, people, or events of their choice.

The second set, Interactive Meditations, is applied during interaction with others - not in a sitting position - and consists of two types of meditation. The first relates to using a meaningful object to set up intentionality before the children interact with anyone. The second relates to seeing the other person as someone who is much more than what they see or know. The first brings intentionality free from hostility; the second brings attention beyond what they know already to what they do not know about others. The meditations serve to bring a desire to know and to question by removing the immediate inclination to make assumptions. By verbalising their intentionality they convert it into a sentence that is kept on their radar of attention.

In the first type of Meditation, the children are asked to choose a specific moment during the day. Later in the programme, this is done at any time, so if they choose dinnertime, for example, they will close their eyes before going to the dinner table and convert any of the following sentences into their meaningful object of meditation during dinnertime:

- I will pay sustained attention to everything that is said at dinnertime.

Esteban, age five, shared the following experience with us. *"It was really fun last night. Normally I don't listen to what my two brothers have to say, but last night I did, and I enjoyed being around them. They made me laugh a lot."*

- I will pay sustained attention to the feelings of others at dinnertime.

Pedro, age 13, said, *"I realised how tired my mum was and how much effort she was making by being there for us."*

- I will keep my attention on this experience and if it wanders, I will bring it back to the dinner table.

Ana, age 13, said, *"I counted six times but I managed to catch myself every time and bring myself back to the conversation. I was also aware that I missed so much information every time my concentration went astray."*

- Before I say anything I will check that my words do not include judgments or generalisations.

Berta, age 13, said, *"I lost count of how many times I made judgments, but I became aware of my language. Just once I managed to catch it before it came out of my mouth and I stopped myself from saying it. My family stared at me, not knowing what was going on... In the end I said nothing."*

Each time the children choose a different sentence, so by the end of term they should have practiced all of them in different settings.

The second type of Meditation relates to seeing others and saying, *"You are much more than what I can see or know of you."* Mariana, age 13, for example says, *"I always had this fixed idea about my nine-year-old sister, that she was not clever at all. But things have changed since I started saying this sentence every time I was about to talk to her. At first I was surprised about all the things I didn't know about her, then she surprised me with comments or thoughts I never realised she was capable of producing. I became aware of how much she loves me. Our relationship has changed since, and I feel 10 out of 10."* The 10 refers to the settings on the 'emocio-metro' ruler.

**Tai Chi:** Tai Chi sessions held in the Year II include the children moving and interacting with each other in pairs or in groups of four. The movements allow partners to move across each other, not opposing or confronting their actual presence, but flowing with the other's movements. The purpose of this practice is for the children to feel what it means to have an experience absent of hostility even when some of the initiating movements are hostile. The children begin to feel the flow produced by the absence of opposing movements, and the anticipation that an effective attentiveness brings about when reading the other's movements. By the end of the term they understand that Caring for the Experience is comparable to

doing Tai Chi; it requires the same dancing and flowing, and it enables the co-creation of experiences.

Mario, age five, reported, *"Yesterday I did Tai Chi with my mouth so my mum and I produced a nice song."* The teacher asked *"How?"* and Mario replied, *"We played with silent notes and words."* The analogy of music is normally used in the Tai Chi sessions, where musical notes represent moving the body forward. The importance of silent notes is that they represent the attentive silence that allows the other's movement to flow. It is explained that in music, notes do not offer resistance to one another, but flow, reflecting the movements and the set of dances the children practice in Tai Chi. Mario further reported, *"I was chatting with my mum and gave way to her words with my silent notes and then I used an attentive word, and she in turn used her silent note too. We named our song 'our daily song'. It was fun."*

**(b) The Art of Questioning:** This is the first time the children are taken into The Space Between. Although it is always there, this is the first time they experience what it means and how it is constituted. Now the dynamics of their participation shift substantially. The children work interactively with each other in The Space Between with the intention not only of focusing on their own conditions as they did in the previous year, but also on the conditions that others bring.

It is at this point that the first simulator Caring for the Experience is played. It is a 'factory' with various rooms in it (see Appendix I), with each room representing different components of experience where the children learn how to break down experience into its parts and explore and analyse them. They use coloured stickers to label the different components and place them around the rooms wherever they feel is appropriate. To have something physical to do helps them in two ways. First it helps them to keep their concentration focused not on the person in front of them, but on the components of the experience. Second, it helps them to look in the same direction and concentrate on observing these components closely. These components include the context, the various types of causes and conditions, the people involved, and the outcome of the experience.

During the first semester the simulator is played in various forms, which we name rounds. First, the teacher uses a generic event so that the children learn how the simulator works, and what its characteristics are, then they play the simulator by using past events, each child bringing his/her own personal past event. This round is easy for them because they already know the outcome of the event, so it is easier to identify what needs to be changed. The teacher demonstrates with one personal example so that the children learn how to place the conditions inside the simulator and what questions they need to ask. After this example it is the turn of the children to use the simulator using their own past experiences. In this round, they practice the Art of Questioning by themselves. Although the teacher is there to coach them when needed, they are encouraged to make the effort to do it on their own. The final round is played in interactive mode and will be explained at the end of this section.

In the simulator, the children learn through questions how to identify contents that are factual and contents that are just assumptions. They also identify the different elements and the various types of condition within the experience. These consist of the persons, the causes and conditions coming from their own thoughts, the conditions coming from another's thoughts, the conditions coming from the event itself and the context in which it develops. Most importantly, they identify the conditions they do not know. The children learn how those conditions interrelate and the impact they create. They learn to identify which ones can be changed, and which ones cannot be changed and need to be accepted and dealt with. They practice how to deal with all the components based on one principle: Caring for The Space Between.

Caring for The Space Between means proposing actions that do not create hostile conditions. As previously explained, hostility for EUDE means absence of conscious attention in the way we act or talk normally that is manifested in judgments, generalisations or dogmatic thinking. When the children say something unrelated to what is in The Space Between, or something that cannot be linked or sustained, it is called 'Not Caring for The Space Between'. In such cases the teacher frames questions that identify and contrast what has been said with what is actually there. When the children lose concentration, the teacher asks them to

write on a sticker whatever they had said or thought and post it on their body. Some of them may end up placing more than one sticker on their body. Each sticker is a way of having them keep in mind that they have lost attention, that their focus is somewhere else and that they have stopped seeing the components of that particular experience. Only by going back to the simulator and seeing conditions again with close attention will they be able to dispose of the stickers. The simulator only ends when they have no stickers attached to their body, which means they have created an outcome absent of assumptions, dogmatic thoughts, judgments and hostile actions.

When the children cannot recover their focus attention on the experience they are encouraged to pick up one of the Meditations they have learned, which could help them regain control of their attention. This is done with the sole intention of prompting them a) to understand the purpose of what they have learned so far when interacting with others and b) to make a habit of disciplining their sustained focus and concentrated attention. The following example illustrates this in practice.

A teacher (not in the EUDE programme) told us that a classmate began shouting at Maria (age 13) because Maria did not hear something her classmate was saying and made a judgment about that situation. Maria was ready to say something back, but stopped and asked the teacher if she could leave the classroom for a few minutes. The teacher agreed. When Maria did not come back, the teacher went to look for her and found her sitting on the floor with her eyes closed. The teacher went back into the classroom leaving Maria to do what she was doing. After few more minutes Maria returned, went to her seat, looked at the classmate who had shouted at her and said, *"Sorry, I lost track of much of what you were trying to explain to me, so my judgment had no basis. Would you like to explain this again and I will listen carefully?"*

It is important to state that teachers are not allowed to make any kind of judgments about a child's progression. The aim is for the children to be aware of where their attention is and to help them learn how to regain control of it. The

children are encouraged to see what happens with thoughts, language and actions when they stop guarding their attention, which normally causes them to relapse into their habitual egocentric tendencies.

### ***Descriptive Account of the Simulator***

As previously stated, the main explanation of the simulator will be given in Chapter 4. Here, however, I want to give a simple example in order to explain how the process using the simulator works. In one of the EUDE labs, Sergio, age 5, sat inside<sup>148</sup> the simulator and explained that he had had an argument with his three-year-old sister the day before because she took one of his toys without asking him first. He became very angry and they ended up fighting. His mother took away the toy and sent them both to their respective rooms, telling them to stay there until dinnertime. The event that Sergio described was put on a sticker and fixed<sup>149</sup> in the simulator.

### ***Placing the Stickers in the simulator***

Sergio skilfully identified all the components of that event and put all the stickers around the simulator in their respective areas.<sup>150</sup> First he identified<sup>151</sup> all the people involved in the event - his mother, his sister, his friends, and his mother's friend. He then identified<sup>152</sup> some of the outside conditions; it was 5pm, his mother was busy with her friend, he was playing outside, and it was warm and sunny. Next he identified<sup>153</sup> his own experience of the event - that he was happy when he was playing with his friends but later became angry with his sister. Finally, he identified what he did not know, such as why his sister wanted to play with that toy and why she had not asked him first. His teacher then asked him what the outcome of that event was. He replied, "*Well, we were both sent to our rooms, so I*

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<sup>148</sup> Sergio sat in the simulator marked [1].

<sup>149</sup> Sergio placed a sticker in the area marked [2].

<sup>150</sup> In Appendix I, I attach a number to each important part of the simulator. I will refer to this number to describe where the children placed the stickers.

<sup>151</sup> Sergio placed stickers with the names of people in the area marked [3].

<sup>152</sup> Sergio placed a sticker in the area marked [4].

<sup>153</sup> Sergio placed a sticker in the area marked [5].

*could not carry on playing with my friends, and my toy was taken away from me and mum got really angry with both of us."*

### ***Playing the Desire Scenario***

The teacher said, "*Tell me Sergio, what result would*

*you like to have seen?" Sergio replied, "Well, I would have liked to have been able to carry on playing outside with my friends, and not to have seen my mum so angry. And I would have liked to have had my toy back."*<sup>154</sup>

### ***Identification Process***

The teacher then asked, "*If you had the chance to go back in time, what conditions do you think you could have changed?"* He immediately replied, "*That my sister did not exist.*" Pointing to the sticker in the simulator, the teacher asked, "*Is that person already there?"* Sergio replied, "*Yes, she is.*" The teacher then said, "*Sergio that is one of the conditions that you cannot change, the same as the weather, or your mum, or your mum's friends. Remember, people are here to stay. They are part of the conditions that you cannot change.*<sup>155</sup> *These types of conditions are there already and you just have to deal with them. What else can you change?"* Sergio looked at the simulator and after a while picked up one of the stickers from the simulator and said, "*This one.*" The sticker read '*anger*' - which was one of the conditions he identified when writing the components. The teacher asked, "*Why?"* He replied, "*That is the only thing I could have changed, and that would have changed the outcome.*" The teacher then asked, "*What would have stopped you from being angry?"* He responded, "*Talking to my sister first, getting to know the things I didn't know.*" "*Such as?"* asked the teacher. Sergio replied, "*Asking my sister why she wanted my toy and why she did not ask me for it first.*"

In the final round, the children work with experiences that are co-created in interaction with their classmates in real time. In this final round the teacher first

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<sup>154</sup> Sergio placed a sticker in the area marked [6].

<sup>155</sup> The teacher pointed to each sticker on the simulator while reviewing with Sergio what was already in it.



sets the topic. After that it is a topic of their choice. The rules in this round remain the same except for one difference. Now, the children do not know the outcome, and the stickers of causes and conditions are placed as they go along. They also replace stickers every time a cause or a condition changes relating to the momentariness of their interaction, which is now dynamic, rather than static as in the previous rounds. The task of the children now is to maintain conscious attention and to Care for the Experience - as already explained - while interacting in real time with others. In this round there is not much time for them to think about what to say or do. The impact of what they say, or the way they respond or act in a situation when playing the simulators, will be felt immediately and the turnaround of that condition will have to be done immediately. If they succeed in mastering this level, then the next one – Accompanying the Experience – will be much easier for them.

In this round the children become emotionally involved in the debates on the topics. As a result, their concentration or attention to detail normally slips and they lose track of information already given. When that happens, emotions, generalisations, judgments and dogmatic language come into play. This is the round where they place stickers on their body and, as before, they must remove them, otherwise the simulator will never end.

The simulator is strengthened with interactive meditations, here and now, as previously explained, but in this round other previously used tools are included, as described below:

- 1) The appearance of tunnel vision. Tunnel vision happens when the children become angry at something, or with someone, either because they are no longer paying attention to The Space Between, or because their attention has weakened. They learn to notice when their body begins to feel tense and their eyes are looking everywhere except at the simulator. To counteract this, they are instructed to look around the room and to focus on something else. This could be a drawing or a toy. Once their focused attention has returned they are asked to return to

the simulator. Normally they go back feeling more relaxed and ready to look again into the conditions.

- 2) Standing on the red cardboard (self-centredness). The children reflect on why and how their own attachments have led them to an emotional involvement and reaction, such as, for example, "*I did not like to be contradicted.*" They need to think about how they can move from the red cardboard to the white cardboard (self-regulation) by using questions, inference and discernment based on the conditions placed in the simulator.

These tools are only used when certain symptoms of being stuck are identified during the experience. They need to be applied in real time when the children are in trouble. It is then that their attention needs to be re-focused and their concentration disciplined.

It is important to emphasise that we never lecture the children, order them to stop their behaviour, or give a normative judgment about specific behaviours. The attention needed in the simulator is promoted by coaching the children to observe what they say or do through the Art of Questioning. We have anecdotal evidence and testimony showing that this kind of empirical observation of action, and its effects on feelings through focused concentrated attention, is remarkably effective. Observation and experimentation alone, throughout the whole process with the simulator, has been shown to transform experience.

**(c) Abstentions:** We find that applying these observational exercises leads to a reduction in assumptions. A more sophisticated inference takes place at this stage, and no further analysis or discussion is needed for the children to learn to control, and desist from, saying things that they identify as problematic. This is the kind of abstention that children will manifest at this level. For this reason, nothing else is emphasised at this stage except practising abstentions during the practices with the simulator.

#### **2.2.2.2 Second Semester - Accompanying the Experiences**

To Co-create in The Space Between means learning how to care for what is placed by others in that space. It is explained to the teachers that the sole purpose of this semester is for the children to learn how to use the Art of Questioning to help all those involved in the interaction (including themselves) to see and identify harmful self-centred interpretations of experience.

A perfect way of explaining this to the children is through music. The teacher normally gives the children the following explanation: *“Co-creation is like various musical instruments coming together to create music and not just noise. Each instrument, according to its own conditions, will create a sound that in co-creation with other instruments could make music. The degree of precision and refinement in your composition will depend on how much your focused attention is on the act of composing music together, rather than just on playing a single instrument well. That is what we call Accompanying the Experience or caring for The Space Between.”*

To help them understand what Accompanying the Experience actually means, a variety of experiences are created where the children learn in real time how to Accompany the Experience and Co-create. A different simulator is used for this purpose.<sup>156</sup> The themes used in this simulator are all topics the children are familiar with, and are ones that might start a debate or might set off a mixture of feelings. The aim is for the debates to be as lively as possible precisely because then the children will practice a real-life situation when conditions are less favourable. Dealing with their self-centred interpretations is not the only issue at stake, as previously explained. Now, they need to deal with the self-centred interpretations of others as part of the conditions in The Space Between. By this, I mean that one child may encounter situations where another child is acting with self-centred assumptions or egocentric motivations. In such cases we want the children to learn what is needed for them to turn that experience around and be able to co-create.

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<sup>156</sup> See Appendix II.

The principle emphasis at this Level therefore will be on the Art of Questioning. This is not because the other two techniques are not present or are less important, but simply because Accompanying the Experience requires a language based on questions rather than statements. Identifying the conditions in The Space Between no matter to whom they belong, is the first aspect of Accompanying the Experience. Contrasting questions are used for connecting causes and conditions. This helps to highlight what is missing, which in turn helps to identify self-centred assumptions. With the reflexive questions the children 'turn around' the self-centredness of others by inviting them to co-create. This questioning makes the children sustain their concentrated attention on The Space Between and helps them create sharp inferences and discernments that do not open the door to egocentric interpretations. By not including egocentric interpretations, the children open up the possibility for always seeing new ways of playing, arranging conditions in a more expansive and creative form and never reducing those conditions to a particular conclusion. Hence the only possible outcome in Co-creation is that there is not prior objective to the co-construction of conditions, the only purpose is not to have a purpose, and the only plausible construction is the one on which a fixed or final idea are not viable.

**(a) Meditation:** The final meditation is named Contemplative Meditation. This meditation is done in two ways; while sitting in silence or while interacting with others. In the sitting meditation the children focus on something larger than an object. It could be a view of a garden, or something similar where things are moving. By keeping their attention on the scenario without moving their head or eyes, they take in a great amount of detail about the scenario, including their own presence within it.

The interactive form is connected with The Space Between. In that space the children will keep observing the shared space as an observer, trying to interact as little as possible. When they do interact, the idea is simply to observe how other children respond to such interaction. This meditation is analogous to throwing a small stone in a still pond and observing the ripples it produces.

This meditation is one of the children's favourite activities. Its purpose is to help them be more focused and more in tune with The Space Between. This meditation normally helps them to be more discerning and equanimous in their responses to stressful situations, rather than simply reacting to them.

**Tai Chi:** The final part of Tai Chi takes place in this semester and is a continuation of the previous one. The children begin to feel the flow produced by the absence of opposing movements. They will do Tai Chi as they did before, but now they invite another person to move around and dance in the same direction, rather than in a confrontational warrior's position. These movements are essentially elegant and smooth so the children get to feel the flowing, but they also see the turning around of potential hostile postures into more peaceful ones as part of developing co-ordinating movements instantaneously.

**(b) The Art of Questioning:** The simulator used in this part of the programme is a library divided into rooms that reflect a space as the previous simulator does. The difference now is that this simulator includes rooms where a child places stickers with questions written on them.<sup>157</sup> The simulator begins once the child has chosen the subject that will set up the interactions with other children. The topics are divided into categories from mild to strong. The difference lies in the degree of self-centredness, or self-motivated ideas the topic could cause the children to bring about. In this simulator the interaction between the children is restricted to using the Art of Questioning. At this point no statements are allowed unless they are accompanied by a contrasting or reflexive question. Two meaningful questions have to be asked at all times during this exercise: *"Is what I am about to say free from hostility? Does what I am about to say invite others to dance and co-create in The Space Between?"*

Joris, now age six, can be brought back for this example. Together with his classmates, he was sitting in a chair around the simulator that was on the floor and

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<sup>157</sup> See Appendix II. Number [1] is the room where the children sit to concentrate in the shared space, [2] is the room where they place the sticker with all the key essential conditions of their constructing experience, [3] is the room where they place stickers with contrasting questions, [4] is the room where they place stickers with reflexive questions [5] is the room where they place stickers with identification questions.

discussing a topic related to an incident they had all had with a teacher from another class. Juan was recapitulating what they already identified in each section of the simulator. Then, pointing to the section where they describe the conditions of the event, he said, *"So, we have the teacher, the children (us), the classroom. It was during the morning, the classroom was messy and almost everyone in the class was running about and making a lot of noise."* Julio added, *"Yes, and the teacher told us twice to sit down and to be quiet."* *"That is right,"* said Emiliano, *"then we were all punished."* Mariana added, *"Even the ones who were sitting quietly."* Then José said, *"Yes, that was unfair."* So, Joris asked, *"Do we know if the punishment was for having a messy classroom or just for running around? If we said it was unfair, what we will link it to?"* José replied, *"To the way I feel now because I was not running about that day."* Joris noticed that José did not reply to what he was asking, so Joris rephrased the question, *"If the punishment was for having a messy classroom would we feel the same?"* Jose pointed laughing at the *"really messy"* simulator sticker, and replied, *"No, because it was really messy."* So Joris replied, *"Do we really know why we got all punished?"* Mariana answered, *"Not really, so why don't we go and ask the teacher?"* That same day they all went to see the teacher and found out that they were punished because the classroom was messy and because they were running around noisily. But she accepted in front of the children that she had not been clear about her decision with them, and if anything was unfair in this situation it was precisely the lack of clarity.

It is important to clarify that during all these interactions the teacher in the EUDE lab is an observer except when the children get nowhere because they do not know how to continue the questioning. Only then will the teacher ask questions that make them reflect and help them to progress. It is also important that during the whole exercise the children's eyes only focus on the simulator and the stickers they place on the simulator. At no time during this exercise should they turn around to look at each other. This helps the children from engaging in disputes with others or bringing personal ideas about others into the discussion. This in turn helps them to focus and concentrate on the causes and conditions more easily and to keep the two main meaningful objects in their attention. Late in

the semester the simulator is removed and the children sit around a round table where they can see each other's faces when they are discussing a topic.

While it is true that the simulator helps them with their focused attention until their mental discipline has become strong, it is also true that the simulator can become obstructive, so its removal is essential. By this point, the children can incorporate what they have learnt into a more realistic form of interaction. Hence removing the simulator at a certain point enables them to see each other, and challenges them to maintain conscious attention on The Space Between without having to use the simulator. That in fact is the purpose of the rest of the EUDE labs until the end of this semester and Year III. The children should be able to sustain the conscious attention as they interact with others in any type of situation or circumstances.

**(c) Abstention:** At this stage of the programme abstention means absence. It is the absence of the habitual tendency to interpret experience with self-centred ideas, and the absence of a language loaded with dogmatic thinking – or what in EUDE we call hostile actions. Rafael, a 7 year-old boy, was in the classroom when the teacher heard his classmate Mariana saying to him *"You are really silly"*. Rafael asked, *"Do you see me like that all the time or just at this very moment?"* Mariana said, *"You are silly all the time."* Rafael said, *"So, yesterday when we were playing and having fun together was I silly as well?"* Mariana responded, *"Well, no,"* and then Rafael added *"And on other occasion when we had fun and shared good moment was I silly?"* Mariana replied, *"No. It is just now that you are silly,"* so Rafael said, *"Can we then talk about what just happened now?"*

In this example Rafael is showing absence of hostile reaction. He maintains his focus attention on the experience and does not take Mariana's comments personally because he knows they do not describe him, they merely describe one moment of their experience. Maintaining his focus attention he also invites Mariana to do the same, but not before he helps her to focus on the correct object of attention, removing any disproportional views that can distort their process of finding out what the problem really was.

### 2.2.3 Year III – Integration Process

The final part of the programme brings different scenarios where the children habituate themselves to Co-create and to share responsibility in The Space Between in any social interaction. This year is not based on the EUDE labs; the structure is more like a workshop with projects and therefore not particularly relevant for the purpose of this thesis. However I would like to give a brief explanation of what takes place in this year to show how the programme ends.

The intention is to help the children practice conscious attention and mental discipline in different scenarios. Some of these scenarios are played with the three remaining simulators; others are with specific projects the children have to run outside the classroom. This is what we call Integration Process because at the end of it they are able to create a habitual inclination to interact with conscious attention. The three simulators represent three different scenarios: ecological, social and ideological.<sup>158</sup> In each of the first two simulators, the children live during thirty virtual years (six classes of 60 minutes each), and are confronted with different conditions in each session.

The Ecological simulator begins with the children arriving at the ecosystem<sup>159</sup> with nothing except the clothes they are wearing. From that moment on they will work as a group trying to survive the four ecosystems (forest, grassland, desert, tundra) that the simulator presents. The ecosystem is well balanced when they arrive in it and the idea is that by the end of the simulator, as a minimal requirement, they return a well-balanced ecosystem and survive together as a group, any and all of the crises that might arise. The purpose of the simulator is to trigger discussions, debates, greediness, and possible egoistic and egocentric attitudes that arise from conditions that 'Mother Nature' (the teacher) may put in place. These conditions will depend on what the children are asked to practice since the variables are many. If, for example, they are peacefully settling down in their chosen ecosystem, 'Mother Nature' might send a hurricane or another devastating disaster, but only one of the children will be told of it. This disturbance

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<sup>158</sup> See Appendix III.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.



might cause the child to run away from the upcoming disaster, leaving the rest of his/her classmates behind, or he/she might share the news so that they can all seek a solution together. It is important to clarify that by this point, the goal is not simply teamwork, even though the children may end up solving the problem together. The purpose of the simulators is rather to simulate difficult situations so that the children can practice keeping focus attention on the experience and guard from relapsing into egocentric tendencies. At the same time they will invite others to the shared space for the purpose of co-creating solutions together.

A real-life scenario illustrates the effect of this simulator. In 2014 when hurricane Odile hit land in Cabo San Lucas Mexico, almost destroying the whole peninsula of Baja California, Alberto<sup>160</sup> (age 7) and his family were in a communal underground bunker trying to protect themselves from the incredible force of the hurricane. Alberto's mother was crying, as were other people in the bunker. He got closer to her and asked, *"Why are you crying mum?"* She replied, *"because the hurricane will destroy everything and the many people in desperation afterwards might rob our house and take our stuff. You know how people are Alberto, they are bad."* Alberto then sat beside his mother and asked, *"Mum has the hurricane arrived?"* *"No,"* she replied. He continued, *"Do we know for sure what might happen?"* His mum said, *"No."* Alberto continued, *"It is a possibility that people might react differently? Now look at my eyes and tell me what do you see?"* (By then many people in the bunker were quiet and did what Alberto asked her mum to do). She said, *"I see you and I love you very much."* Alberto then said, *"could we do anything about the other stuff mum, right now, without risking our lives?"* She replied, *"No, we can't."* Then Alberto asked her to keep looking into his eyes while he was looking into hers and smiling at her. Alberto's mother, who reported this testimony to us, also added that concentrating on the most beautiful smile of Alberto she had ever seen got her through the worst moment of the hurricane. When the hurricane was over, many people thanked Alberto for helping them to get through a very frightening moment in such a nice and loving manner. His mother also reported that after the hurricane people were really helpful to each

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<sup>160</sup> We implemented the EUDE programme in three schools in that region of Mexico - Amarahanto, Zarahuaro and Sunny Hill. Alberto was studying at Zarahuaro School.

other and that not one single theft was reported from houses and only a few from supermarkets.

The second simulator named 'Social'<sup>161</sup> is played using the same principle, except that this simulator now represents the most ordinary aspects of our day-to-day life. The children are given a town that is 'well balanced', meaning one that is financially stable, without crime, or homeless, and where the teacher now plays the role of the bank. The children arrive in this town with nothing and are expected to survive the six sessions and maintain a stable town. The bank triggers certain conditions, the rest are created by the children's interactions.

While the first two simulators are connected with more ordinary situations, the third one named 'Ideological' confronts the children with a more sophisticated scenario of ideologies.<sup>162</sup> This simulator is intended to sharpen their inferential process and discernment, which is manifested in a more sophisticated response to dogmatic ideas of others. The children navigate a universe where planets represent different dogmatic ideas; they fly on Pegasus and land on one of the planets where they are presented with a dogma. They have only one chance to reply to that dogma. The rules for replying are that the reply cannot contain another dogma, judgment, or generalisation of any kind, and that it must include the three aspects of the Art of Questioning. If the children succeed, they fly to the wisdom planet, at the centre of the universe. After that the simulator comes to an end. The following provides an example. Seven children, all aged six, were playing the simulator and landed on a planet called Nihilism, the dogma that nothing exists except thoughts. After debating for a while among themselves they finally came up with their reply, *"If we were to think that only thoughts exist, the question will be: where do they come from, if we don't exist?"*<sup>163</sup>

Apart from playing the simulators the children need to develop three projects during Year III of the programme. These are: '*proyecto amigo*', friend project, '*proyecto familia*', family project, and '*proyecto social*', social project. The

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<sup>161</sup> See Appendix III.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> The following video shows this example. It has English subtitles.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esq0XqmHzBQ>

main purpose of these projects is for the children to practice what it means to lead a project by letting others lead the process. Leading projects can arouse strong desires in the children, such as moving the project towards their own needs or wants. Refraining from doing so, and managing their own desires, is part of the objective.

The Friend project involves helping a best friend make a dream come true. The family project refers to making real a family dream. The difference is that in the first, the child is not involved because it is only about the friend's dream, so he/she can only accompany the friend during the process. But in the family dream, the family are involved and their participation can be quite tricky since the child could persuade the family to take his/her dream as their own. Examples of the friend's dreams are: spending more time with their parents, having a pet, going on holiday to somewhere with their parents, etc. The family's project ranges from getting electricity and water into their homes to finding a way to spend more time together. The final project is a social one and implies that the children will not know the people they are going to be involved with. This project avoids the impact of notions of charity and welfare. It is about how to help others to develop conscious awareness of their experiences; it is like creating their own small EUDE prototype.<sup>164</sup> It is with this final project that the EUDE prototype for education ends.

## Summary

I have described the EUDE programme, which is designed to cultivate mental discipline and conscious attention in schoolchildren for the purpose of regulating and levelling down egocentric inclinations in their interpretation of experience in order to reduce hostility in their interactions. I have reviewed the methodology and techniques of the EUDE labs, and shown the feasibility of EUDE in the classroom. The testimonial evidence is encouraging and at times overwhelming. I

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<sup>164</sup> We have ample examples of this type of social project. Many of them were presented for the first convention of EUDE's network of schools held in Mexico City in June 2017. More than 500 children and teenagers will gathered together for the first time in order to present their projects. The projects ranged from films and documentaries, board games and virtual games to different types of workshops designed by them.

conclude that this EUDE programme that transforms human experience with the aim of causing ethical development has the potential to transform the lives of children for the better, although more rigorous scientific research is needed in order to increase the value of its impact. In the next chapter, I will examine the work of Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenological methodology. We should begin to see almost immediately how Buddhaghosacārya can provide the philosophical framework on which the EUDE programme and its principles can be sustained and thus on which potential future research could be based.

### 3 BUDDHAGHOSACĀRYA (THE *VISUDDHIMAGGA*)

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*...to realize the ultimate is not to abandon the mundane but to learn to see it 'with the eye of wisdom' . . . What needs to be abandoned is one's perversions and false clinging . . . This applies not only to actual life but to words, concepts, understanding, and systems of understanding.*

*Ramanan.*

Buddhaghosacārya is regarded as the main Theravada Buddhist commentator by his own tradition and by some western scholars. I was therefore surprised to find that his main work, The *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification), is frequently relegated to a footnote, or a brief summary. While a few western scholars have researched historical questions about works that are rightly attributed to Buddhaghosacārya, studies of what Maria Heim - who has worked intensively on shedding light on agency and moral psychology relating to Buddhaghosacārya's thought on ethics<sup>165</sup> - describes as his treatment of "the 'innermost interiority' or psychological reality of ordinary human experience,"<sup>166</sup> are rare.

Indeed, the interiority that Buddhaghosacārya examines in such detail centres his attention on the conditions that underlie human experience. This approach to the Buddha's doctrines is best described as phenomenological practice, according to Heim. By this she means that Buddhaghosacārya did not interpret the Buddha's doctrine as techniques for seeking metaphysical statements about what exists or does not exist, but as a means of seeking a way of attending to human experience through contemplative practices with the purpose of seeing, discerning and understanding the complexity, conditionality and impermanence of that experience, and in the process changing attitudes. Hence Buddhaghosacārya's purpose is not to coerce the practitioner to arrive at a metaphysical position. By

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<sup>165</sup> For further detail, see Heim, 2014.

<sup>166</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 72.

following his words closely we will see that he seeks to purify the practitioner's seeing and knowing, which means the practitioner's ability to understand and discern the conditionality of his human experience. Seeing and knowing, as explained by Buddhaghosacārya, are connected to perception, intention, motivation and feelings, which ultimately drive actions.

Hence removing harmful conditions, which block our capacity to correctly see human experience, is paramount in Buddhaghosacārya's methodological process. This gradual and constant process where in the final purification, or what we could call wisdom, there is only 'seeing and knowing', is concerned not with guiding practitioners to see what they know, but how they know. The task of purifying how we know and how we see involves a set of practices that aim first to purify the mind by gradually removing all obstructions that block our capacity for seeing and knowing, then to instruct us in how to engage in correct seeing, where convictions and ontological reflexes that we arrive at so easily, not only cannot hold, but fade away. This is precisely my focus and what has motivated the comparative study of this thesis because it is also the central concern of EUDE - How to equip the children with the ability to remove in their day-to-day life, in practical terms, the conditions beneath thoughts and action that are harmful; how to enable them to reduce the tendency to resort to egocentric views and harmful judgments, which result in harmful actions because the children failed to know and see the conditions and conditionality of experience.

My intention is not to downgrade or downplay the highest purpose of Buddhism in general, or Buddhaghosacārya in particular. Nor is it to claim that EUDE is comparable to this higher spiritual achievement proposed by Buddhism or/and Buddhaghosacārya. My interest lies elsewhere; that is, in the means of equipping at least some, young, human beings with the capacity to dismantle harmful conditions, underlying thoughts and actions, and as a result, to effect a positive change in human interaction through less hostile interactions. I regard this way of caring for our human experience as a noble form of ethical development. Hence my main interest in analysing Buddhaghosacārya's methods for equipping monks and the large virtuous (followers of *sīla*) Buddhist

community to disentangle harmfulness in experience is for the purpose of focusing on his intertwined triadic<sup>167</sup> phenomenological methodology. This is a gradual modular process that cultivates attention by immersing the practitioner in a different set of crafted contemplative practices with the purpose of exploring and analysing the characteristics and conditions of experience and by doing so, to see and know how those conditions work, such that by correct seeing, harmful conditions fade away. The techniques used by Buddhaghosacārya to equip monks and the virtuous Buddhist community with this intertwined triadic phenomenological method will serve as the main point of comparison with EUDE in Chapter 4.

What underpins this present chapter is not a study of spiritual practices as such. My reading and presentation of Buddhaghosacārya's work will be limited to drawing attention to the shifting and cultivating of attention which focuses on breaking down experiences for analysis and exploration of its conditions through his unique and ingenious methodology and techniques. These will help to articulate the philosophical principles that underpin both subjecthood and ethical development in EUDE, thus offering the explanatory framework we are seeking. These principles can be summarised as follows. The first relates to his strategies for shifting the practitioner's untrained attention to seeing and knowing conditions in experience in order to abandon and dismantle the ones that are harmful. This resembles the EUDE concept of Caring for the Experience. The second relates to how, in the absence of such conditions, other less harmful and less hostile, conditions can emerge. This refers not (impossibly) to the absence of experience in experience, but to the absence of harmful conditions. It resembles the purification that EUDE wants children to achieve in EUDE's concept of The Space Between. As far as EUDE is concerned the space is always in between people's interaction but is corrupted by egocentric conditions. Children learn how to clear that space by observing the particularities of experience in ways that shape their perception, intentions and feelings differently, away from egocentric views, and towards an intrinsic way of caring for how they co-create experiences with others.

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<sup>167</sup> The three set of practices that Buddhaghosacārya's methodology embraces are: Virtue (*sīla*), Concentration (*samādhi*) and Understanding (*pañña*).

Human interaction is central to EUDE where Caring for the Experience implies caring for all others and vice versa. This is based on the firm belief that one cannot happen without the other, and is what I would like to call the ethical dimension of EUDE. Although the ethical dimension of Buddhaghosacārya may not be explicit in his training, it is intrinsic to it; by modifying thoughts and actions, he reflects an ethical concern for conduct. This ethical concern highlights the relevance of others in shaping not merely one's experiences but also the design of the methodology required for the path. It is a methodology where Buddhaghosacārya and the tradition place great emphasis both on the social interaction within the confines of a life in a monastery and on the interaction with the lay communities around them, as we shall see through the presentations of his method.

### 3.1 BUDDHAGHOSACĀRYA: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN EXPERIENCE

It is in the *Abhidhamma*<sup>168</sup> system that the Buddha exposed the nature of human experience and the deepest and most obscure inherent tendencies (*anusaya*), dispositions and inclinations that keep human beings in a state of corruption, illness and blindness. It is using the same system that he exposed our potential to dismantle these tendencies through the *Dhamma* theory.

Buddhaghosacārya's reading of *Abhidhamma* explains that human experiences are ever-changing states in a conditioned existence (*bhava*) where 'conditioned' means made by a concurrence of causes-in-relation.<sup>169</sup> He explains experiences as being constructed (built) and compounded (composed of).<sup>170</sup> In the

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<sup>168</sup> The Pali *Abhidhamma* is one of the three baskets of the Theravada Buddhist Pali Canon. Heim describes them as "some of the most complex investigations of moral psychology available in human intellectual history, more intricate and far reaching perhaps than many models of the mind and agency available in contemporary cognitive science." (Heim, 2014, p. 34). They are considered "the essence of the Buddha's teachings or that which goes beyond what is given in the Buddha's discourses" (*Dhs-a* 2-3; Horner 1941; von Hinüber 1994). See also Caroline Rhys Davids in her translation of the text as a "psychological scheme that drives human experience". For further reference, see her first translation of the Pali *Abhidhamma* 1900, xvi.

<sup>169</sup> Exp., p. 63.

<sup>170</sup> Exp., p. 69.



words of Heim, this means in its general sense ‘construction,’ which points to the feature of the mind that creates our experience through putting together and compounding other things.”<sup>171</sup> For Buddhaghosacārya, compounded refers to all factors (*dhammas*) available at the time of the construction of each experience. Phra Payutto describes these as “psychological compositions, or the various qualities that embellish the mind making it good, bad, or neutral”<sup>172</sup> depending on what is available at the time of construction and what mental formations it produces. Factors can be helpful conditions<sup>173</sup> or they can derive from our obscure inherent tendencies and be harmful<sup>174</sup> conditions. The important question is: what role do these helpful or harmful conditions and their dispositions play in the formation of our present human experience? The conditions seem to account for what occurs prior to harmfulness in human experience. This means that, if the conditions available at the time of construction are harmful, the states that form our experience will be compounded and then constructed with these negative forces; the same applies to the helpful conditions. In other words these conditions seem to undergird our perception, feelings, intention, and motivation. Thus Heim explains that Buddhaghosacārya views a person’s actions “lying not so much at the moment of choice or decision but at the moment when our minds put together and arrange our mental conditions to experience the world in the particular and

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<sup>171</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 48.

<sup>172</sup> Phra Payutto (1995) *Buddhadhamma: Natural Laws and Values for Life*, Translated by Grant Olson, State University of New York, p. 54.

<sup>173</sup> Factors, which are Helpful conditions are described in the *Visuddhimagga* as follows: 1) Contact, 2) volition, 3) applied thought, 4) sustained thought, 5) happiness (interest), 6) energy, 7) life, 8) concentration, 9) faith, 10) mindfulness, 11) conscience, 12) shame, 13) non-greed, 14) non-hate, 15) non-delusion, 16) tranquillity of the [mental] body, 17) tranquillity of consciousness, 18) lightness of the [mental] body, 19) lightness of consciousness, 20) malleability of the [mental] body, 21) malleability of consciousness, 22) wieldiness of the [mental] body, 23) wieldiness of consciousness, 24) proficiency of the [mental] body, 25) proficiency of consciousness, 26) rectitude of the [mental] body, 27) rectitude of consciousness. The four ‘or-whatever-states’ are: 1) zeal (desire), 2) resolution, 3) attention (bringing to mind), 4) specific neutrality. The five inconstant states are: 1) compassion, 2) gladness, 3) abstinence from bodily misconduct, 4) abstinence from verbal misconduct, 5) abstinence from wrong livelihood. (Vism XIV. 133.)

<sup>174</sup> Factors, which are Harmful conditions, are described in three groups: those rooted in greed, those rooted in hate and those rooted in ignorance. The full list in *Visuddhimagga* of conditions rooted in greed is: 1) concentration, 2) consciencelessness, 3) shamelessness, 4) greed, 5) delusion, 6) wrong view. The conditions rooted in hate are 7) concentration, 8) consciencelessness, 9) shamelessness, 10) hate, and 11) delusion. The conditions rooted in ignorance are steadiness of consciousness, 12) consciencelessness, 13) shamelessness, 14) delusion, and 15) uncertainty. The four or-whatever-states are: 16) zeal, 17) resolution, 18) agitation, and 19) attention. The three inconstant states are: 20) envy, 21) avarice, and 22) worry. The or-whatever-states are: 23) agitation and 24) attention. (Vism XIV.159-176).

distinctive ways that we do.”<sup>175</sup> This point bears a striking similarity to EUDE. For EUDE there is a latent tendency in every human being, termed ‘Ego Effect’, which prior to choice or decision-making has the potential to cause an egocentric harmful construction of thoughts and actions (verbal and physical) that drives our ‘apparent’ choices or decisions. I will pursue this point further in the next chapter. For now, we can conclude that human experience is nothing but a “pile of factors”<sup>176</sup> in a continuous impermanent form of states that constitute our personality and condition us in a profound way.

The question now is where these conditions originate. In classical Indian thought the origins of these tendencies or predispositions are said to be the result of *karmic* activity. The Buddha explains *kamma* as the result of actions that create dispositions, inclinations and temperaments that determine our status of rebirth.<sup>177</sup> Thus, these tendencies and predispositions exist because of past conditions, which ripen as a result of conditions in our present experiences and in turn condition our future rebirth. Hence we could say that we are ‘*karmic agents*’ whose experiences, according to the method of Dependent Origination explained in the *Abhidhamma* system, is a dynamic composition of conditioned and conditioning factors “conceived of as active volitional forces.”<sup>178</sup> Rupert Gethin explains that in the *Abhidhamma*, the karmic agent is not presented as “an analysis of a man as an object, but rather the understanding of the nature of conditioned existence from the point of view of the experiencing subject.”<sup>179</sup> As we shall see, this seems to echo how Buddhaghosacārya approaches the analysis and exploration of experience.

### 3.1.1 Main Concerns and Hopes about Human Experience

Thus as *karmic* agents we have these deeply-rooted inherent tendencies, or forces that have the potential to corrupt our perception, intentions feelings and

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<sup>175</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 83.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>177</sup> MN III 203.

<sup>178</sup> Rupert Gethin, (1986) ‘The five *Khandhas*: Their Treatment in the *Nikāyas* and Early *Abhidhamma*’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 14: p. 37.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

motivations, and consequently our human interaction. Buddhaghosacārya highlights this concern when quoting the *sutta* where the Devas (deities) asked the Buddha the following question:

The inner tangle and the outer tangle— This generation is entangled in a tangle. And so I ask of Gotama this question: Who succeeds in disentangling this tangle?<sup>180</sup>

This riddle, which in fact shows two problematic situations and one reflective question, triggers the entire design of Buddhaghosacārya's work. Thus, **a)** the first problematic situation refers to the word 'tangle' - explained by Buddhaghosacārya as a "network of craving (*taṇhā*)"<sup>181</sup> - shows a concern for how to untangle the harmful conditions that are so central and problematic for human experience where craving (*taṇhā*) is considered the most dangerous of all, **b)** The second problematic situation refers to 'the inner tangle and the outer tangle' that exposes the fact that our experience is shaped by others' experiences; it is not solipsistic but the result of constant human interaction. This in fact explains that human conditionality is within - as we have already explained - but is also conditioned by others' experience. Hence "entanglement [is] found in the actual states - conditioning relationalities, functions, subject-object reciprocalities - through which our lives find expression."<sup>182</sup> This takes us to the reflective question of the riddle: **c)** what is required for dismantling and removing these harmful requisites. This will be answered by Buddhaghosacārya when he shows the human potential for seeing and knowing those harmful requisites by following a distinctive set of practices on which the whole of the *Visuddhimagga* is based.

#### *a) Harmful Conditions in Human Experience*

Harmful conditions are considered to be delusions or corruptions of perception, and are emphasised in various forms and places in the Buddha's sermons.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Vism I.7.

<sup>181</sup> Vism I.2.

<sup>182</sup> Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad (2018) *The Body in Contemplation*, Oxford University Press [forthcoming], p. 12. [Chapter manuscript].

<sup>183</sup> See *suttas* MN 122, MN III 104 and 109, SN IV.293.

Harmful conditions are described by Nyanaponika as “the intrusion of a foreign element that disturbs the mind’s tranquillity with agitation; that prevents its agility with obstruction, its pliancy with hardening, its workableness with unbalance, and its proficiency with weakness; that deflects its uprightness.”<sup>184</sup> There are different ways to classify these harmful conditions, or negative forces, as they are also called. *Bhikkhu* Bodhi invites us to see them in three groups: the conditions responsible for flawed behaviour, the conditions that impede the success of the practice, and the conditions that maintain bondage to the cycle of rebirth.<sup>185</sup> Bodhi describes the first group as gross hindrances that exhibit themselves in the form of desire for things that please any of the senses including sensual desire, but also as anger, ill-will etc. The second group refers to sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry. While these first two groups are easily discernible in oneself and others, the third group, which Bodhi terms underlying tendencies, is more difficult to see. In the *suttas* such as MN 36.47 this last group is called *āsavas*, a term used to represent states that defile, bring re-becoming, cause problems and *dukkha*, and lead to aging, death and future birth. Bodhi translates *āsavas* as cankers, corruptions, or taints.<sup>186</sup> In *The Expositor (Attasālinī)*<sup>187</sup> Pe Maung Tin translates the term as ‘intoxicants’. Among this last group described by *Bhikkhu* Bodhi *taṇhā* is one condition that deserves further explanation.

The term *taṇhā* has been translated variously as: craving, hunger for something, excitement, and the fever of unsatisfied longing.<sup>188</sup> The Buddha identified three forms of craving (*taṇhā*): sensual-craving (*Kama-tanha*), craving to be (*Bhava-tanha*) and craving not to be (*Vibhava-tanha*). Edwina Pio explains that out of this famous triad the *Sanyuta Nikāya* classifies 108 modes of craving.<sup>189</sup> The *Nikāyas* explain that the first form of craving brings craving for sense objects, which provide a pleasant feeling, or craving for sensory pleasures. The second

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<sup>184</sup> Nyanaponika Thera (1998) *Abhidhamma Studies: Buddhist Exploration of Consciousness and Time*, Wisdom Publications, p. 80.

<sup>185</sup> *Bhikkhu* Bodhi, (2012) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha; A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya*, Wisdom Publications, pp. 26-28.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>187</sup> *Exp.*, pp. 63.

<sup>188</sup> PED.

<sup>189</sup> Edwina Pio (2001) *Buddhist Psychology: Modern Perspective*, Abhinav Publications, pp. 16-17.

craving infers a being who craves not to experience the world, or who craves to be separated from painful feelings. The third form infers a being who believes himself/herself to be a monad, independent, sovereign of his/her own will and choices, and who craves to prevail and dominate over others. This form of craving is considered highly problematic because it generates one of the most problematic mental formations; that of the 'identity view' (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*),<sup>190</sup> considered the most dangerous of all views, which causes us to suffer and keeps us in this cycle of existence, namely *saṃsāra*,<sup>191</sup> declared by the Buddha as the "Thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed ... is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress."<sup>192</sup> That is because it generates one of the most problematic mental formations; that of the 'identity view' (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). When a person holds a mental formation of an identity view, the Buddha explains, that person "assumes feeling to be the self, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling. He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception. He assumes formations to be the self, or the self as possessing formations, or formations as in the self, or the self as in formations. He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness. This, monk, is how self-identity view comes about."<sup>193</sup> The Buddha adds, "a person with such views is considered to have a corrupt mind, to be ill, and to be in a state of faultiness and a state of suffering. A person with these predispositions exists in a state where he or she is likely to commit unskillful acts."<sup>194</sup>

Identity view has been the subject of many scholarly studies and debates in recent years. These studies have tried to establish how the Pali *Abhidhamma* system proposes the destruction of these pernicious views through its *Dhamma*

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<sup>190</sup> The following are some of the places where the Buddha addressed this identity view: SN 41.3, MN 109, MN 2, Iti 100-112, AN 5.200.

<sup>191</sup> See *suttas* SN 41.3, MN 109, MN 2, Iti 100-112, AN 5.200.

<sup>192</sup> MN 2. Other *suttas* where the Buddha specifically names them as 'pernicious views' are: SN III 99 and 182-183, 204-205; also MN i 130-131 and i 256-257.

<sup>193</sup> MN 109 See also SN 12.2.

<sup>194</sup> See *suttas* MN 101, MN 33, MN 110, Iti 1-27.

theory. Some of the interpretations of the *Abhidhamma* system have explained the ‘identity view’ by combining doctrines of non-self (*anatta*)<sup>195</sup> and emptiness (*suññatā*)<sup>196</sup>. Examples of these debates and ideas can be found in various academic works,<sup>197</sup> but it is not our intention to pursue them here. What is important is to examine the distinctive view held by Buddhaghosacārya concerning these harmful conditions and their effect on human experience.

### *b) Harmful Conditions in Human Interaction*

My reading of Buddhaghosacārya is that he was interested in how we are intimately interconnected with the experience of others, and the effect these harmful conditions have on a person’s social dimension. Human experience however does not operate in isolation. We interact with others and it is in these interactions that harmful actions bring another dimension to harmful conditions. Heim illustrates this social dimension very well when she states “humans are porous in nature; quick to anger from others’ incursions on us; shaped by culture, family life, and habit; and implicated in complicated histories and relationships with particular others.”<sup>198</sup>

Buddhaghosacārya begins by defining consciousness states variegated according to relations based on circumstances. Thus for him the tangle, or network, of craving is viewed as “arising for one’s own requisites and another’s, for one’s own person and another’s, and for the internal and external bases [consciousness].”<sup>199</sup> He explains that our experience can be shaped by others’ experiences: “because there is a person there can be another person; because there is a teacher, there can be a student; and there is no easy way to repay or give back to them for this.”<sup>200</sup> This suggests that what a person is, is defined by relationships and by others (you cannot be a student without having a teacher, and vice versa,

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<sup>195</sup> See *suttas* SN III.141, IV.49, V.345, in *sutta* II.37 of AN, II.37–45 and II.80.

<sup>196</sup> See *suttas* MN 122, MN III 104 and 109, SN IV.293.

<sup>197</sup> For more reference see Jonardon Ganeri, (2012) *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, pp. 155-213. See also Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson and Dan Zahavi, (eds.) (2011) *Self, No Self?: Perspectives from Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, Oxford University Press, pp. 56-78.

<sup>198</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 234.

<sup>199</sup> Vism I.2.

<sup>200</sup> MN v.70.

and he means this in a nontrivial sense). As Heim writes, “our minds and actions do not stand apart from these relationships, but are made up of them”<sup>201</sup> However, the tradition also understands that those others in human interactions are persons; they too are a ‘pile of factors’ with inherent tendencies and a degree of blindness, like us. Consequently, they too have some degree of corrupt or diluted perception.

It is through all these compounded factors from both sides that our personhood is shaped by others and that we shape those others in return. Heim poetically describes this process: “important patterns of intersubjectivity are woven throughout these tapestries.”<sup>202</sup> Does this imply that experience is fundamentally intersubjective? Everything that Buddhaghosacārya and the tradition have explained so far seems to support this view. If we accept this, then it can be said that these patterns of intersubjectivity are what gives new dimension to *taṇhā*, and for that matter to any other harmful conditions as well. Our analysis leads us to see that our personhood does not keep harmful states solely within its internal boundaries. It implies that these formations occur within our human interactions in the form of actions (physical or verbal). Due to this intersubjective nature of human experience our actions are as much conditioned by others as they condition others. From these patterns of intersubjectivity Buddhaghosacārya shows us not only how conditioned we are by our own root tendencies, but also how heavily conditioned we are by others and by our context. This leads us to reflect on the fragility of human experience and the consequences of our harmful conditions on human interaction.

### *c) Human Potential*

The Buddha also emphasised our potential when he said, “I do not see even one other thing that, when developed and cultivated, is so malleable and wieldy as the mind.”<sup>203</sup> He grounded his teachings on recognising the human condition. As Caroline A.F. Rhys Davids writes, “The Buddhist was nothing if not a pragmatist in

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<sup>201</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 234.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, p. 223.

<sup>203</sup> AN i V.47.

his psychologizing, showing therein a psychological sagacity not a little striking.”<sup>204</sup> Thus Buddhaghosacārya says that changes in our way of attending and apprehending to our experiences come about on the arrival of what he names the moment of opportunity, the ‘right time’ (*samaya*). Quoting the Buddha from *Aṅguttara* iv.227. Buddhaghosacārya writes “*Bhikkhus*, there is but one moment one *samaya* for the practice of the holy life.”<sup>205</sup> This is described as a concurrence of causes or the existence of a condition that can be brought about by following the eightfold path.<sup>206</sup> Hoffman and Deegalle explain that “from the Theravada perspective, the Noble Eightfold Path is the only path (*ekāyano ayam maggo*) which leads to purification of beings.”<sup>207</sup> It is divided in two parts; the first four planes of liberation are for the mundane (*lokiya*),<sup>208</sup> the last four planes of liberation are for the soteriological or supra mundane (*lokuttara*). The path is achieved through a progressive process, namely the seven purifications of mind,<sup>209</sup> through the three-fold training.<sup>210</sup>

Therefore, this moment of opportunity means ‘disentangling the tangle’ by working towards clarity, which in itself is neither good nor bad, merely the ability to see, comprehend and understand our human condition. It is a moment of opportunity to change our human experience and our attitudes towards human interaction, and to exercise constantly and consistently care for our thoughts and actions. This could be equated with EUDE’s concept of Caring for the Experience.

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<sup>204</sup> C.A.F. Rhys Davids, (1898) ‘On the Will in Buddhism’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, pp. 48.

<sup>205</sup> Exp., p. 76.

<sup>206</sup> SN 45.8 on the subject of retraining our orientation to see our human experience and the world (right view and thought), transforming unskillful actions for skillful actions (right speech, action, and livelihood), and disciplining the mind (mindfulness, and concentration).

<sup>207</sup> Hoffman and Deegalle, 1998, p. 107.

<sup>208</sup> The four planes of liberation consist of stream-enterer, once returner, non-returner and Aranhat.

<sup>209</sup> The seven stages of purification (*satta-visuddhi*) are explained in the Relay Chariots (*Rathavinīta-sutta*) MN 24. They are: Purification of Conduct (*sīla-visuddhi*), Purification of Mind (*citta-visuddhi*), Purification of View (*ditthi-visuddhi*), Purification by Overcoming Doubt (*kankha-vitarana-visuddhi*), Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What Is the Path and Not the Path (*maggamagga-ñānadassana-visuddhi*), Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Course of Practice (*patipada-ñānadassana-visuddhi*) and Purification by Knowledge and Vision (*ñānadassana-visuddhi*).

<sup>210</sup> Virtue (*sīla*), Concentration (*samādhi*) and Wisdom (*paññā*).



### 3.2 DEFINING, SEEING AND KNOWING

It appears when reading Buddhaghosacārya that all these harmful conditions that produce wrong perceptions, motivations, intentions and feelings, come about because a person fails to see the mutability of experience, *anicca* (impermanence), even less its conditioned state, and thus cannot see the sign (*nimitta*)<sup>211</sup> of those harmful conditions, or the role they play in conditioning our experiences. Buddhaghosacārya describes this person as follows: “He is like a blind man who wanders about the earth, encountering now right and now wrong paths, now heights and now hollows, now even and now uneven ground, and so he forms formations now of merit, now of demerit, now imperturbable.”<sup>212</sup> Such a person is said to be in a state of blindness.

Indeed Buddhaghosacārya explains that this blindness has the characteristic of unknowing because there is no penetration and this causes (unjustified) interpreting. He then declares that the cause is lack of wise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*),<sup>213</sup> which is directing the attention away from the conditions of experience, thus failing to see and know its harmful conditions.

Delusion has the characteristic of blindness, or it has the characteristic of unknowing. Its function is non-penetration, or its function is to conceal the individual essence of an object. It is manifested as the absence of right, or it is manifested as darkness. Its proximate cause is unwise (unjustified) attention.<sup>214</sup>

Viewed from another perspective, the lack of attentiveness to the conditions leaves the mind unguarded, thus allowing root tendencies to direct our perceptions,

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<sup>211</sup> Sign is a vital element of attention practice and will be explained in detail in the next section. For now it is sufficient to say that through meditation the practitioner can succeed in creating an imaginative image of the sensory object. From there he/she can shift attention to working with this image rather than with the actual object/subject of meditation. See Vism IV.126. It is important to note that according to Ñāṇamoli the three different signs defined by Buddhaghosacārya – preliminary work sign, learning sign and counterpart sign – do not appear in the Piṭakas. Vism p. 108.

<sup>212</sup> Vism XVII.118.

<sup>213</sup> Vism XIV.163-164.

<sup>214</sup> Vism XIV.163.

motivations, intentions and feelings. Buddhaghosacārya regards lack of attention as the root of all that is harmful,<sup>215</sup> which brings sorrow and lamentation, thus suffering.<sup>216</sup> Indeed the actions brought by our not seeing and knowing the complexity of experience are what Buddhaghosacārya and the tradition term *akusala* and which manifests itself in dogmatism, egoism, selfishness, greed, enmity, disinterestedness etc.<sup>217</sup> In other words *akusala* represents incorrect seeing due to the lack of careful attention to the conditions and conditionality of experience. In EUDE *akusala* will be equivalent to not caring for the experience.

The opposite of what has been described is to be able to take action based on seeing and knowing the complexities of human experience. This is termed *kusala* and is defined by Buddhaghosacārya as follows:

[*Kusala's*] characteristic is its blameless and happy result, its function is the shattering of what is bad (*akusala*), its manifestation is purification, and its immediate cause is careful attention.<sup>218</sup>

This means acting with correct seeing (*yathābhūta**dassana*), and acting with careful attention to the conditions and conditionality of experience. Hence *kusala* is the result of an act of seeing and knowing, which shatters all harmful conditions. Although it points to an ideal human accomplishment, while EUDE has a far more modest aim, EUDE's Caring for the Experience bears a limited resemblance to the functions of *kusala*.

As I understand Buddhaghosacārya, these two terms *akusala* and *kusala* represent his main concern - removing the practitioner's blindness - and his main objective - that of cultivate correct seeing. Actions brought about by correct seeing do not mean seeking to arrive at a position or a view about how the world and everything in it is, since the term does not mean right or wrong, good or bad, or correct or incorrect. In fact, somewhat ironically, correct seeing keeps the mind away from claiming that some particular view is correct. It means the absence of

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<sup>215</sup> Vism XIV.163.

<sup>216</sup> Vism I.42.

<sup>217</sup> Exp., p. 50.

<sup>218</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 55.

obstructions, and corruptions of harmful conditions that cloud thoughts and actions. Hence *kusala* is the result of the very act of seeing and knowing the particularities of experience; *akusala* is the result of the very act of not being able to see and know experience as contingent and conditioned. Heim notes the ethical value of the terms: “when *kusala/akusala* modify karma, intention, and conduct, they are reflecting ethical concerns of how one should act and think in mundane life. Moreover, *kusala* is something discerning people can come to know directly because actions that are brought about by *kusala* or *akusala* have results or fruits.”<sup>219</sup> When *kusala* or *akusala* becomes a habit, the conditions are reinforced so that actions brought about by them remain as a latent tendency (*anusaya*)<sup>220</sup> for future actions.

### 3.2.1 The Relation between Correct Seeing and Wise Attention (*yoniso manasikāra*)

The progressive and transformative process of the path is based on the belief that a person who wrongly constructs views and feelings out of harmony with the impermanence, conditionality and mutual dependency of conditions in experience, has the potential to dissolve such views by seeing correctly.

*Bhikkhus*, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. Who knows and sees what? Wise attention and unwise attention. When one attends unwisely, unarisen taints arise and arisen taints increase. When one attends wisely, unarisen taints do not arise and arisen taints are abandoned.<sup>221</sup>

The above *sutta* highlights two important points. One is that the path moves towards gaining and purifying seeing and knowing; the other is that seeing and knowing is possible by shifting the way we attend and apprehend the particularities of experience through the cultivation of wise attention (*yoniso*

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<sup>219</sup> Maria Heim (2015) ‘Buddhaghosa on the Phenomenology of Love and Compassion’, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*, Jonardon Ganeri (ed.), Oxford University Press, p. 56.

<sup>220</sup> Vism XXI.22-68.

<sup>221</sup> MN i. 7.

*manasikāra*). This maps with the explanation in the *Anguttara* commentary that there are two ways in which ‘right view’ (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) or ‘correct seeing’ (*yathābhūta*) arises, and that is through wise attention, or through listening to others.<sup>222</sup> Wise attention can be defined as the correct seeing that gets to the root of things and reflects one’s own experience in relation to the *dhmma*. Heim and Ram-Prasad highlight that for Buddhaghosacārya, correct seeing brought about by the cultivation of wise attention contrasts with the discredit of “resorting to views.”<sup>223</sup> This significant distinction is made in order to highlight that in fact resorting to views is the opposite of what correct seeing is all about.

In the *Yoniso Sutta*, ‘The Discourse on Being Wise’,<sup>224</sup> wise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*) is said to have the function of detecting harmful conditions and the characteristic of directing the attention to the root of things.<sup>225</sup> In his translation of the *Khuddakapāṭha*, Bhikkhu Ñānamoli emphasises *yoniso* as “from the womb” or from its origin or cause.<sup>226</sup> Buddhaghosacārya defines *yoniso manasikāra* as attention to the conditions and to the conditionality of experience: “knowing in a particular mode separate from the modes of perceiving and cognizing.”<sup>227</sup> Wise attention means penetration,<sup>228</sup> which is not simply mere attention, but attention that brings seeing and knowing. In the words of Buddhaghosacārya, the understanding that wise attention brings about is “knowledge associated with profitable consciousness.”<sup>229</sup> Although we will explain the differences in more detail in the ‘Methods and Techniques’ section, it is important to recognise here that the way of knowing that wise attention brings about is quite different from mere perception. Buddhaghosacārya places wise

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<sup>222</sup> AN 2:157 and MA 2:346.

<sup>223</sup> Maria Heim and Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad (2018) ‘In a Double Way: *Nāma Nāma -rūpa* in Buddhaghosa’s Phenomenology’, *Philosophy East and West: A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy*, [forthcoming].

<sup>224</sup> SN 45.49/5:29.

<sup>225</sup> Piya Tan, trans. (2010) *Yoniso Sutta: The Discourse on Being Wise: The Internal Condition for the Noble Eightfold Path* | S 45.55/ SN 5:31 Pali Text Society.

<sup>226</sup> See Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, trans. (1978) *The Minor Readings (Khuddakapāṭha)*, Pali Text Society, p. 260.

<sup>227</sup> Vism XIV.5.

<sup>228</sup> Vism XXIII.22.

<sup>229</sup> Vism XIV.3. A point of clarification on profitable consciousness. This is a consciousness accompanied by joy and associated with knowledge. Knowledge is the discrimination of hindrances and defilements (unprofitable consciousness). It is also knowledge of the results of unprofitable consciousness, which is suffering.

attention as one of the most important qualities to be developed,<sup>230</sup> adding to what the Buddha in *sutta* SN 46:13 explained when he said that wise attention is a prerequisite for enlightenment.

### 3.2.2 The Absence of Harmful Conditions

Buddhaghosacārya explains that the ceasing of root-causes does not simply mean the sudden replacement of them for something else. Rather, the ceasing is the result of unformed (*asaṅkhata-paññatti*) harmful conditions.<sup>231</sup> Buddhaghosacārya quoting the Buddha<sup>232</sup> explains:

*Fading away* is not mere absence of greed, but rather it is that unformed *dhmma* which, while given the names “disillusionment of vanity,” etc., in the clause, “that is to say, the disillusionment of vanity ... *Nibbāna*,” is treated basically as *fading away*. It is called *disillusionment of vanity* because on coming to it all kinds of vanity (intoxication), such as the vanity of conceit, and vanity of manhood, are disillusioned, undone, done away with. And it is called *elimination of thirst* because on coming to it all thirst for sense desires is eliminated and quenched. But it is called *abolition of reliance* because on coming to its reliance on the five cords of sense desire is abolished. It is called *termination of the round* because on coming to it the round of the three planes [of existence] is terminated. It is called *destruction of craving* because on coming to it craving is entirely destroyed, fades away and ceases.<sup>233</sup>

The explanation that Buddhaghosacārya offers above is that the fading away of harmful condition is caused by carefully and wisely seeing and discerning the impermanence and conditionality in experience. He explains the emphasis on ceasing root-causes in the following analogy: “Just as a tree cut down grows up

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<sup>230</sup> Vism IV.52.

<sup>231</sup> Vism VIII.245-251.

<sup>232</sup> “*Bhikkhus*, in so far as there are *dhmmas*, whether formed or unformed, fading away is pronounced the best of them, that is to say, the disillusionment of vanity, the elimination of thirst, the abolition of reliance, the termination of the round, the destruction of craving, fading away, cessation, *Nibbāna*.” (A ii 34).

<sup>233</sup> Vism VIII.247.

again while yet its root remains unharmed and sound, so with the tendency to crave intact this suffering is ever reproduced.”<sup>234</sup> Hence, as stated in the Third Noble Truth, the path of purity aims for the cessation of root-causes. This means that there is not a counterpart of root-causes, only their mere non-formation, so when craving ceases, it is non-craving. The same applies to hate and delusion where their absence is non-hate and non-delusion. That is why the path is not about cultivating wisdom, or love, or detachment, but - as we shall see - about cultivating the necessary attention until seeing and knowing are attained and conditionality and impermanence are apprehended. This gradual process abandons, dismantles and removes the causes of these root-conditions so that they eventually fade away and cease to exist.

Buddhaghosacārya explains that two states cannot co-exist simultaneously, for example one cannot love and hate during the same thought moment – one either loves or one hates:

The divine abiding of loving-kindness has greed as its near enemy, since both share in seeing virtues. Greed behaves like a foe who keeps close by a man, and it easily finds an opportunity. So loving-kindness should be well protected from it. And ill will, which is dissimilar to the similar greed, is its far enemy like a foe ensconced in a rock wilderness. So loving-kindness must be practiced free from fear of that; for it is not possible to practice loving-kindness and feel anger simultaneously.<sup>235</sup>

Nonetheless he goes on to explain that if there is absence of hate in one's experience then one is able to see new things that are not formed by hate because of the absence of its obstructions. This does not imply that love arises because hate is not present; what it says is that the possibility for the state of love can arise if other conditions come together. Using the language of Buddhaghosacārya it can be said that if hate is not present other factors are used without the condition of hate. What then will the final object of consciousness look like without hate as a

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<sup>234</sup> Vism XVI.62. See also Dhp 338.

<sup>235</sup> Vism IX.98. See also DN III 247–48.

condition? We do not know, but we know that it will look anything but hateful. Some may argue that one could love some people and hate others, but Buddhaghosacārya is not talking about the kind of love that is conditioned by one's craving and desires and is totally co-dependent. He is talking about a constant state of not having the presence of hate because harmful conditions that bring such sentiments in experience are absent.

Buddhaghosacārya's training shows two different practices for gradually achieving these absences. In one practice, one fills one's mind with caring thoughts and good deeds so that harmful conditions do not arise during all those moments when one's mind is occupied with those helpful thoughts, thus making possible a mode of living (*viharati*) in which this becomes possible, habituated and perhaps eventually, second-nature. This is the case of virtues practices, which Buddhaghosacārya explains in the first section of the *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>236</sup> The other practice breaks down experience so that through the cultivation of attention and discernment, one sees and knows and in consequence, dismantles and removes, those harmful, conditions whose absence allows other less harmful thoughts and actions to flourish. This is described in Part II (Concentration) and Part III (Understanding) of the *Visuddhimagga*. The training proposed by Buddhaghosacārya, however, embodies these triadic practices, where one practice has a strong emphasis on moral development aimed at the absence of harmful actions, while the other two practices focus on an intense insistence on developing a vision and understanding the impermanence and conditionality in experience. In other words, these mutually-dependent intertwined practices create a bridge between blindness and correct seeing by working to gradually dismantle and cause to cease the harmful conditions. Collectively, these mutually-dependent intertwined practices entail what Heim has described as a "rigorous therapeutic regimen of practical methods,"<sup>237</sup> ingeniously designed by Buddhaghosacārya in the *Visuddhimagga*. I view these practices as a process for taking care of experiences, a process achieved through the various contemplative practices that shift perspective and imagination. This is central to the whole programme of

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<sup>236</sup> Vism I.1-161 (*sīla* chapter)

<sup>237</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 1.

ethical development for both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya, as we will see in Chapter 4. Before turning to the practices, we need first to describe Buddhaghosacārya's method for purifying seeing and knowing.

### 3.3 THE METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR BREAKING DOWN AND EXPLORING EXPERIENCE.

The Buddha was able to penetrate human experience and to subtract from its particulars general templates that help us to see and know the conditions of any particular experience, and to understand how they work together. The templates were explained in the *Sutta Piṭaka* but a detailed explanation of them is found mainly in the *Abhidhamma* system. Based on these Pali texts, Buddhaghosacārya designs, crafts and accommodates the methods and techniques in the *Visuddhimagga*, together with their various contents. The main two methods described in Buddhaghosacārya's work are the *jhāna*<sup>238</sup> for shifting the practitioner's focus of attention and for cultivating concentration (*samādhi*)<sup>239</sup> into the characteristics and conditions of experience, and *vipassanā*<sup>240</sup> for understanding and gaining insight into how those conditions work.

Winston L. King views these two methods for achieving concentration and insight as being at the heart of the Theravada tradition.<sup>241</sup> Heim describes them as an "analytic method of exploring experience."<sup>242</sup> For Ram-Prasad, they are the "realization of the Noble Truths taught by the Buddha."<sup>243</sup> Both practices are regarded by the Buddha as the 'Only Way' (*ekāyano maggo*),<sup>244</sup> the unfailing master keys for training the mind. One is said to bring the ability to pay selective

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<sup>238</sup> Winston L. King explains that the *jhāna*, a form of meditative concentration that belongs to the Hindu Yoga system, "yield different theoretical and experiential results when embedded in the Buddhist (*vipassanic*) context." See King, 1980, p. 43.

<sup>239</sup> *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli clarifies that *Samādhi* which means, serenity, tranquillity (reserved here for *passaddhi*) or calm or quiet, is also a synonym for absorption concentration. Vism p. 84, fn.7.

<sup>240</sup> *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli explains that 'insight' (*vipassanā*) is a synonym for understanding. Vism p. 84, fn.7.

<sup>241</sup> King, 1980, p. 82.

<sup>242</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>243</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 10.

<sup>244</sup> Nyanaponika (2014) *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, Rider, p. 24.



and careful attention to the characteristics of experience, the other to bring the ability to pay wise attention in order to discern the impermanence and conditionality of those characteristics. The first brings “hedonic indifference”<sup>245</sup> with the attainment of equanimity, the emotional state required for discernment. Discernment then enables analysis into the conditionality and impermanence of experience, an analysis that - from our understanding of Buddhaghosacārya’s reading of the *Abhidhamma* system - should keep away from any particular view of reality. In fact, it can be said that resorting to any view while exploring experience will be a sign that harmful conditions are still active.

### 3.3.1 The *Jhāna* Template and its Content

The *jhāna* template for shifting attention and concentration to the particularities of experience, is described by Buddhaghosacārya as the fourfold system for “viewing the object closely.”<sup>246</sup> The sole objective of the *jhānas* is to shift and sharpen our capacity to pay attention to what we find in experience. Describing the function of the *jhāna* template, King suggests that it is a “device for achieving high levels of concentration, in which ordinary attention, which jumps from subject to subject like a monkey in a tree, is progressively restricted in its ranging about and brought under control of the one-directional will to attainment.”<sup>247</sup> The Buddha said, “One who is concentrated knows and sees correctly.”<sup>248</sup> De La Vallée Poussin notes that this form of intense concentration (*samādhi*), means oneness of mind with the object.<sup>249</sup> Sarbacker views it as a meditative absorption or trance attained by the practice of *jhānas*.<sup>250</sup> Buddhaghosacārya calls it a profitable unification of mind (*cittass’ ekaggatā*).<sup>251</sup> Commenting on Buddhaghosacārya’s work, *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli amplifies this description by adding that *cittass’ ekaggatā* is rendered in the sense of agreement or harmony (*samagga*) of consciousness and its

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<sup>245</sup> King, 1980, p. 29.

<sup>246</sup> Exp., p. 206.

<sup>247</sup> King, 1980, p. 31.

<sup>248</sup> AN V.3

<sup>249</sup> Louis de La Vallée Poussin, (1990) *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, vol. 1 Asian Humanities Press, pp. 189–90.

<sup>250</sup> Stuart Ray Sarbacker (2012) *Samadhi: The Numinous and Cessative in Indo-Tibetan Yoga*, SUNY Press, p. 13.

<sup>251</sup> Exp., p. 13.

concomitants in focusing on a single object. He further notes that Buddhaghosacārya sometimes renders it, as ‘one-pointedness’, which *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli describes as the sense of focusing like a searchlight.<sup>252</sup>

The description of the *jhāna* template was described by the Buddha based on his own personal experience as follows:

So, I, *brahman*, aloof from the pleasure of the senses, aloof from unskilled states of mind, entered into the first meditation which is accompanied by initial thought and discursive thought, is born of aloofness and is rapturous and joyful. By allaying initial and discursive thought, with the mind subjectively tranquillised and fixed on one point, I entered into and abide in the second meditation which is devoid of initial and discursive thought, is born of concentration, and is rapturous and joyful. By the fading out of rapture, I dwelt with equanimity, attentive and clearly conscious: and I experienced in my person that joy of which the *ariyans* say: "joyful lives he who has equanimity and is mindful," and I entered into and abided in the third meditation. By getting rid of joy, by getting rid of anguish, by the going down of my former pleasures and sorrows, I entered into the fourth meditation which has neither anguish nor joy and is entirely purified by equanimity and mindfulness.<sup>253</sup>

The Buddha’s description shows in brief the process from access to absorption that we will examine in detail in Section 3.4. For the moment it is sufficient to say that the main function of the process is to remove the toxic and distracting thoughts and feelings that ordinarily cloud the mind. The *jhāna* practice cultivates (*bhāvanā*)<sup>254</sup> attention and mental discipline and aims at equipping the practitioner

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<sup>252</sup> *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli, 2010, chapter III note 2, p. 81.

<sup>253</sup> MN, I, pp.27-28 (I.21-22).

<sup>254</sup> The term *bhāvanā* is defined by both Buddhaghosacārya (Vism p. 217) and Walpola Rahula as something that “cleans the mind of impurities and disturbances”. See Walpola Rahula (1974) *What the Buddha Taught*, Grove Press. However the term has generally been used as an equivalent to meditation, or in combination with particular faculties, to signal what sort of cultivation is intended, for example: *citta-bhāvanā* development of mind, *samādhi-bhāvanā* development of concentration, or *mettā-bhāvanā* development of loving-kindness. For more references relating to

with the ability to remove harmful conditions by seeing them close enough to detect their grossness. It is through seeing their grossness that the abandoning of sensual desire and greed can take place. The *jhāna* template is a mode of meditative concentration that requires an object or subject to focus and concentrate on; it does not work in a vacuum. There are forty well-crafted objects/subjects (described below) that form the content of the *jhāna*. The *jhāna* works in the same way with any of these forty object/subjects of contemplative meditation.<sup>255</sup> Buddhaghosacārya divides the object/subjects into two groups: those used for access concentration which first train attention to closely examine the object, and those used for absorption concentration, which train “attention to (view or) examine closely the characteristic marks.”<sup>256</sup> This brings us back to the harmful conditions, which Buddhaghosacārya describes as the opposites of *jhāna*. These hindrances<sup>257</sup> or harmful conditions are darkness; while *jhāna* is like a lamp that brings the light that dispels darkness,<sup>258</sup> thus, correct seeing. Hence harmful conditions and correct seeing are opposites and therefore cannot co-exist simultaneously. Correct seeing brings harmful conditions into absence in experience. However some harmful conditions may be visible enough and the preliminary development of attention through the *jhānas* could be sufficient for their removal, but some other harmful conditions, that are deeper and well rooted in our psyche, may require specific contemplative experiences for training attention to them.

The content of the *jhāna* can be any of the forty object/subjects of experiences that can alter our perceptions and emotional states in various ways. These contemplative experiences are an intensive training for shifting then cultivating attention to the insubstantial, the impersonal, and to the repulsive

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the term, see Caroline Rhys Davids (1901) ‘A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics of the Fourth Century B.C.’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 33:1, pp. 129-139.

<sup>255</sup> The meditation objects/subjects consist of ten *Kasinas*, ten Kinds of foulness, ten Recollections, four Divine Abidings, four Immaterial States, one Perception and one Defining.

<sup>256</sup> Exp., p. 222.

<sup>257</sup> Buddhaghosacārya here refers to the five hindrances that are considered the main ones to eradicate during the process of these contemplative practices. They are: sense desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and doubt. (Exp. p.220). See also Vism IV.32, for a detailed explanation of the two kinds of concentration.

<sup>258</sup> Exp., p. 220.

aspects of our discursive thoughts on how we think things are in the world. The aim of the contemplative experiences is hedonic indifference and the purifying of the emotional states brought about by greed, attachment or hatred that is necessary for the attainment of equanimity, the emotional state required for correct seeing.

Hence Buddhaghosacārya's explanation of what is achieved through the *jhānas* and their forty contemplative practices are: a) acquired mastery in the five ways of attention - mastery in advertizing, mastery in attaining, mastery in resolving (steadying the duration), mastery in emerging, and mastery in reviewing, b) hedonic indifference and equanimity, brought about by the removal of the five hindrances, and c) one-pointedness of mind or unification of mind - a necessary requisite for the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*).

### 3.3.2 The *Vipassanā* Methods

Bodhi says of *vipassanā* (insight) that it can be understood as the mind's ability to "penetrate deep into the truth of the *Dhamma*."<sup>259</sup> Buddhaghosacārya describes it "as an act of understanding,"<sup>260</sup> which is "a particular mode of knowing"<sup>261</sup> that uses two *Abhidhamma* methods for breaking down experience for its analysis – the five aggregates (*Khandhas*)<sup>262</sup> and the twelve-linked Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*).<sup>263</sup> Heim explains that these *Abhidhamma* methods "define the experience itself, its origin, its varieties, its fruit, its cessation, and the path to its cessations."<sup>264</sup> Nyanaponika describes them as "two complementary methods: that of analysis, and that of investigating the relations (or the conditionality) of things."<sup>265</sup> He continues, "The connection or relation between things, that is their conditionality, is dealt with particularity in the *Patthana*, which supplies a vast net of conditional relations obtaining between the conditioning phenomena and the

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<sup>259</sup> Bodhi, 2012, p. 31.

<sup>260</sup> Vism XIV.3.

<sup>261</sup> Vism XIV.3.

<sup>262</sup> The five aggregates (*khandhas*) are: Consciousness (*viññāṇa*), Perception (*saññā*), Feelings (*vedanā*), Mental Formation (*saṅkhāra*), and Matter (*rūpa*).

<sup>263</sup> See *sutta* SN 12.2 and DN 15, which refer to the twelve links of cycle existence.

<sup>264</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 38

<sup>265</sup> Nyanaponika, 1998, p. 21.

things they condition. But the mere fact of relational existence is already implicit in the thorough analysis undertaken in the *Dhammasangani*, where it is shown that even the smallest psychic unit, that is, a single moment of consciousness, is constituted by a multiplicity of active mental factors bound together in a relationship of interdependence.”<sup>266</sup> These methods have the capacity to be applied to any experience. It is through such application that the practitioner can attend to the content of his own experience, see it carefully, then analyse and discern its particularities and conditionality. Through the process of applying these *Abhidhamma* methods to any experience, harmful thoughts, feelings and intentions triggered by these obscure tendencies, dispositions and inclinations fade away because they cannot hold.

However, it is important to note that Buddhaghosacārya’s understanding of the *Abhidhamma* methods contrasts with other interpretations that, for example, try to explain harmful thoughts such as ‘identity view’ by combining doctrines of non-self (*anatta*)<sup>267</sup> and emptiness (*suññatā*)<sup>268</sup> as metaphysical assertions. Some scholars have described the twin *Abhidhamma* methods - the *khandhas* (aggregates) and *paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) - as a direct form to attack this identity view, or for that matter any other view, through ontological assertions. For example, the counter-craving for ‘not to be’ teaching is Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*); the counter-craving for ‘to be’ teaching is a method of breaking down a person into five *khandhas* (aggregates).<sup>269</sup> The predominant discussion and the usage of the combination of methods have focused primarily on seeing *Abhidhamma* in metaphysical terms, as expressed by Gethin: “the *dhammas* are the physical and mental events that are the ultimate building block of the way things are.”<sup>270</sup> This reading of *Abhidhamma* echoes many

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> SN III.141, IV.49, V.345, in *sutta* II.37 of AN, II.37–45 and II.80.

<sup>268</sup> MN 122, MN III 104 and 109, SN IV.293.

<sup>269</sup> David Webster (2005) *The Philosophy of Desire in the Buddhist Pali Canon*, Routledge, p.32.

<sup>270</sup> Rupert Gethin (1998) *The Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, p. 209.

other explanations of the *dharmma*<sup>271</sup> where the aim is to find the ultimate reality of the person and/or phenomena.

It is not the intention of this section to analyse metaphysical views. Suffice it to say that my reading of the *Visuddhimagga* echoes that of Heim and Ram Prasad,<sup>272</sup> who in their latest study show how Buddhaghosacārya uses the *Abhidhamma* methods and the non-conventional<sup>273</sup> language that goes with them, not as metaphysical or ontological statements about what exists or does not exist, but rather as analytical methods for seeing, exploring and transforming human experience. This means that *Abhidhamma* methods are not metaphysical assertions. Thus, away from metaphysics, Buddhaghosacārya's general approach to the *Abhidhamma* system is to guide the meditator through a carefully elaborated series of contemplative practices so that he is corrected in the way he sees the world, not in the way he forms a specific idea of that world. Heim and Ram-Prasad reassess the *Abhidhamma* methods in the light of Buddhaghosacārya's reading of them. They take up the foundational *nāma-rūpa*, which, according to them, "Buddhaghosacārya takes to be the hallmark of *Abhidhamma* analysis"<sup>274</sup> and thus, unlike most other scholars, they move away from the tendency to see *nāma-rūpa* in terms of a dualistic ontology of 'mind-and-body'. They emphasise that "for Buddhaghosacārya (and the interpretation of the canonical sources that he urges), *nāma-rūpa* is one analytical distinction (among many) that can be used to observe experience, but it does not identify a metaphysical reality or basis of an individual."<sup>275</sup> Furthermore they add, "Name and form are analytical terms used to discern two sides of human phenomenology, but themselves do not constitute an ontological category."<sup>276</sup> This is the central point that they are making about *nāma-*

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<sup>271</sup> Examples can be found in Jay Garfield (2015) *Engaging Buddhism: Why it Matters to Philosophy*, Oxford Press, and Jeffrey Hopkins (2012) *Reflections on Reality: The Three Natures and Non-Natures in the Mind-Only School*, University of California Press.

<sup>272</sup> See Heim and Ram-Prasad, 2018.

<sup>273</sup> Buddhaghosacārya uses a more conventional language when dealing with aspects of the *Vinaya* or human experience on a day-to-day basis. Thus a person is called 'person' or sometimes-even 'self'. The states are termed classes of consciousness and they can be low, medium and exalted. Buddhaghosacārya uses mind as consisting of a series of distinct moments of consciousness or when referring to the diversity of effects in action. (*Vism* pp. 84-86).

<sup>274</sup> Heim and Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 12.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

*rūpa*, thus in fact showing that Buddhaghosacārya's primary concern in using *Abhidhamma* methods and techniques is with the nature of experience. Thus, Buddhaghosacārya focuses on sharpening the practitioner's attention through contemplative practices in order to break down experience in many different ways and discern their particularities, dismantling harmful conditions in experience so that a person does not end up with dualistic mind-and-body ontological ideas. Heim and Ram-Prasad's analysis helps us to see how Buddhaghosacārya's reading of *Abhidhamma* system equips the practitioner to attend to experience by keeping him away from theoretical or metaphysical presuppositions. It is with this understanding that my detailed presentation of Buddhaghosacārya's contemplative practices in the next section unfolds.

### 3.3.3 The Role of Questions in Sharpening Discernment

Before we begin the detailed examination of the methods and techniques deployed by Buddhaghosacārya, we need to bring attention to one important technique for sharpening discernment that although not explicitly explained in any of the *suttas* or in the *Visuddhimagga*, is intrinsic in all of them because it is manifested in the very way the teachings are transmitted by what Buddhaghosacārya names a teacher (also referred to as "the good friend").<sup>277</sup>

Buddhaghosacārya explains that there are five important aspects that need to be developed during the cultivation of wise attention. These are: achievement, mastery of scriptures, hearing, questioning, and prior effort. Achievement means faith and energy for the final goal of the path; mastery of scriptures means mastery of the Buddha's words; hearing means learning the teachings carefully and attentively normally through a teacher or what is also called a good friend or helper of the path; questioning refers to the acuteness of discernment, and prior effort refers to the three-trainings (*sīla - samādhi - paññā*).<sup>278</sup>

Our interest in the topic of discernment through questions is twofold; (i) the literal voice of another, the engagement required in practices, so that they are

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<sup>277</sup> Vism III.59.

<sup>278</sup> Vism XIV.28.

not entirely autonomous but integrated with other people, and (ii) the use of questions as a way to refine discernment.

The first point is particularly relevant for our comparison with EUDE, where the entire process of the labs is based on a dynamic interrelation with others, and where the teacher and the children's peers play a key role in helping the children shape differently their agency, perception, feelings and intentions. The role of the teacher, or what Buddhaghosacārya refers to as 'the helper on the Path' or a 'good friend' (*kalyānamitta*)<sup>279</sup> is generally overlooked when addressing contemplative practices but even more so when addressing the topic of discernment. Buddhaghosacārya spends an entire section<sup>280</sup> detailing the factors that a good teacher needs to consider when guiding others and explaining to a disciple the importance of having a good teacher or good friend. In a key canonical passage, Ānanda thought he was being clever when he asserted, "Half the holy life is friendship, companionship, and closeness with good people," only to have the Buddha strongly insist that these are the *whole* of the holy life:

Not so, Ānanda! Not so Ānanda! This is the entire holy life, Ānanda that is good friendship, good companionship, and good comradeship. When a *bhikkhu* has good friend, good companion, & comradeship, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path.<sup>281</sup>

For Buddhaghosacārya this helper of the path is someone who understands that the methodology is not only descriptive but has to be practiced. For our purpose what is important is the role a person plays in sharpening discernment through questions and answers, which leads to our next point.

Thānissaro *Bhikkhu*, who has dedicated so much work to this topic, begins by clarifying that questions in the tradition are not for the purpose of questioning

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<sup>279</sup> Vism III.28.

<sup>280</sup> For more information see *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli, 2010, Chapter III pp. 61-73.

<sup>281</sup> SN 45.2.



about others but for questioning about true conditions in experience.<sup>282</sup> Quoting the Buddha helps us to see the classification of questions used by the tradition:

First the categorical statement, then the analytical, third, the type to be cross-questioned, & fourth, the one to be put aside. And any monk who knows which is which, in line with the *dhamma*, is said to be skilled in the four types of questions: hard to overcome, hard to beat, profound, hard to defeat. He knows what's worthwhile & what's not, proficient in [recognizing] both, he, wise, rejects the worthless, grasps the worthwhile. He's called one who has broken through to what's worthwhile, enlightened, wise.<sup>283</sup>

I will develop these questions in more detail in the next section together with the other techniques; it is sufficient to note here that questions that foster and refine discernment play as important a part of the practitioner's development of wise attention as they do in EUDE. The role of questions will be an important topic for Chapter 4 given that the main technique in the EUDE programme for breaking down, seeing, and working with conditions in experience is the Art of Questioning (*el arte del cuestionamiento*).

We will now show how Buddhaghosacārya in an ingenious way arranges and crafts all these general templates, methods and techniques into a series of trainings whose purpose is to purify the practitioner's vision and understanding. However, more importantly for our purpose, we will examine their detailed application. This will enable us to understand the systematic implications of EUDE practices in Chapter 4.

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<sup>282</sup> Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu (2010) *Skill in Questions: How the Buddha Taught*, Metta Forest Monastery, p. 54.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, p. 28. See also AN 4:42.

### 3.4 THE *VISUDDHIMAGGA*: THE THREE TRAININGS

The *Visuddhimagga* enables us to see the use of these templates in specific circumstances. Buddhaghosacārya contextualises them, elaborates on them and explains them by developing very complex material into more conventional crafted experiences that reflect the ordinariness of everyday life. These contemplative practices are divided in three interrelated modular trainings: virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and understanding (*paññā*). They are designed within the confines of the progressive path of purification (the relay chariots, *Rathavinīta-sutta*) and based on the Buddha's answer to the previous Devas' riddle.

When a wise man, established well in virtue, develops  
consciousness and understanding, then as a *bhikkhu* ardent and  
sagacious he succeeds in disentangling this tangle.<sup>284</sup>

The presentation of the three-trainings across the entire *Visuddhimagga* is based on a standard formula derived from the *Nettipakaraṇa* system.<sup>285</sup> This system is used for showing the 'proximate causes' of conditions; it helps to determine, on the one hand the conditions that need to be removed, ceased or undone, and on the other, the conditions that need to be developed or cultivated (*bhāvanā*). *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli maintains that this way of tackling conditions conveys an implicit teaching of Dependent Origination.<sup>286</sup> But it also makes possible the entire non-linear – that is to say, 'modular'<sup>287</sup> – design of the *Visuddhimagga*. By this I mean that the practices are interrelated in a dynamic and progressive way: the practices can happen in any sequence, and are also repeated in different patterns, depending on the progression and the needs of the practitioner. This interrelatedness comes about because the practice takes into account the dynamics, ordinariness and commonness of human life; it does not take place in isolation and in a fixed,

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<sup>284</sup> Vism I.7.

<sup>285</sup> The *Nettipakaraṇa* (Guide) is an extra-canonical Buddhist scripture ascribed to the Buddha's disciple Kaccana. It is a guide for commentators on the Buddhist scriptures. (See *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli, 1977, p. vii). Heim notes that *Nettipakaraṇa* defines a word by explaining its characteristic (*lakkhana*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*), and immediate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*). (Heim, 2014, p. 55). These terms are defined at As 63.

<sup>286</sup> Ñāṇamoli, 2010, p. xxxviii.

<sup>287</sup> This is the understanding of the structure of the text as developed in a workshop discussion at Amherst College by Charlie Hallisey, Heim and Ram-Prasad in 2015.

solipsistic sequence. Purification of seeing and knowing, equanimity and the cultivation of wise attention have to be applied in every circumstance within the confines of a life in a monastery and in the company of the ‘good friend’ (*kalyāṇamitta*)<sup>288</sup> or helper of the path. This highlights once again the relevance of others in shaping not just one’s experiences but also the design of the methodology required for the path, and the role that a life in a monastery plays in the requisites that Buddhaghosacārya and the tradition place at the forefront. This brings us to one final important consideration - the role of the *saṅgha*. The *saṅgha* will eventually be compared with the intrinsic interrelated, intersubjective context of practice of the EUDE labs, where the reshaping of one’s own experience works not in isolation but as a mutually dependent interaction within a community of similar practitioners (albeit in a radically different context).

### ***The Preliminary Practices and Requisites***

The Buddha declared the *saṅgha* to be one of the three cornerstones<sup>289</sup> of the path. Buddhaghosacārya includes the absence of a proper place for the practice as one of the ten impediments for the path.<sup>290</sup> Buddhaghosacārya defines the *saṅgha* as a life with a community of practitioners following the same path, where finding a good friend or teacher is more available, and where the conditions for the practice are more in tune with the requirements of the practice. The lack of such a community could be an impediment for the practice since “The meaning is that the total of disciples forms a communality because it possesses in common both virtue and [right] view. That right way, being straight, unbent, uncrooked, unwrapped, is called noble and true and is known as proper owing to its becomingness, therefore the noble community that has entered on that is also said to have entered on the

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<sup>288</sup> The word friend here means spiritual friend. For more information regarding the concept of ‘good friend’ see Steven Collins (1989) ‘*Kalyāṇamitta* and *Kalyāṇamittatā*’, *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, 11:55. See also The Discourse on Diligence in Spiritual Friendship | S 3.18/1:87-89 *Kalyāṇa,mitta Sevana Sutta*; *Kalyāṇa,mitta Sutta*.

<sup>289</sup> The *saṅgha* is one of the three Jewels. The three Jewels are: the teacher (the Buddha), the teachings (the *dhmma*) and the community (the *sangha*). See Sn 2.1 the Jewel Discourses: *Ratana Sutta*.

<sup>290</sup> The other nine impediments are: family, gain, a class, building, travel, kin, affliction, books and supernatural powers. For more information see Vism III pp. 29.

straight way, entered on the true way, and entered on the proper way.”<sup>291</sup> By proper or right way (*sammā-paṭipadā*) Buddhaghosacārya means “the way that is irreversible, the way that is in conformity [with truth], the way that has no opposition, and the way that is regulated by the *dhmma*.”<sup>292</sup> This common ground and the rules of the community do not legislate mental actions; they govern only visible acts of body and speech, according to the *vinaya* rules. Virtue (*sīla*) - refers to duties of performance and duties of avoidance. The duties of performance and avoidance are techniques taken from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that focus on acts of body and speech and do not regulate mental actions. Heim explains that *sīla* conditions a model type of moral agency.<sup>293</sup> Their practices, known as keeping and abstaining, are accomplished by faith and energy. Duties of avoidance, known as avoiding and restraint, are accomplished by faith and mindfulness.<sup>294</sup> The function of these techniques is to calm the mind, which is a requisite for the practices of concentration. For a disciple who has just begun the path of purity, this helps him to avoid improper misconduct. This is important because abstaining by restraint from harmful states of body, mind and speech will bring about “the special qualities of blamelessness and non-remorse.”<sup>295</sup> Furthermore, when the disciple practices restraining from the ten bad deeds,<sup>296</sup> for example, not killing or not taking what is given, then no apprehension (*ottapa*) and no shame (*hiri*) are said to exist.<sup>297</sup> Consequently, this community and the moral life within it pave the way for vision and knowledge by helping to stop misconduct, thus achieving the quality of blamelessness (*sampatti*).<sup>298</sup> The benefit, says Buddhaghosacārya, is the possibility to train in the contemplative practices because the practitioner is in a

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<sup>291</sup> Vism VII.90.

<sup>292</sup> Vism VII.90.

<sup>293</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 33.

<sup>294</sup> Vism I.26.

<sup>295</sup> Vism. I.10.

<sup>296</sup> Although there are ten bad deeds only seven are practiced at this preliminary stage. They are: killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, and frivolous speech. The other three - non-covetous, non-ill will and right view - belong to the practice of careful and wise attention. (Exp., p. 183.)

<sup>297</sup> Vism. I.22. See also Maria Heim (2012) ‘Shame and Apprehension: Notes on the Moral Value of *Hiri* and *Ottappa*’, *Embedded Languages: Studies in the Religion, Culture, and History of Sri Lanka*, (eds Carol S. Anderson, Susanne Mrozik, W. M. Wijeratna, and R. M. W. Rajapaksha), Godage Books, pp. 237-260.

<sup>298</sup> Vism. I.21.

state of calmness, absent of painful feelings,<sup>299</sup> which is an important requisite for the practice of the higher forms of attention - concentration and insight - that purify seeing and knowing.

### 3.5 THE PRACTICE - PURIFYING SEEING AND KNOWING

The crafted experiences for contemplative practices are classified by Buddhaghosacārya into two kinds: generally useful meditation subjects and special meditation subjects.<sup>300</sup> The ‘special meditation subjects’, consist of meditations among the forty that are suitable to one’s own temperament. Buddhaghosacārya says of these that they are “special (*pārihāriya*) because the practitioner must carry it (*pariharitabbattā*) constantly about with him, and because it is the proximate cause for each higher stage of development.”<sup>301</sup> The table below<sup>302</sup> illustrates how Buddhaghosacārya maps the temperaments with the objects of meditation.

Temperaments	Greed	Hate	Deluded/Speculative	Faithful	Intelligent
<b>Meditations</b>					
<b>Kasinas (10)</b>	Earth, Water, Fire, Air	4 Colours (blue, yellow, red and white)	Earth, Water, Fire, Air	Earth, Water, Fire, Air	Earth, Water, Fire, Air
<b>Kinds of Foulness (10)</b>	All				
<b>Recollections (10)</b>	Mindfulness Occupied with the Body		Mindfulness of Breathing	6 Recollections (The Buddha, The dhamma, The sangha, Virtue, Generosity, Deities)	Mindfulness of Death and one about Peace
<b>Divine Abidings (4)</b>		All			
<b>Immaterial states (4)</b>	All	All	All	All	All
<b>Perception (1)</b>					Repulsiveness in Nutriment
<b>Defining (1)</b>					Defining of the Four Elements

Table 1: Temperaments and Objects of Meditation

<sup>299</sup> Exp., p. 138.

<sup>300</sup> Vism III.57.

<sup>301</sup> Vism III.59.

<sup>302</sup> Vism III.119-120.

Thus in a certain way the special meditation subjects are treated as antidotes to particular temperaments, as the table shows.

Useful meditation subjects/objects says Buddhaghosacārya are “needed generally and desirable owing to their great helpfulness.”<sup>303</sup> So, for example, loving-kindness towards the community of *Bhikkhus*, mindfulness of death and perception of fullness are useful meditation subjects. The benefits that useful meditation subjects bring about are numerous, but to mention some, loving-kindness will bring kindness in one’s co-residents and therefore will make one easy to live with. With lawful protection will come well-disposed, principled people, then one can wander unhindered anywhere.<sup>304</sup> With mindfulness of death one can hold the following thought, “*I have got to die*” and give up on the “improper search and with a growing sense of urgency he comes to live without attachment.”<sup>305</sup> Regarding the last example, Buddhaghosacārya explains that when the practitioner’s mind is “familiar with the perception of foulness, then even divine objects do not tempt his mind to greed.”<sup>306</sup> And finally, he uses the four useful meditation subjects named the four abidings - loving-kindness (*mettā*) compassion (*karuṇā*), gladness (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) -<sup>307</sup> to emphasise the cultivation of attention to ‘others’.

Taking the *jhāna* template, we will examine how Buddhaghosacārya deploys his instruction through a careful treatment of one of these experiences - the earth *kaṣiṇa*. The *kaṣiṇa* contemplative practice takes the practitioner to a state of mind where there is no more seeing, hearing, perception or feelings. It is a state that locks the mind in one narrow mode of awareness according to King who adds, “If anything is hypnotic in Buddhist meditation it is in this type of attention.”<sup>308</sup> However, we will see that while it is true that attention locks out sense data and conceptual thinking, it at the same time locks in an intense

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<sup>303</sup> Vism III.59.

<sup>304</sup> Vism III.58.

<sup>305</sup> Vism III.58.

<sup>306</sup> Vism III.58.

<sup>307</sup> This term is usually translated as sympathetic joy, however I am using *Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli’s translation and he translates it as gladness. (*Bhikkhu* Ñāṇamoli, 2010, p. 105).

<sup>308</sup> King, 1980, p. 44.

attention on the object until it becomes the total field of one's attention and breaks down barriers in what Buddhaghosacārya names 'infinity of space' where perception becomes indistinctness. I want to show how through this template, the *jhāna* and its content - which could be any content but in our case is the earth *kaṣiṇa* - Buddhaghosacārya intertwines the shifting and sharpening of attention with the dismantling of harmful conditions. He explains that the factors abandoned by the *jhāna* are divided into sense desires and harmful thoughts. By sense desires he means states "consisting of the flood of sense desires, of the bond of sense desires, of the canker of sense desires, of sense-desire clinging, of the bodily tie of covetousness, and of the fetter of greed for sense desires."<sup>309</sup> By harmful thoughts he means the remaining harmful conditions. Buddhaghosacārya explains that each *jhāna* has its own opposite, mapped as follows: concentration (one-pointedness)<sup>310</sup> is opposed to sensuous desire, rapture to ill will, initial application of mind to sloth and torpor, bliss to flurry and worry, sustained application of mind to perplexity.<sup>311</sup> Thus during the second *jhāna* only three factors remain - rapture, bliss and one-pointedness, the other two, applied thought and sustained thought, fade away. Once the practitioner is in the second *jhāna* he has the skilfulness to withdraw into and emerge from each of the objects of meditations without the requirement of applied thought and sustained thought. The third *jhāna* eliminates rapture; the fourth *jhāna* removes bliss and brings hedonic indifference or equanimity together with the unification of mind. In our example of the earth *kaṣiṇa*, hate and greed and pernicious views such as that of individuality will be dismantled.

### 3.5.1 Careful Attention to Sensory and Perceptual Experience

Buddhaghosacārya explains that when the practitioner sits in front of a physical space with the object of his choice - in our case the earth *kaṣiṇa* - he should look for a piece of land with earth on it somewhere in the monastery where he will not

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<sup>309</sup> Vism IV.87.

<sup>310</sup> Buddhaghosacārya says that one-pointedness of mind is another name for concentration (Exp., p. 156). He describes it as like "the steadiness of the flame of a lamp in the absence of wind" (Exp., p. 157).

<sup>311</sup> Vism IV.87.

be disturbed. He should then begin to focus concentration on it, not too soft, not too hard, but like “seeing the reflexion of his face on the surface of a looking glass.”<sup>312</sup> Gradually the practitioner enters into a more refined mode of sensory awareness and begins removing the dangers of the senses. At this point colour and other characteristics of the earth object should not be reviewed because attention first needs to be shifted. For example, the colour of the object should be seen solely as a property or accessory of the physical object in regard to its characteristics such as hard or soft; it should be given attention since apprehension is done with the eyes. The concept should be used only as a name which can be any name since is just a name, although Buddhaghosacārya seems to suggest using the one that is most obvious, which in the case of earth *kaṣiṇa* is just ‘earth’. Once attention has been shifted in this way and the focus maintained in this manner, the learning sign (*nimitta*) is produced.

### **3.5.1.1 The Separation between the Physical Phenomena and its Appearance**

This first sign, named the learning sign, is the willed imaginative image of the *kaṣiṇa* totally unbound from the physical object (*kaṣiṇa*), “born only of perception in one who has obtained concentration, being a mere mode of appearance.”<sup>313</sup> The sign is the subjective (*ajjhata*)<sup>314</sup> appearance of what is perceived. In his analysis of the phenomenology of contemplative practices through Buddhaghosacārya’s approach, Ram-Prasad states that the purpose of the sign “is to be able to experience (literally, undergo (*anubhava*)) in a special and ‘purified’ way what was originally presented to the senses,”<sup>315</sup> thereby removing the imperfections of sensing the object that lie with the self-centred ideas of the perceiver. The reason for the sharp division between mental and physical phenomena, that is, between the image in one’s imagination and the sensory object is to contrast them. The reason such a contrast is needed is because it helps to see the self-centred ideas based on personal desire or attachments with more clarity so that they can be

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<sup>312</sup> Vism IV.28.

<sup>313</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>314</sup> Buddhaghosacārya defines subjectivity as personal. By personal he refers to states that occur in one’s own continuity and pertain to each individual. (Exp., p. 60-61).

<sup>315</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 12.



dismantled and the image reconfigured without them. In the words of Ram-Prasad, who is drawing on the Buddha's words, this contrast is between "'tangled' phenomenology and 'disentangled' phenomenology."<sup>316</sup> It is precisely this disentangling done by the shifting of attention and by strong attentiveness (*sati*)<sup>317</sup> to the learning sign (image) in contrast to the sensory object that enables the practitioner to see the characteristics of experience where harmful conditions cannot hold.

As we explained earlier, harmful conditions are opposites of *jhāna* and therefore cannot co-exist simultaneously. The practitioner should then leave the place and seclude himself in his quarters.<sup>318</sup> This is because what follows cannot be achieved by seeing the physical disk - earth *kaṣiṇa*. The sign must now be purified using only this mental image; it must not be influenced or disturbed by the physical object. This process bears a striking similarity with the process of separation in the EUDE labs, where the children are asked to make a sharp separation between a mental object and a physical object in order to work exclusively with their subjectivity. Although the final purpose and profundity is not the same, the mechanics for cultivating attention bear a remarkable similarity, a point I shall develop in the next chapter.

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> I deviate here for the conventional translation of '*sati*' as 'mindfulness', because like *Bhikkhu* Bodhi (see *Bhikkhu* Bodhi 2011 'What does Mindfulness Really Mean? A Canonical Perspective'. *Contemporary Buddhism* 12.1: pp. 19-39) and Ram-Prasad (see Ram-Prasad, 2018, p.16) I am concerned with how much we take for granted the meaning of the term mindfulness. Ram-Prasad notes "We rarely inquire into the precise nuances of the English term, let alone the meaning of the original Pali word it represents and the adequacy of the former as a rendering for the latter." (Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 16). The term *sati* is defined by Buddhaghosacārya as remembering the object, or one who remembers the object, or the mere remembering of the object. He also says that it is overcoming confused memory; its characteristic is not floating away. (Exp., pp. 159-160). *Bhikkhu* Bodhi adds that "the meaning of the word is more fully brought out in the term 'bringing to attention', as the development of the notion of focus from the more general use of 'remembrance' or 'memory'" (*Bhikkhu* Bodhi 2011, p. 22.) Thus, I choose 'attentiveness' instead of mindfulness as a way of keeping distance from the contemporary confusion that the elastic and vague use of the term brings about.

<sup>318</sup> Vism IV.30.

### 3.5.1.2 The Shift of Attention to Work only with the Subjective Mental Objects

The sign then becomes an entirely mental object not apprehended by the senses, and the practitioner needs to be trained in adverting this sign with eyes closed or open.<sup>319</sup> Through a hypnotic-like process, or what L.S. Cousins calls “lucid trance,”<sup>320</sup> the mind reaches high levels of sensory awareness. By sustaining focussed attention on the sign for a long period of time the mind becomes completely absorbed in it. Then the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*) arises totally purified of gross material (hindrances and defilements) and becomes an entirely mental object pervading the whole experience and totally separate from the physical object. This counterpart or extension of the sign appears as if breaking out from the learning sign, says Buddhaghosacārya, adding that the counter sign “is a hundred times, a thousand times more purified, like a moon’s disk coming out from behind a cloud.”<sup>321</sup> The rise of this counterpart sign means that the “hindrances are quite suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration.”<sup>322</sup> He warns us however that this sign should not be reviewed much because concentration is still weak and such reviewing does not provide the conditions for higher endeavour, thus could cause one not to reach the second *jhāna*.

During this process of extending the sign, guarding it becomes paramount. Buddhaghosacārya explains the importance of this in the following verse: “So guard the sign, nor count the cost, and what is gained will not be lost; Who fails to have this guard maintained will lose each time what he has gained.”<sup>323</sup> This imaginative image could fade away at any time, so the practitioner needs to know how to get back to it. The fading away may be caused by distractions of any kind but are mainly due to the meditator’s monastic duties and to the engagements he has with the lay community, which makes the practice - as previously stated - not

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> L. S. Cousins

(1973) ‘Buddhist *jhāna*: Its Nature and Attainment according to the Pāli Sources’, *Religion*, 3:2, p. 125.

<sup>321</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>322</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>323</sup> Vism IV.34.

one of isolation but part of a life in a monastery with the *saṅgha* which includes all sort of interactions and complexities. Hence Ram-Prasad raises an important point for our consideration, “It is not just the ‘object’ in isolation that is the focus or the sole means to the retrieval of the imitative sign.”<sup>324</sup> He highlights how deeply ‘ecological’ a process as abstract as this can be, affecting the practitioner’s body and mind with inner and outer conditions all the time.<sup>325</sup> However Ram-Prasad clarifies that although there is a mental/physical distinction with the object, the conditions themselves are not strictly divided into inner/outer, but rather as a constantly changing set of salient factors – hence ‘ecological’.<sup>326</sup> Thus Buddhaghosacārya explains that the meditator must discern the whole context that brought him to see the sign in the first place saying, “I attained this after eating this food, attending on such a person, in such a lodging, in this posture at this time.”<sup>327</sup> In this way, when that absorption is lost, he will be able to recapture those modes and renew the absorption, or while familiarising himself with it he will be able to repeat that absorption again and again. The meditator must discern the mode of its attainment as if he were a ‘hair-splitter’, which he develops further using the following analogy: “For when a very skilful archer, who is working to split a hair, actually splits the hair on one occasion, he discerns the modes of the position of his feet, the bow, the bowstring, and the arrow thus: I split the hair as I stood thus, with the bow thus, the bowstring thus, the arrow thus. From there on, he recaptures those same modes and repeats the splitting of the hair without fail.”<sup>328</sup> And thus he should master entering and attain the sign without reviewing it much and develop the ability to remain in the *jhāna* or the ability to emerge quickly from it.<sup>329</sup>

This point is important for my analysis in two ways. First, it shows that attention practice embraces other things and other people and thus is not a matter of pure isolation. Second, attention practice is about the purpose of remembering which brings attentiveness (*sati*) both to the inner conditions of the imaginative

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<sup>324</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p.15.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, p. 14-18.

<sup>327</sup> Vism IV.120.

<sup>328</sup> Vism IV.120.

<sup>329</sup> Vism IV.132-134.

image and the outer conditions of the context in which it was brought about. Both of these aspects of attention practice are key elements in EUDE labs, as well shall see.

Buddhaghosacārya describes this first attainment of *jhāna* as “lighting (*upanijjhāna*) the object, because of burning up (*jhāpana*) opposition.”<sup>330</sup> By opposition he refers to all hindrances that are the usual distractions that cloud ordinary awareness, such as sloth and torpor, discursive thought, doubt and rapture - conditions that are absent because of these finer and acute levels of sensory awareness. Awareness is brought about first by applied thought, then by sustained thought. Applied thought is what we can call the first impact and it is what leads the mind to the sign, while sustained thought is the act of keeping the mind anchored to the sign. Analogically Buddhaghosacārya says that applied thought is like a “bird’s spreading out its wings about to soar into the air,”<sup>331</sup> while sustained thought is quiet and is “like a bird’s planeing with outspread wings after soaring into air.”<sup>332</sup> The learning sign belongs to the former, while the counterpart sign belongs to the latter.

With applied thought and sustained thought anchored to the object, the practitioner enters into the second *jhāna* where his mind is undisturbed and he possesses confidence.<sup>333</sup> Hence this *jhāna* does not require the actual act of applied and sustained thought.<sup>334</sup> Buddhaghosacārya notes that it “is only this concentration that is quite worthy to be called ‘concentration’ because of its complete confidence and extreme immobility due to absence of disturbance by applied and sustained thought.”<sup>335</sup> This absorption - in our case the earth *kasīṇa* - allows for the “seclusion from” (i.e. the stopping of) distracting thoughts. This means that the practitioner has the skills to withdraw into and emerge from each of the objects of meditations without the requirement of applied thought and sustained thought. And thus these two stages of attention practice are good in the

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<sup>330</sup> Vism IV.119.

<sup>331</sup> Vism IV.119.

<sup>332</sup> Vism IV.119.

<sup>333</sup> Vism IV.142.

<sup>334</sup> Vism IV.147.

<sup>335</sup> Vism IV.148.

end because defilements subside and the mind becomes totally concentrated, which “brings satisfaction, pleasure and joy where distraction and worry are got rid of.”<sup>336</sup>

The emotional outcomes such as joy or satisfaction, brought by each purification of the mental image (the counterpart sign of the earth *kasīṇa*) also become a support of that same practice of attention that brings each purification. While these are not outcomes that EUDE can claim, I include the subject here because the link between improved emotional states and attention practices, and vice versa, is one worth noting. Buddhaghosacārya explains this apparent circularity. On the one hand happiness “has the characteristic of endearing (*sampiyāyanā*). Its function is to refresh the body and the mind; or its function is to pervade (thrill with rapture). It is manifested as elation. But it is of five kinds as minor happiness, momentary happiness, showering happiness, uplifting happiness, and pervading (rapturous) happiness.”<sup>337</sup> On the other hand happiness, is supportive of attention practice because “when conceived and matured, it perfects the twofold tranquillity, that is, bodily and mental tranquillity. When tranquillity is conceived and matured, it perfects the twofold bliss, that is, bodily and mental bliss. When bliss is conceived and matured, it perfects the threefold concentration, that is, momentary concentration, access concentration, and absorption concentration.”<sup>338</sup> The same applies to bliss defined by Buddhaghosacārya as that which “thoroughly (*SUṭṭhu*) devours (*KHĀdati*), consumes (*KHAṇati*), bodily and mental affliction, thus it is bliss (*sukha*). It has gratifying as its characteristic. Its function is to intensify associated states. It is manifested as aid.”<sup>339</sup> So while happiness lies in getting the desirable object, bliss is the experience of it. However Buddhaghosacārya says that where there is happiness there is bliss but this does not necessarily work the other way round, meaning that where there is bliss there is not necessarily happiness. But in this *jhāna* there is happiness (pleasure) and bliss which brings the necessary equilibrium and the serenity for moving on through the path that is the beginning

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<sup>336</sup> Vism IV.113.

<sup>337</sup> Vism IV.94.

<sup>338</sup> Vism IV.99.

<sup>339</sup> Vism IV.100.

of equanimity and which intensifies as the practitioner moves on through absorption to the remaining *jhānas*.

### 3.5.2 Careful Attention to Conceptual Experience

Buddhaghosacārya explains that a possessor of the third *jhāna* dwells in equanimity where he sees fairly without partiality. With his usual hermeneutics, Buddhaghosacārya explains equanimity as follows, “equanimity has the characteristics of neutrality. Its function is to be unconcerned. It is manifested as uninterestedness. Its proximate cause is the fading away of happiness.”<sup>340</sup> Attention at this point in the practice has reached new levels described by Buddhaghosacārya as “mindful and fully aware.”<sup>341</sup> By that he means that the practitioner remembers, does not forget, guards the mind, is not confused, and has the ability to investigate (judge) and be scrutinised.<sup>342</sup> Buddhaghosacārya expands the meaning of mindfulness when he says, “Mindfulness has as its characteristics unforgetfulness as its function, guarding, as its manifestation, firm perception. It should be regarded as a door-post from being firmly established in the object, and as a door keeper from guarding the door of the senses.”<sup>343</sup>

This does not mean that in the previous *jhāna* there was no mindfulness or awareness. What Buddhaghosacārya explains here is that “due to the abandoning of the gross factors, the function of mindfulness and full awareness is now evident to him” and “requires that the mind’s going always includes the functions of mindfulness and full awareness.”<sup>344</sup> This third *jhāna* removes happiness and grief due to equanimity and brings hedonic indifference together with the unification of mind. This means that it is led away from happiness. If not prevented by mindfulness and full awareness the mind could return to the happiness attained by the previous *jhānas*. This indicates that equipping the practitioner with the ability to constantly guard the mind is one of the most important aspects to develop in this *jhāna*. Thus the attainment in this *jhāna* is described as unification of mind,

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<sup>340</sup> Vism IV.171.

<sup>341</sup> Vism IV.172.

<sup>342</sup> Vism IV.172.

<sup>343</sup> Exp., p. 161.

<sup>344</sup> Vism IV.173.

which Buddhaghosacārya explains as one who “dwells in bliss, who has equanimity and is mindful.”<sup>345</sup> Buddhaghosacārya reaches an important point that shows how material body and mental body are mutually dependent and in fact, inseparable: “he feels bliss with his body.”<sup>346</sup> Buddhaghosacārya explains that “after emerging from the *jhāna* he would also feel bliss since his material body would have been affected by the exceedingly superior matter originated by that bliss associated with the mental body.”<sup>347</sup> At this point he has reached the perfection of bliss, and he is not drawn towards it by happiness because mindfulness is there to prevent the arising of happiness. Ultimately by bringing the sign to mind as “*earth, earth*” again, he will achieve the abandoning of gross factors and obtaining of peaceful factors, - knowing. It is now that the fourth *jhāna* will arise.<sup>348</sup> Hence to the practitioner, mental joy should appear gross and equanimity blissful, which shows the emotional reshaping that he undergoes during attention practice in this *jhāna*.

The four *jhāna* as explained in the *Visuddhimagga* are about abandoning; abandoning pleasure and pain. They have purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.<sup>349</sup> This highlights that the final goal of seeing clearly and of having right cognition has been achieved by purity of mindfulness, and that purity of mindfulness occurs because equanimity has also been attained in its purest and clearest form. In other words purity of mindfulness is brought about by equanimity, and could not reach its full potential in the previous *jhānas* both because it was obscured by the opposite forces such as applied and sustained though, etc., and because mindfulness and awareness were not viewed as requisites by the practitioner. Quoting the Buddha, Buddhaghosacārya adds, “There are four conditions, friend, for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant mind-deliverance. Here, friend, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain and with the previous disappearance of happiness and grief a *bhikkhu* enters upon

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<sup>345</sup> Vism IV.176.

<sup>346</sup> Vism IV.175.

<sup>347</sup> Vism IV.175.

<sup>348</sup> Vism IV.181.

<sup>349</sup> Vism IV.183.

and dwells in the fourth *jhāna* ... equanimity. These are the four conditions for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant mind-deliverance.”<sup>350</sup>

What Buddhaghosacārya is in fact explaining is that greed is far away because its conditions have been removed. This means that greed is because bliss is, and bliss is because happiness is, therefore having removed bliss as a condition, happiness becomes absent and through the absence of happiness greed too becomes absent. The same applies to hate whose condition is grief and the condition of grief of pain. Having removed the condition of pain, grief goes, and with it, goes hate.

What is happening here should now be reasonably clear. This template, as seen through a careful treatment of one of the forty objects - the earth *kaṣiṇa* -, shows how deep absorption in a sensory object (and then the counterpart sign) allows for the gradual fading away of conceptual experience so that by the second *jhāna*, “initial and discursive thought” is attenuated. The process of the *jhāna* has checked the input of all sense data and explicit feelings brought about by it. Attention is locked in on the meditational subject, here the counterpart sign, to the total exclusion of mental discourse.

The previous explanation has shown that attention is a gradual process mutually dependent on the progress of dismantling harmful conditions. And the dismantling of harmful conditions or factors in experience allows other forms of more careful attention due to the serenity, bliss and equanimity that their absence brings about. The fact that the practitioner is not in a cave but leading a full life in a monastery adds the interesting aspect of the interconnected elements of those experiences to his contemplative practices. Ultimately this template and its forty different contents - objects/subjects - equips the practitioner with attention and with the corresponding attentiveness, mindfulness and awareness that he can use in any other experience. This means that he now has the ability to disentangle the tangle in his own experiences.

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<sup>350</sup> Vism IV.191.



However although the process of the template is the same in any of the forty objects/subjects of meditation, there are important differences in the reasons for applying them. With the *kasīṇa* meditation, for example, we have seen how to remove hate and greed by working with the imaginary object earth. But removing adherence to views such as identity view, for example, requires another content in the *jhānic* template, which reveals the importance of having so many well-designed and well-crafted contemplative practices.

### 3.5.3 Careful Attention to Others

Buddhaghosacārya bridges the gap between selfish desires and the development of a loving mind by combining practice with the meditative subjects of the four abidings. These four abidings are defined by Buddhaghosacārya as “conveyance of good, the removal of harm, gladness over others’ success, and absence of preoccupation.”<sup>351</sup> For Buddhaghosacārya they are the best in the sense of being immaculate and faultless in nature. They constitute a superlative mode of conduct towards others “for these abidings are the best in being the right attitude towards beings.”<sup>352</sup> They deal purposely with the social dimension of human experience, by discarding ill-will for love, cruelty for compassion, dislike for sympathy, lust and hatred for equanimity (hedonic indifference).<sup>353</sup> He says that in them we see nothing but the finest objects/subjects for experiencing and caring for others.

Buddhaghosacārya explains that love means that one who loves wishes others well, and that love is so called because it concerns a loved one. Compassion signifies one whose heart quivers at the pain of others, or one who destroys the pain of others, or scatters over the afflicted. Sympathy means one endowed therewith, or with co-existent states, of rejoicing, or one’s self rejoices, or just rejoicing in others’ happiness. Equanimity or hedonic indifference refers to one without enmity because ill-will has been removed, one who is able to contemplate with disinterestedness by attending to a condition of centrality.<sup>354</sup> The undertaking

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<sup>351</sup> Exp., p. 258.

<sup>352</sup> Vism IX.106.

<sup>353</sup> Vism IX.108: Exp., p. 257.

<sup>354</sup> Exp., pp.258-259.

of these practices dissolves the appearance of others whom one hates or resents.<sup>355</sup>

To take loving-kindness as an example, Buddhaghosacārya says that as the practitioner takes up this meditation subject and applies it using the *jhāna* template, he should first develop loving-kindness towards oneself by reciting; “May I be happy and free from suffering or May I keep myself free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily.”<sup>356</sup> However, there is danger in thinking repeatedly in this way as it is said: “even if he developed loving kindness for a hundred or a thousand years in this way, ‘I am happy’ and so on, absorption would never arise.”<sup>357</sup>

The core of Buddhaghosacārya’s idea here is that we begin by trying to make the life of others better because, at the very least, this will also make our own life better. Continuing to perform these practices effectively, in the way explained, changes our view from one characterised by annoyance because others do not conform to our desire-led intentions, to one where we feel in terms of the good attained by others. What is important for Buddhaghosacārya at this level is the practice of accepting the existence of others, the experience of others, the thinking of others and the conscious awareness of others, in order to reach a kind of enlightened self-interest. This should not be viewed as an assertion of difference between oneself and the others towards whom one shows loving-kindness, compassion or gladness. On the contrary, this treatment helps the practitioner to dismantle the perception and mental formations of such a barrier.

The benefits of the absence of harmful consciousness begin with “being dear and loved, and end with destruction of suffering.”<sup>358</sup> Its result is the destruction of ill-will: “Friends that mental emancipation called love is the escape from ill-will, that mental emancipation called compassion is the escape from cruelty, that mental emancipation called gladness is the escape from dislike, that

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Vism IX.345.

<sup>357</sup> Vism IX.347.

<sup>358</sup> Vism I.23.

mental emancipation called equanimity is the escape from lust.”<sup>359</sup> It is ‘escape’ because it is impossible that one should cultivate love and at the same time get angry; it is impossible that one should cultivate compassion and at the same time strike with the hand; it is impossible that one should be sympathetic and at the same time be discontented; it is impossible that one should cultivate equanimity, and at the same time be enamoured with or hurt another.<sup>360</sup>

### **3.5.3.1 Immeasurability: Expanding the Sign to Infinity of Space**

In the next step, as with the earth *kaṣiṇa*, the practitioner has to expand that love to the community of monks, limiting it first to those people in the monastery by thinking, “*I am happy. Just as I want to be happy and dread pain, as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings, too,*”<sup>361</sup> and by making himself the example. Then the desire for other beings’ welfare, and happiness arises within him.<sup>362</sup> Then the practitioner should develop loving-kindness towards all deities in the same monastery. After that, he should extend those wishes towards all the principal people in the village; then to all human beings, then to all living beings. As with the *kaṣiṇa* meditation these abidings can expand the sign of loving-kindness or compassion or joy until infinity of space is reached, which ‘pervades’ (*pharītvā*) all directions with loving-kindness. The expansion consists not in having many beings as the object towards which one directs these meditations, but in having many beings as objects for beings without limit and that constitute their field of immeasurability. Heim explains that this expansive and unimpeded feeling is a whole way of living (*viharati*), and is precisely what is meant by freedom, because “one has freed oneself of the ‘slavery’ (*dāsabya*) of one’s own defilements, which otherwise condition and constrain one’s experience.”<sup>363</sup>

### **3.5.3.2 Breaking Down Barriers - Indistinctness in Perception.**

Breaking down barriers in the practice of attention means that one’s perception becomes homogeneous. In the words of Buddhaghosacārya, it means “mental

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<sup>359</sup> Exp., p. 259.

<sup>360</sup> Exp., pp. 260-261.

<sup>361</sup> Vism IX.351.

<sup>362</sup> Vism IX.351.

<sup>363</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 7.

impartiality.”<sup>364</sup> To exemplify this impartiality Buddhaghosacārya uses four categories of imaginative objects: oneself, a beloved friend, a neutral person, and an enemy. It should be clarified that these imaginative objects need to be based on real people for whom the practitioner has feelings of love, neutrality or hate. Thus he explains:

When his resentment towards that hostile person has been thus allayed, then he can turn his mind with loving-kindness towards that person too, just as towards the one who is dear, the very dear friend, and the neutral person. Then he should break down the barriers by practicing loving-kindness over and over again, accomplishing mental impartiality towards the four persons, that is to say, himself, the dear person, the neutral person and the hostile person.<sup>365</sup>

The one by one visualising starting with oneself, followed by the neutral person, then the loved one, then finally the enemy, should lead the practitioner to think, “May this being be happy; or May they be released from pain; or May they not lose the success they have obtained.”<sup>366</sup> Eventually through the process of the *jhāna*, the practitioner removes discursive thoughts about the distinctiveness of each of these people until he encounters no distinctions, barriers, or limits to how he feels about all those subjects because he no longer particularises them since seeing is now undifferentiated.

#### **3.5.4 Removing Adherence to Views - Correct Seeing**

The analysis of any experience undertaken to remove adherence to views, especially the view of a unified self ‘identity view’ (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), “involves breaking down units of experience into their smaller constituents, while investigating the relations of things involves positing particular groupings and networks of phenomena to interpret the dynamic patterns of their

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<sup>364</sup> Vism IX.86.

<sup>365</sup> Vism IX.40

<sup>366</sup> Vism IX.123.

interrelatedness and conditionality.”<sup>367</sup> Hence the different ways of breaking down experience depend on the purpose for their analysis. The five aggregates (*khandhas*) for example, are used to break down the notion of a unified self ‘identity view’, to make us see and understand that in fact an idea of a person cannot be found when each *dhamma* is examined, there is no being that is the foundation for assuming ‘I am’ or ‘I’. In the ultimate sense, there is only name-form. In the ultimate sense, the idea of a unified self is nothing other than a series of processes that are highly conditioned and impermanent.

This can be illustrated with the following *sutta*, which refers to the case of a king who had never heard the sound of a lute. When the king heard the sound of the lute one day, he asked his ministers what it was because the sound was so enchanting and enthralling. His ministers replied that it was the sound of a lute. The king asked for the lute; when his ministers brought one, he asked them where the sound was. When the ministers explained that the sound was produced by a combination of different factors, the king complained that the lute was a poor thing indeed, broke it with his own hands, and had the pieces burned and their ashes scattered. What the ministers called the sound of a lute, the king said, was nowhere to be found.<sup>368</sup> The point of the *sutta* is that views of any sort are treated as contingent combinations of factors where such views cannot be found. In the same way any adherence to views including the most dangerous of all - ‘identity view’ - can be dismantled when treated by the five aggregates (*khandhas*) where a fixed idea of individuality or an apparently unified self cannot be found in any of the five parts that constitute the aggregates.

This practice also applies to emotions we may hold for a person, such as anger, where for example, we begin breaking the person we hate into the five components, then ask which part we are angry with until we realise that anger cannot be found in any of those parts. Consequently, we see that the emotion we arrive at so easily not only cannot hold, but fades away. It should be noted that what is being dismantled here is not the physical person with whom we are angry;

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<sup>367</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>368</sup> SN 35.205.

the work is done in a contemplative state where we work together with the idea we have of the person we are angry with. Once an emotion is examined through the scrutiny of the five aggregates, it finds no basis on which to fix, as in the example of the sound that was nowhere to be found.

Thus examining Buddhaghosacārya's reading of the *Abhidhamma* templates, Ram-Prasad writes that the *nāma-rūpa* does not take on "the character of a formal theory of man. The concern is not so much the presentation of an analysis of man as object, but rather the understanding of the nature of conditioned existence from the point of view of the experiencing subject."<sup>369</sup> Thus the aggregates are a reflexive analysis that aims at dismantling any possible adherence to such views.

Getting away from resorting to views by guiding a transformative exercise of seeing correctly is therefore the aim of this contemplative exercise. As explained previously, the purpose of these *Abhidhamma* practices is not to arrive at conclusions about how things ultimately are; the practices are directed towards developing the capacity to not seek such conclusions, as Heim and Ram-Prasad have noted. They further add, "learning to observe experience in new ways is explicitly a protection against the existential problematic that the Buddha identified as 'resorting to views'."<sup>370</sup>

At the beginning of this chapter I highlighted craving (*taṇhā*) as one of the most problematic root-tendencies. Craving (*taṇhā*) for unified self-concept, for example, is dealt with both through the five aggregates and the method of Dependent Origination. This method helps us to break down human experience not only into five parts, as we have seen with the aggregates, but twelve. By doing this we see how conditions work, how the self-concept originates, what conditions it, and how that self-concept conditions experience. So for example, the rationality used is that "Dependent on a (harmful or helpful) phenomena there may arise a

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<sup>369</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 23.

<sup>370</sup> Heim and Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 17.

(harmful or helpful) phenomena, conditioned by way of (root-causes).”<sup>371</sup> It also works in reverse order; if root-causes cease, then phenomena (harmful or helpful) do not arise. The quotation below exemplifies the general method of Dependent Origination in both directions, which can be applied to any thought formation.

And what is dependent co-arising? From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness. From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-and-form. From name-and-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media. From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact. From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling. From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving. From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance. From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming. From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain,

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<sup>371</sup> Nyanaponika (1998) *Abhidhamma Studies: Buddhist Exploration of Consciousness and Time*, Wisdom Publications, p. 21.

distress, and despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress and suffering.<sup>372</sup>

Once the practitioner sees the conditions, he can begin to understand what conditions him, and what he is responding to. This form of breaking down experience unveils the root causes of things by finding the relationality of conditions in experience. The different ways of breaking down experience, the five aggregates or Dependent Origination, are used as hermeneutic framing to observe experience in a particular way. Their use will depend on the kind of exploration required for the training.

However seeing the conditions is simply seeing, while knowing how they work thorough Dependent Origination also requires discernment. Acuteness of discernment (*pucchāparicchedo*) requires the practice of knowing both how and what to question and how and what to answer, as we shall see in the next section.

### 3.5.5 Wise Attention: Sharpening Discernment through Questions.

Questions equip the practitioners for the process of discernment, which is required for the analysis of conditions and conditionality in experience. The questions were divided by the Buddha into four types: categorical (*ekamsavyākaraṇīya pañha*), analytical (*vibhajjavyākaraṇīya pañha*), cross-question (*paṭipucchavyākaraṇīya pañha*), and to be put aside (*thapanīya pañha*).<sup>373</sup> They are explained by Ṭhānissaro as follows:

If asked, 'Is the eye inconstant?' one should answer categorically, 'Yes, it's inconstant.' This is the categorical question. If asked, 'Does inconstant mean eye?' one should answer analysing, 'Not just the eye; the ear is also inconstant, the nose is also inconstant.' This is an analytical question. If asked, for example, 'Is the eye like the ear? Is the ear like the eye?' and one cross-questions, 'In what sense are you asking?' then if told, 'I am asking in the sense of seeing,' one should

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<sup>372</sup> SN 12.2. See also SN 12.61, SN 22.5

<sup>373</sup> MN 4:42.



answer, 'No.' If told, 'I am asking in the sense of inconstancy,' one should answer, 'Yes.' This is a cross-questioning question. When asked, for example, 'Is the soul the same thing as the body?' one should put it aside, (saying) 'This is unanswered by the Blessed One.' This question is not to be answered. This is a question to be put aside. Thus the form in which the question is presented is the measure of the four ways of answering questions. It is under the guidance of these [categories] that a question should be answered.<sup>374</sup>

Buddhaghosacārya adds that the function of the questions are: 1) to illuminate something unseen; 2) to bring something unknown together with something that is known; 3) to cut through doubts; and 4) to discover opinion.<sup>375</sup> In addition there are also questions for self-examination or self-interrogation, which Buddhaghosacārya, speaking in the first-person, exemplifies with one of the four abidings: "why do I continue this perverse and ruinous hatred?"<sup>376</sup> Ṭhānissaro adds that "as we watch the Buddha respond to questions, we are watching discernment in action, for that is how he understood discernment: as an action, as a compassionate strategy for bringing about release."<sup>377</sup> Ṭhānissaro further notes that a teacher should provide practitioners with the tools to foster their own discernment: to choose their questions wisely, to find the answers for themselves, and to gauge whether their answers really helped them.<sup>378</sup>

The first, categorical questions refine the frame of correct seeing by shifting attention to the details of experience, and thus establishing the chain of conditions. The second, analytical questions are applied differently in accordance with the practitioner skills, which work towards uncovering the dynamic of conditioned and conditioning factors that constitute human experience as described in Dependent Origination. The third, cross-reference questions, establish the causation of conditions and use hypothetical analogies or similes or examples in

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<sup>374</sup> Ṭhānissaro, 2010, p. 360.

<sup>375</sup> Exp., pp. 73-74.

<sup>376</sup> Vism III.23.

<sup>377</sup> Ṭhānissaro, 2010, p. 12.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

order to frame actions that result from seeing and knowing versus those caused by blindness. Those examples are applied when the practitioner cannot understand how to examine the causation of conditions on his own. The frame of correct seeing is refined by these questions that “the Buddha recommended be applied to one’s specific actions,”<sup>379</sup> all the way to the action of assuming a sense of self and other subtle forms of ideas that come about as the result of our tendency to cling, grasp or crave for adherence to views. A more detailed explanation with examples will be offered in Chapter 4, where I will be drawing similarities between these questions and the questions used in EUDE for the purpose of sharpening the children’s discernment.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION: BUDDHAGHOSACĀRYA’S METHODOLOGY

Buddhaghosacārya’s approach to the reading of the *Abhidhamma* system in “phenomenological terms, rather than as ontological commitments”<sup>380</sup> is, as Heim states, uncommon. She describes his methodology as “ametaphysical phenomenological practice.”<sup>381</sup> We have examined how the *Visuddhimagga* is concerned with phenomenology rather than metaphysics. Its goal is to purify seeing and knowing through the careful and gradual process of developing wise attention to the various details and conditions in experience.

Hence my reading of the *Visuddhimagga* as phenomenological methodology resonates with that of Ram-Prasad who writes “to talk of Buddhaghosacārya’s phenomenological method is to talk of his programme of training monks and the virtuous Buddhist community to attend to what is found in their experience through the categories adverting to the various factors in/of experience that the Buddha taught.”<sup>382</sup> Ram-Prasad explains that Buddhaghosacārya’s analysis of experience does not seek to define the nature of knowledge or offer a framework through which such knowledge can be gained. The purpose for a monk in

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<sup>379</sup> Thānissaro, 2010, p. 356.

<sup>380</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 10.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 7.

attending to the analysis of experience is to free him “from the misunderstandings about his own life that keep him entangled in the painful conditions of that life.”<sup>383</sup> One conclusion we can draw from Buddhaghosacārya’s approach is that it can be said to free us from obstructions that drive us into ontological reflexes, and what Ram-Prasad describes as “the need to come up with an answer for how things really are from the way they appear.”<sup>384</sup> So, what in fact Buddhaghosacārya offers, is a phenomenological methodology that equips practitioners with the tools for dismantling harmful conditions by attending, analysing and changing human experience at the level of psychological conditions.

As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, although there is abundant Buddhist literature relating to moral psychology and ethics, little importance has been paid to the practical fine-grained detail of methodology and techniques that we tend to overlook when trying to theorise the sometimes untheorisable. The praxis of the *Visuddhimagga* and the psychological significance of Buddhaghosacārya’s work is an excellent example of the importance of correct seeing, which is to pay close and careful attention to the details of experience, for the purpose of exploring and analysing its conditions. This is precisely what Keown in his article on morality in the *Visuddhimagga* dismisses as unimportant, the detailed explanations of experience referring to them as “minute monkish matters of deportment and trivial infringements.”<sup>385</sup> However, as Heim recognises, what Buddhaghosacārya really explains through his phenomenological method in the *Visuddhimagga* in his ‘own distinctive way’ is “the more usual Buddhist refusal to stop with a description of mere action and his insistence on attending to the way that skilful experience is actually being constructed underneath action.”<sup>386</sup> It is an internally aware, and intentional ethical behaviour, like a compass within self and relationships, rather than what is normally associated with virtue ethics or other abstract theories of morality. The *Visuddhimagga* is concerned with the construction of experience through the purification of view. The removing of

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>385</sup> Damien Keown (1983) ‘Morality in the *Visuddhimagga*’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 6:1, p. 73.

<sup>386</sup> Heim, 2014, p. 72.

defilements is the absence of self-centred tendencies and as the Buddha said, “is the absence of any wrongdoing.”<sup>387</sup> The *Visuddhimagga* can therefore be better understood when we ask how hostile acts can be eliminated in concrete human circumstances.

In accordance with this view, my reading of the techniques deployed by Buddhaghosacārya in the *Visuddhimagga* is not concerned with finding theoretical terms or trying to find a theory of morals, as Keown and many others seem to be doing. Instead I have read Buddhaghosacārya’s phenomenological methods in terms of a set of practices that “explores with great sensitivity and nuance the subtle working of experience,”<sup>388</sup> and that lead to a life free from harmful conditions where caring for others through the absence of harmful conditions can truly be manifested.

We will now move to the final chapter of this thesis where we will examine those aspects of Buddhaghosacārya’s work and EUDE practices that are comparable, and through that comparison show how Buddhaghosacārya can give a philosophical coherence to EUDE practices.

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<sup>387</sup> D.i.174.

<sup>388</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 10.

## 4 THE COMPARISON – THE FRAMING OF EUDE

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*Caring for one's own experience is in  
itself an act of love to others.*

*EUDE*

The purpose of this chapter is to show how my reading of Buddhaghosacārya's work contributes to understanding the implications of EUDE. It will demonstrate how a comparative analysis provides a systematic framing of EUDE and how a conceptual framework emerges from that framing. It will ultimately articulate the distinctive philosophy of ethical education that the secular programme of EUDE encompasses, then show how the distinct phenomenological methodology of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya can collaborate on shedding light on a different angle from where to the ethical development that is central to current global concerns can be approached. Before we begin, a summary of the main principles of both practices that have been explained in Chapters 2 and 3 will provide an overview of the similarities they share along with their key differences.

I explained in Chapter 2 that EUDE's main purpose is to reduce hostility in human interaction through its labs, which are a set of practices that children perform through practical processes that do not have a theoretical framework. Indeed, EUDE has never sought to formulate a theory and does not have a doctrinal commitment. I have made clear that it is secular programme without a higher spiritual goal. I have also discussed the need for its practices to have an internal conceptual coherence, a philosophy that can make sense of this programme that is located within the framework of intervention in ethical development. With regard to its practices, EUDE was designed believing that ethics is a matter of enactment attained through the way the labs enable the children to transform their experiences and consequently their conduct. EUDE equips them with the ability to perform such transformation through modular and mutually dependent techniques, that is, conscious attention to the content and conditions of experience and the way in which these experiences can be broken down, examined and

analysed for their reinterpretation. EUDE has demonstrated that the more the children cultivate focused attention on experience, the more they see and understand; and the more they see and understand, the more they are able to dismantle harmful conditions (dogmatic thinking, judgments and generalisations). This spiral growth results in less hostile action and interaction.

In Chapter 3, I examined how Buddhaghosacārya's doctrinal commitments, teleology and soteriology are able to give us such detailed practices. The chapter demonstrated how, through the three interrelated sections in the *Visuddhimagga* (Virtue, Concentration and Understanding), Buddhaghosacārya presents a dynamic and progressive system that shows how our human tendencies are manifested as conditions in our experience and how important the development of correct seeing through the cultivation of attention is. The chapter showed how to break down experience in order to work with the conditions that obstruct vision and understanding by means of the imagination. Imagination, explained by Ram-Prasad, helps to shift the focus of attention on to different interpretations of the content of experience, which reconfigures the practitioner's thoughts and actions. We concluded that Buddhaghosacārya's methodology is a phenomenological discipline that has "no grip for an ontic divide between the subjective and the objective,"<sup>389</sup> which makes it analytical and not metaphysical.

What now needs to be analysed is how Buddhaghosacārya's distinct phenomenology method can offer a particular insight that helps us to articulate a clear conceptual framework for the methodology of EUDE practices. This coherent statement of methodology will amount to the 'philosophy' of EUDE: philosophy in the sense of a systematic framing and structuring of practices, rather than a body of doctrine or an argument for a particular view of reality. Thus, despite the profound differences between the practices of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya, the comparison in this chapter will focus on a shared key principle: cultivating attention to the content of one's own experience as an intervention in one's ethical development. EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya regard their practices as providing the method and techniques for dismantling conditions in experience that are harmful

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<sup>389</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 6.

for oneself and others. They both understand that this dismantling of harmful conditions in experience is a way to reshape one's phenomenology. As explained in Chapter 3, by modifying thoughts and actions, both practices reflect an ethical concern for conduct, although in EUDE this is quite explicit. However it must be strongly emphasised that EUDE is modest in its aims and strictly limited in scope; it makes no claims about transforming human nature fundamentally, nor does it offer the ancient spiritual promise of the world religion that Buddhaghosacārya sought to explain.

The comparison based on this shared key principle is divided into two layers of analysis. **The first analysis** will show that the practices of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya are in alignment in two ways: 1) through the process for cultivating correct seeing which focuses on attention to the exploration and analysis of human experience, and 2) through the use of the techniques that work with the subjective content of experience. Both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya use imagination as the means to reinterpret the content of human experience, that is, the distinctive analytic, and not ontic way in which both practices see and work with human experience in order to remove selfishness and egocentric ideas. I will begin by describing conceptually the shared key areas of the comparisons mentioned above. However it is only when one sees the fine-grained detail of the practices that what is radical about the nature of the process and techniques of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya's work can be appreciated. Thus I will contrast both programmes by offering detailed examples from where my reading of Buddhaghosacārya will offer a systematic framing of EUDE practices.

**The second analysis** of this comparison refers to understanding the ethical dimension that both practices share. It will provide a clear conceptual framework for EUDE as well as highlight what is radical about this secular programme for ethical development. In the end it will become evident how the distinct way in which both programmes use phenomenological transformation contributes by highlighting and demonstrating the importance of phenomenological discipline in the field of ethical development.

Before continuing, it should be noted that my comparative analysis as well as being guided by, and based on, my reading of Buddhaghosacārya's work, has been influenced by the most recent work of Ram-Prasad who, during the process of my writing, has published *The Body in Contemplation*.<sup>390</sup> This is because his study sheds valuable light on Buddhaghosacārya's use of *Abhidhamma* techniques in a manner that helps me to highlight the key points from which Buddhaghosacārya's work can provide a coherent framework to EUDE's principles and to its methodology.

#### **4.1 A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES TO BE COMPARED**

EDUE's objective is to remove harmful self-centred dogmatic ideas, judgments and/or generalisations by equipping children with the ability to pay conscious attention to conditions in experience, an ability that hopefully becomes habituated and perhaps eventually, second-nature. Buddhaghosacārya's practices also aims at cultivating (*bhāvanā*) wise attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) thereby removing, dismantling and causing to cease the harmful conditions that prevent correct seeing and understanding. EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya begin with an understanding of the human person that proceeds through an analysis of experience at a very fine-grained level of analytical detail, since both practices view experience as providing in itself the reflexive materials for phenomenological transformation. That is why the practices of both programmes focus strongly in their techniques and processes towards cultivating attention to conditions in experience, through a process that they divide into different stages, as we shall now see.

##### **4.1.1 The Process for Cultivating Correct Seeing**

As explained in Chapter 2, cultivating attention to experience in EUDE follows the basic principle that the more conscious attention is developed, the more it is

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<sup>390</sup> See Ram-Prasad, 2018.



possible to lessen harmful conditions, such as attachments or hatred. To achieve this, EUDE works with an inseparable correlation between two practices of attention: attention to conditions in experience, and attention to The Space Between. The two practices are divided in three stages. The first stage is to habilitate discipline in the minds of children by training them how to sustain focus attention using different objects<sup>391</sup> - sensory present objects or past memory objects or ideas. The second stage is to care for the experience by cultivating in them the ability to pay attention to the content of the experience brought about by the contact with an object of attention. They also learn how to detect and remove judgments, generalisations and dogmatic ideas. The third and final stage is achieved when the children are in a position to understand that they must care for The Space Between, the shared space where they co-create experience with others. Caring for The Space Between means helping others through the Art of Questioning to detect their own judgments, generalisations and dogmatic thinking. For Buddhaghosacārya there are doctrinal commitments that a practitioner must comply with. Thus his method aims first to take the practitioner to virtuous acts through abstention and restraint in order to be able to cultivate correct seeing through the practice of concentration (*Samādhi*) and insight (*Vipassanā*) that leads to the realisation of the Noble Truths taught by the Buddha. Only then can the practitioner go through further stages of attainment on the path to liberation (*nibbāna*). The reading of the two contemplative practices *Samādhi* and *Vipassanā*, that we have discussed in Chapter 3, and that are also defined as the ‘only way’ by the Buddha, offer a way to understand the first two stages of attention practice in the EUDE programme, albeit not with the same level of complexity as in Buddhaghosacārya’s system and with a different final aim. In Buddhaghosacārya’s method one practice brings the ability to pay selective attention to the characteristics of experience (concentration); the other cultivates the ability to pay wise attention to the impermanence and conditionality of those characteristics, which is a more advanced form of attentiveness, a way of knowing through wise attention, separated from mere perceiving (*sañjānana*) and cognising

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<sup>391</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, by objects I mean, inanimate objects, animate objects, people and events, both present or from past experiences.

(*vijānana*).<sup>392</sup> A summary of Buddhaghosacārya's words on the different levels of attention that I described in Chapter 3 is helpful here:

Perception is only the mere perceiving of an object as, say, blue or yellow; it cannot bring about the penetration of its characteristics as impermanent, painful, and not-self. Concentration knows the objects as blue or yellow, and it brings about the penetration of its characteristics, but it cannot bring about, by endeavouring, the manifestation of the path. Understanding knows the object in the way already stated, it brings about the penetration of the characteristics, and it brings about, by endeavouring, the manifestation of the path.<sup>393</sup>

Although Buddhaghosacārya describes three different levels of attention, our aim is to show how he frames the EUDE programme. Consequently we are interested solely in perception and concentration, which can be compared with Year I and Year II of EUDE's programme. For example, Year I of the EUDE programme 'Subjectivity Process', is devoted to equipping the children with the ability to sustain focused attention to sensory objects, then to shift their attention to the experience (mental object) triggered by the contact with the object, then finally to examine the content that forms the subjective appearance of the experience, such as past experiences, language, functions or characteristics linked to the object of attention, etc.

The aim at this first level of attention is for the children to see the subjectivity of their experiences with clarity. We can understand the implications of the first level of attention practice in EUDE when we compare it with Buddhaghosacariya's description of the first steps for cultivating (*bhāvanā*) attention through *Samadhi*, through the four-fold *jhāna* template and its forty objects of meditation - the example given in our previous chapter - where he describes in detail how absorption in a sensory object allows for the stopping of distracting thoughts and how, by working with the subjective appearance of

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<sup>392</sup> Vism XIV pp. 3.

<sup>393</sup> Vism XIV.3.

experience, the practitioner comes to understand his own subjectivity. As Ram-Prasad explains, “There is something intuitive about many features of our experience of the formations, since they advert to what we already know vaguely about ourselves and can therefore sharpen through attentiveness. But closer attention begins to draw us away (as in an existential sense it will the practitioner) from these intuitions towards subtler, less obvious and therefore startlingly fruitful aspects of who we are.”<sup>394</sup> Hence perception focuses one’s attention on the object of experience; consciousness carefully and attentively sees its characteristics. The results of these two levels of development are described by Buddhaghosacārya as: “the state in virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants remain evenly and rightly on a single object, undistracted and unscattered.”<sup>395</sup> The implication of the previous analysis helps us to understand the logic for the two different levels of attention in EUDE, which is that the children will only be able to discern and infer what they can see.

EUDE assumed that without first cultivating different degrees of attention, seeing conditions in experience is simply not possible, let alone removing the harmful ones. This can be placed in the context of the concept of blindness that Buddhaghosacārya quoting the Buddha highlights “*Bhikkhus*, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. Who knows and sees what? Wise attention and unwise attention, when one attends unwisely, unarisen taints arise and arisen taints increase, when one attends wisely, unarisen taints do not arise and arisen taints are abandoned.”<sup>396</sup> The development of attention and concentration is therefore seen in Buddhaghosacārya’s system as the very first stage of the mind’s encounter with the object; the holding of the associated mental factors to the object as a prerequisite for correct seeing. That means seeing the impermanence and conditionality of the characteristics of the object in experience, a process, which in turn changes one’s experience of it. These practices produce what Heim and Ram-

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<sup>394</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 27.

<sup>395</sup> Vism III.3.

<sup>396</sup> MN i. 7.

Prasad call “phenomenological transformation.”<sup>397</sup> This also applies to the process of conscious attention in EUDE where seeing the characteristics of subjective experience means seeing conditions and relationality, and being able to create inferential processes where generalisations, such as “*all dogs are dangerous*,” or judgments such as “*you are ugly*,” or dogmatic thoughts such as “*children who beg in the street are criminals*”, or harmful emotions such as hatred and resentment, are removed. The deeper level of attention this requires is cultivated during Year II of the EUDE programme, as explained in detail in Chapter 2 in the section devoted to conscious attention that we term Caring for the Experience. This deeper level of attention begins with the children learning how to break down experience and how to identify the subjective content of experience separated from self-created assumptions by focusing on a well-inferred and discernible process. EUDE explains that it is possible for the children to interact without reading a harmful self-centred interpretation into experience, if conscious attention and mental discipline are cultivated.

This entire process in both practices shows that although some degree of attention needs to be cultivated, a deeper form of attentiveness must first be developed and perfected by the very act of understanding, and vice versa, that understanding requires deeper forms of attention that result in correct seeing as stated by Buddhaghosacārya when saying, “one who is concentrated knows and sees correctly.”<sup>398</sup> This helps to understand why focused attention and conscious attention in EUDE are viewed not as a sequential process, but a progressive one. The more focus attention the children develop, the more they can see beyond ordinary conditions and the more their inferential and discernment thinking sharpens. The more these sharpen, the more they are able to see beyond ordinary conditions, which increases their level of conscious attention. The reading also shows that for EUDE these mutually dependent intertwined practices, support and perfect each other.

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<sup>397</sup> Heim and Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 9.

<sup>398</sup> Vism XIV.7.

#### 4.1.2 Techniques for Working with The Content of Experience

As we have stated, for EUDE the sole purpose for the above process of correct seeing is for the children to detect and remove judgments, generalisations and dogmatic ideas. For Buddhaghosacārya, however, the objective is broader – to guide the practitioner to see and understand the deepest and most harmful human tendencies, such as ignorance, craving and hatred. To achieve that, Buddhaghosacārya requires various ways to break down the experience so that the practitioner can examine its content from different angles. EUDE by contrast, requires only one way for breaking down experience since it examines the content with a much more modest aim. Therefore Buddhaghosacārya uses a set of techniques from the *Abhidhamma* system such as the *jhāna* template and its forty-meditation objects/subject, while EUDE uses the Art of Questioning with its corresponding simulators.

Although the techniques of Buddhaghosacārya and EUDE might seem very different at first glance, they in fact share an important similarity, the way their techniques work with the experience and its content. By that, I mean that both practices use their techniques to create awareness of the subjective components of what is experienced. Thus, the work that the techniques seek to address is the reinterpreting, or in words of Ram-Prasad “reconfiguring,”<sup>399</sup> the content of experience (subjective appearances) in less harmful form. This explains why the techniques in both programmes first shift the attention of the children/practitioners away from present physical objects to their subjective appearance, then why both use imagination as a therapeutic tool that compares and contrasts the objective<sup>400</sup> with the subjective data and vice versa, which alters the interpretation of the subjective content of experience. In the case of Buddhaghosacārya, the therapeutic tool is the use of the sign (learning sign, counterpart sign). In the case of EUDE, as the previous analysis has explained, the therapeutic tool is the mental object

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<sup>399</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p.1.

<sup>400</sup> Objective here does not mean metaphysical reality, but the factuality of experience that for EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya refers to the subjective data perceived through the senses (past or present), which is different from subjective self-created ideas triggered by personal desires or attachments. Both nevertheless still are subjective data.

(imaginative object) and real object (sensory perception) - the objective and the subjective - used as a way to reconfigure the children's thoughts and emotions.

The objects of attention that both practices require for training the mind to work with the content of experience in this way are key. Buddhaghosacārya has forty different objects of attention for contemplative practice, divided in twenty-two objects that use a counterpart sign, and twelve that have states consisting of individual essences as object (as, for example, with the meditations of the four abidings). EUDE, by contrast, brings different objects of attention in each EUDE lab using four classifications; inanimate objects, animate objects, people and events, and two temporalities; present or past. The temporal framework is changed depending on the goal to be achieved; thus the content can be past experiences or present objects depending on whether the children's experience is being reconfigured from the objective to the subjective or vice versa.

Ram-Prasad sheds light on what is radical about working with the content of experience in this way when analysing Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenology for transformation, and this helps me now to explain what is also radical about the EUDE programme. First, to talk about the practices of subjectivity that both programmes describe permits us to frame both practices in the field of phenomenology; secondly, their phenomenological practice focuses exclusively on the subjective and is therefore analytical rather than metaphysical because neither EUDE nor Buddhaghosacārya seek an ontological explanation of reality through their practices. What has been explained highlights what is distinct about these practices, but as I have said, it is only when the three detailed comparisons are made that this will be fully appreciated.

## **4.2 A DETAILED COMPARISON THAT FRAMES THE MAIN METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF EUDE**

This is a three-part comparison. The first comparison focuses on showing how Buddhaghosacārya helps to explain the emphasis that EUDE places in its first stage of the practice on sustained focus attention on experience. The second comparison

shows how, through Buddhaghosacārya's understanding of the *Abhidhamma* system, EUDE's main principle Caring for the Experience is framed, where the reconfiguring of experience takes place under a process that explores and dismantles harmful interpretations of the content of experience through analytic and not metaphysic distinction. The third comparison focuses on the ethical dimension of both practices. In the case of EUDE this refers to its principle of The Space Between where in a share dialogical encounter, experience is co-created and shaped by the subjectivity of all parties.

#### **4.2.1 Attention Practice - Working with Experience**

The preliminary task of EUDE is to train the children to sustain focus and to concentrate their attention on an object. This includes making their minds fully aware of that object to the exclusion of everything else. Buddhaghosacārya's explanation of the preliminary-work sign and learning sign that is developed through the *jhāna* template will help us to understand the implications of this first stage of the EUDE process.

The process begins with the teacher's search for a suitable place where the children can sit quietly and silently to practice focus attention while being kept away from all sensory objects that could cause them any kind of desire or distraction during their practices. Buddhaghosacārya's emphasis in Chapter IV of the *Visuddhimagga* on the importance of finding the proper place and favourable conditions before attempting to sit and perform any contemplative practice helps us to understand and highlight how and why it is crucial to find a suitable place for this kind of practice.

##### ***Favourable Conditions for Developing Focus Attention***

In the EUDE labs the training on focused attention requires a classroom with specific requirements where the children can sit comfortably and without interruptions. The setting of the classroom needs to have enough light so as not to be too dark, and to be an open space where they can sit comfortably, but without

being so close to each other that they can be easily distracted, or so far from each other that it becomes difficult for the teacher to pay attention to each of them during the activity. They should not be sitting in circles because they tend to look at each other even if the activity requires them to close their eyes. The ideal position is for them all to be seated with their backs to the wall so that they do not see each other; the aim is for them to see only the object that is to be placed in front of them and to eliminate any possible distractions. If the room is noisy, too dark or too light, they will find it very difficult to keep their focus attention on the object and will be too easily distracted. The time of the day is also important, so the practice does not take place after a break, after a meal, or just before finishing school. After a break the children tend to be hyperactive and do not want to sit still or focus on anything except carrying on playing, after eating a meal they tend to fall asleep. Before the school finishes for the day is the worst time, since then they are not interested in being quiet or focusing on objects, but merely want to go home. The best time is at the beginning of the school day before the daily classroom activities begin.

We find the same concerns in Buddhaghosacārya who begins the description of the practice by explaining that a suitable monastery favourable to the development of concentration needs to be found first. He describes the eighteen faults<sup>401</sup> unfavourable for contemplative practices, such as a monastery located in a nearby city or a monastery where the practitioner lacks a good friend or a teacher, or one that is close to a road, etc. He clarifies when and how the practice is to take place - "on his return from his alms round after his meal and after he has got rid of drowsiness due to the meal, he should sit down comfortably in a secluded place."<sup>402</sup>

Care taken regarding the right time to sit and meditate so that any potential obstructions or impediments are removed is a point of similarity between both practices. Creating the right conditions means understanding how an untrained

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<sup>401</sup> Vism IV.2.

<sup>402</sup> Vism IV.21.



mind can lapse and become easily distracted. For these reasons, ways of making the process of focus attention easier need to be carefully explored.

### ***Training Attention with Different Objects***

The first part of the practice is concerned with disciplining the children's minds so that they learn how to become fully aware of a present object using the senses. That object can be something visual, or a sound, a smell, a taste or a texture; the idea is that the children practice focus attention using any of the five senses. The various activities for this particular set of labs have been described in the section 'First Trimester - Focus Attention' in Chapter 2. There I described how one set of activities is done through sitting meditation where the children work with a candle or a coloured paper disc and sit and focus on a present object of their choice using the different senses, and one sense at a time - visual meditation using a candle or a coloured paper disc, or hearing sounds during meditation, or smelling an odour during meditation or tasting food during meditation, or touching an object during meditation. I described how Tai Chi is used so that the children learn to focus their attention while in movement, and how, using the example of drawing, they are encouraged to reproduce exactly what they see with such accuracy that their minds are solely focused on and absorbed by drawing that particular object. I described the quantification exercises used to keep focus attention on one particular object while interacting with others in their classroom or with their families at home, as for example how many times they say kind words at dinner time or how many times they hear the sound of a dog during the day. In the case of meditation, or even activities such as drawing or describing what they see, they must sit in front of the present object and see it until there is nothing in their minds except that physical object in front of them. The aim is for them to develop the ability to focus on one chosen object and control their minds, so that attention is not diverted to something else unwillingly, or at least, not unknowingly.

In a similar manner Buddhaghosacārya describes the first step for starting contemplation – after making the physical object of earth *kasīṇa*<sup>403</sup> the mind must be filled with an object until full awareness of that object is achieved. And so, he says that the practitioner should then begin to focus concentration on the visual object (earth *kasīṇa*), not too soft, not too hard, but like “seeing the reflexion of his face on the surface of a looking glass.”<sup>404</sup> Gradually the practitioner enters into a more refined mode of sensory awareness and starts removing the dangers of the senses. At this point colour and other characteristics of the earth *kasīṇa* should not be reviewed. For example its colour should be seen solely as a property or accessory of the physical object with regard to its characteristics such as hard or soft; it should be given attention since apprehension is done with the eyes. The concept should be used only as a name which can be any name since is just a name, although Buddhaghosacārya seems to suggest using the one that is most obvious, which in the case of earth *kasīṇa* is just ‘earth’. This process of not reviewing helps us to understand why it is also important in EUDE to ask the children to abstain from reviewing the sensory object. Children, however, have great imaginations, and fantasising is an unavoidable aspect of their cognitive process.<sup>405</sup> Hence teachers play an important role when through the Art of Questioning they remind the children not to divert their attention to something else. The questions used by the teacher focus on helping the children in two ways: identifying where their attention lies and where it should be, and re-directing their focused attention at all times. Example of these type of questions might be: *“is what you are describing what you have in front of you, or are you sharing with us another experience linked to this object?”* Taking the example of Carlitos who when shown the Disney poster describes a trip to Disneyland instead of what he can see in the poster in front of him, the question will be: *“Carlitos are you describing what you see in the poster or are you sharing with us another experience that you have with Disney characters?”* If the description is about his trip then the question will be: *“could you now describe what you see in the poster in front of you?”* Regaining attention

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<sup>403</sup> For further details regarding how Buddhaghosacārya describes the making of the physical earth, see Vism IV.24-26.

<sup>404</sup> Vism IV.28.

<sup>405</sup> See Bernadette Duffy (2006) *Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years*, Open University Press.

to the present sensory object is the single task in this preliminary stage. The teacher serves as the guardian of the children's mind and models to them the questions that they will interiorise and later ask themselves as a practice of self-interrogation. Equipping the children with the ability to interiorise questions is the key aspect of their training in attention, since it is through questions that they will help themselves regain focus attention on the present sensory object in the more advanced stages of the practice.

As described in Chapter 3, although contemplative practices are performed in seclusion, Buddhaghosacārya emphasises the importance of a good friend, and also shows how the teacher plays a key role in deciding which meditation is suitable for the practitioner, and in constantly reviewing the practitioner's progress. This is explained in detail in Chapter III in the *Visuddhimagga*. Likewise, the practices for ethical development in EUDE require the guidance of another person. However it is important to note one point that distinguishes the two programmes, which is that children need to be guided through the process of attention closely and carefully, whereas the practitioner can perform the practice in isolation. While it is obvious that the deepness required for children does not compare with the spiritual depths of the contemplative practices, the key point is that disciplining the mind requires close guidance and direction in the case of the children, otherwise their mind would wander around in the world of fantasy and imagination.

#### **4.2.1.1 Seeing the Subjective Appearance of Experience**

One of the most important tools that both practices share - as previously noted - is the use of imagination for reconfiguring the phenomenology of the children and the practitioners. Both practices use the subjective appearance of an object of attention whether or not it is physically present - such is the case of memory from past events – in order to reinterpret the content of experience. Buddhaghosacārya states that once attention has been shifted to the visual object and the focus maintained so that it almost becomes one with the visual object by repeating the name of the object as in an hypnotic way 'earth, earth, earth', then the practitioner should go on developing it in this way "a hundred times, a thousand times, and

even more than that, until the learning sign arises.”<sup>406</sup> The learning sign (*nimitta*) is the willed imaginative image of the physical object (in our example, it is the imaginative image of the earth *kasīṇa*) totally unbound from the physical object (*kasīṇa*) - “born only of perception in one who has obtained concentration, being a mere mode of appearance.”<sup>407</sup> The sign should be adverted with eyes open, or with eyes shut exactly as it does with eyes open. Buddhaghosacārya explains three types of skills that the practitioner needs to master: “skill in producing the as yet unproduced sign of unification of mind through the earth *kasīṇa*, skill in developing [the sign] when produced, and skill in protecting [the sign] when obtained by development.”<sup>408</sup>

The previous explanation helps us to understand the implications of why EUDE following a very similar process, teaches the children to shift their focus attention to their subjective experience. This is done during the second part of cultivating focus attention in EUDE labs, and refers to the constructive nature of what children bring to their mental image - their subjectivity – with regard to the sensory object, or even with memory objects, such as past events or people they have met. EUDE deals with the mental image from the second and third trimester in Year I - named Subjectivity. There the children learn how to see and separate the content of the experience for the first time; they separate the sensory data perceived from the present object of experience from the self-centred assumptions. The same applies with memory objects - they separate the factuality of the past event from their emotional ideas of that memory object. As I said in Chapter 2 we term the imaginary subjective object, mental object (*objeto mental*). This imaginary image that includes the content of both - factual data<sup>409</sup> from experience and self-centred harmful tendencies - resembles the use of the signs in the Buddhaghosacārya’s techniques that we have just described. It is important to note that Buddhaghosacārya clarifies that “in the learning sign any fault in the

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<sup>406</sup> Vism IV.29.

<sup>407</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>408</sup> Vism IV.50.

<sup>409</sup> By factual data I mean what is normally perceived by the senses, which for EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya is also subjective.

*kaṣiṇa* is apparent.”<sup>410</sup> At this point in the process of EUDE, the same is applicable to the children’s mental object, which is loaded with self-centred ideas and summaries of their emotional impressions about the physical object. The children do not contrast the content of the experience for the purpose of removing those self-centred ideas until later stages. At this point the sole concern of EUDE is to equip them with the ability to pay selective attention to their mental images and to understand their subjective composition, thereby removing all mental constructions and what Buddhaghosacārya refers to as “subjective defilements.”<sup>411</sup> He further notes that “the reason for the sharp division between mental and physical phenomena, that is, between the image in one’s imagination and the sensory object, is not to grip for an ontic divide between the subjective and the objective; the subjective is just one side of the phenomenological enterprise.”<sup>412</sup> The purpose of the division described by Ram-Prasad as a “‘tangled’ phenomenology and ‘disentangled’ phenomenology,”<sup>413</sup> is for the purpose of seeing two different ways to configure phenomenality. But, it is precisely this disentangling achieved by the shifting of attention and by strong attentiveness (*satī*) to the learning sign (image) as opposed to the sensory object that enables the practitioner to see the characteristics of experience where harmful conditions cannot hold, as we shall see in the examples that follow.

The question might be - why do both practices invest so much in the appearance of the physical object? The answer should by now be clear, since harmful conditions, such as craving, greed and attachment in the case of Buddhaghosacārya, or dogmatic ideas, judgments and generalisations in the case of EUDE, are not in the sensory object, but in the constructed image of that sensory object. The children and practitioners need to see, examine, analyse and work with this image in order to contrast and dismantle self-centred harmful thoughts and emotions. To emphasise the importance of this stage in both practices I include a further insight into imagination offered by Ram-Prasad: “Imagination is a key step

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<sup>410</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>411</sup> Vism IV.84.

<sup>412</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 6.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

in the reconfiguration of ordinary ways of interpreting experience.”<sup>414</sup> Thus, if the learning sign is an imaginative sign, then imagination has the potential to reconfigure phenomenology, which is at stake in both methods. Using different sets of practices of attention EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya aim to teach the children and practitioners to examine the subjective appearance through these imitative images in ways that serve to remove of harmful thoughts or tendencies and enable the reinterpretation of the experience and the phenomenological reconfiguration of the children/practitioners, as we shall see in the next section.

#### **4.2.1.2 Identifying the Subjective Content of Experience**

Buddhaghosacārya explicitly says that after acquiring the learning sign during the *jhāna* process, the practitioner needs to work with it “quite secluded from sense desires, quite secluded from unprofitable things.”<sup>415</sup> Seclusion from sense desire means renunciation, which includes renunciation of sense desire as visible objects, and renunciation of unprofitable things. By unprofitable things he means defilements,<sup>416</sup> which implies seclusion from the hindrances, and that expresses mental seclusion. In other words Buddhaghosacārya addresses the issue of working with subjectivity through an imitative image. Using his own words he explains, “Ananda, mind should be well focussed by that *bhikkhu* as *ajjhata* (subjective, personal), namely, only in that symbol of concentration,”<sup>417</sup> referring to the sign, - which has been practiced before - and advising the practitioner to work with it inwardly rapt and fully concentrated.

Although the final purpose of EUDE is different from what Buddhaghosacārya is intending here, and certainly EUDE has no intention of driving children to reach *jhāna* states, nevertheless, the focus on the subjective content of experience as the object of analysis in both is important and key to the process of reconfiguring experience. In both programmes, the sign or mental image

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<sup>414</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 12.

<sup>415</sup> Vism IV.82.

<sup>416</sup> Sense desires as defilement are described as “zeal as sense desire (*kāma*), greed as sense desire, zeal and greed as sense desire, thinking as sense desire, thinking and greed as sense desire.” Vism IV.83.

<sup>417</sup> Exp., p. 60.

produced by sustained focus attention represents the subjective, and in both processes focus attention on the subjective content is required in order to dismantle harmful conditions. Both methods aim at peeling away the subjectivities of experience in order to remove any misunderstandings that bring harmful and painful conditions to it. Buddhaghosacārya sheds light on the term subjective (*ajjhata*) saying that it is a “self-referring, personal; one’s own produces in one’s continuity.”<sup>418</sup> Ram-Prasad adds of the term subjective, “In itself, the subjective is simply the set of functional capacities provided by the organic bases that enable perceiving and thinking.”<sup>419</sup> The subjective can become the object of one’s attention, which means that one can become aware of oneself as a perceiving and thinking subject and that can become in itself an object of one’s awareness. This explanation makes explicit the real function of the subjective and clarifies in an important way the intuitive use of subjectivity in the EUDE programme. Thus both programmes make a categorical distinction between objects of attention and subjectivity, which are then dissolved through the disciplinary practices, making the experience of the practitioner and the children more interdependent.

However there is an important distinction to be made between the two programmes. The children are required in a more pragmatic and explicit way to understand what subjective appearance really means and for that EUDE spends half a year helping them to see and understand such abstract concepts. Hence EUDE shifts the children’s attention to working exclusively with their mental object in order to understand it. The aim is not to remove their subjectivity but to take their subjectivity as the object of their focused attention through the means of imagination, then to use the three standard techniques of EUDE - meditation, the Art of Questioning, and quantifications – to enable them to examine their own subjectivity. As I have explained in Chapter 2, the children do this by seeing and understanding through an imaginative image (mental object) that their subjectivity: 1) is always personal and can be composed of ‘intrinsic and

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<sup>418</sup> Exp., p. 225.

<sup>419</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 6.

extrinsic<sup>420</sup> data as well as self-centred ontic assumptions of phenomena, 2) is conditioned by emotional summaries from past experiences, 3) is relative to their present emotional state, which conditions their interactions, and 4) is mutually dependent on the context where the experience takes place. Although these four distinctive practices of attention in EUDE are not explicit in Buddhaghosacārya's method, the work with subjective appearances is nevertheless undergone at another level. That is probably because Buddhaghosacārya deals with adults who may not require the explicitness and objectiveness that children do.

At another level Buddhaghosacārya shows how focus on the appearance of the physical object (the learning sign) is used to reach deeper levels of attention during the second *jhāna*. During the process of comparing the physical object and its appearance - the learning sign (image) - the practitioner begins a gradual stepping out of conceptual experience, initial and discursive thought is attenuated and thus the counterpart sign arises presenting a clear image of what was only perceived by the senses. The counterpart sign arises totally purified of gross material (hindrances and defilements) and becomes an entirely mental object pervading the whole experience and totally separate from the physical object. Thus Buddhaghosacārya says, "In the acquired sign, the faults of the [earth-disk] aid are understood well. But the imitative sign... stands forth as if breaking out, leaving behind the acquired sign, and a hundred times, a thousand times more purified."<sup>421</sup> For Ram-Prasad, this suggests that Buddhaghosacārya's practice "should be understood in terms of shaping phenomenal content between attentive focus on the experiential event and the contemplative focus on its imaginative impression. The imagination, then, becomes a means of reconfiguring phenomenology: it attends upon the appearance that is the acquired sign, but it also then leaves it behind, exceeding – in the purity of its focus – the original experience that is subject to the vagaries of the hindrances."<sup>422</sup> As explained at the beginning of this chapter, Ram-Prasad's analysis of Buddhaghosacārya's use of the sign explains the EUDE process of Caring for the Experience, where, through contrasting, exploring

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<sup>420</sup> By intrinsic EUDE means data coming from ideas, emotions, language, and memory; by extrinsic EUDE means data coming from any of the five senses. Both are considered subjective.

<sup>421</sup> Vism IV.31.

<sup>422</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 11.



and analysing their subjective appearance (mental object) against the factuality of the physical object - and vice versa - the children dismantle harmful thoughts and emotions.

Thus the shifting of attention to the subjective appearance of experience, and the process of identifying what the nature of subjective content is all about, are the pillars required for what follows. According to my reading of Buddhaghosacārya's work the next practices equip the children/practitioners to learn how to disentangle harmful contents in experience, or in Ram-Prasad's words to "reconfigure phenomenality."<sup>423</sup> Both programmes now shift the attention of the children/practitioners to learning how to break down experience for the purpose of interrogating and contrasting its content, so that harmful conditions can be detected and dismantled or removed. This is what EUDE refers to as Caring for the Experience and in the case of Buddhaghosacārya, Ram-Prasad notes that "disciplined attention to one's experience and consequent identification of the dynamics of its phenomenal constituents, based on the teaching of the categories by the Buddha (as laid out in the canonical *Abhidhamma* materials), is for the purpose of caring for one's spiritual teleology."<sup>424</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Caring for the Experience - Concentration**

As we have seen, Caring for the Experience in EUDE means guarding one's mind or not losing sight of the experience when interacting with others in order to stop the potential of subjective formations that may contain judgments, generalisations or dogmatic thinking that cloud children's minds, and consequently their social interactions. Harmful emotions from EUDE's perspective are the result of these potential harmful formations, so the focus of attention in what follows is to equip the children with the ability to focus on the content of experience and learn how to see and dismantle those harmful formations.

In the case of the practitioner, failure to see impermanence and conditionality causes pernicious views to arise and thus suffering.

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

Buddhaghosacārya says, “One who is concentrated knows and sees correctly.”<sup>425</sup> A practitioner who has reached this point of concentration has eliminated pernicious views and doubts, his concentration is strong and full of energy, but he is in danger of not seeing the subtle traces of pernicious views hidden beneath them. Hence wise attention is presented as a way to overcome these imperfections. Buddhaghosacārya has already stated that wise attention is a different way of attentiveness and knowing than merely perceiving and cognising.<sup>426</sup> The way of knowing that wise attention brings about is separated from mere perception where obstructions obscuring experience dissolves and experience is seen as impermanent and a condition not just during meditation but also as a constant state of experiencing phenomena. Defilements disperse and the more the experience is absent of them, the more the mind gains strength and vision. Ram-Prasad points out that “disciplined attention to one’s experience and consequent identification of the dynamics of its phenomenal constituents”<sup>427</sup> is a phenomenological method for understanding ourselves. He adds that this “understanding is an act of caring for the Buddhist path, not a grasp of some hidden structure of reality,”<sup>428</sup> which means understanding our own subjectivity and the role it plays in configuring one’s phenomenology. The implications of how breaking down experience and understanding its conditions reconfigures one’s phenomenology and how that affects human interaction will become clearer as we turn to the concrete stages of this process where the techniques are applied.

#### **4.2.2.1 Breaking Down Experience**

The techniques used by EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya for breaking down experience present some important differences. For example Buddhaghosacārya uses different techniques taken from the *Abhidhamma* system such as Dependent Origination, the aggregates, or contemplative practices with their forty different contents. EUDE, by contrast, makes use of one ludic tool when working with all aspects of experience. The complexity of breaking down experience and the

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<sup>425</sup> Vism XIV pp.7.

<sup>426</sup> Vism XIV pp.3.

<sup>427</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 8.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

exploration and analysis of its subjective content needs to be lessened, and presented as amusing and enjoyable tasks. The simulator named '*Cuidando la experiential*' Caring for the Experience, which was described in Chapter 2, was designed for this purpose.

Nonetheless it is the similarities that concern us here and two important points need to be noted. The first is the use of a generic template that both practices use for breaking down experiences. The key point is that both practices make use of templates for the same objective; to explore and analyse the content of the experience. The second is the purpose of such analysis, which Ram-Prasad articulates by explaining "it has nothing to do with ontologising phenomena or seeking to define the nature of knowledge and offering a framework through which such knowledge can be gained."<sup>429</sup> Instead, the practices seek to teach the children and practitioners to see the particularities of their experience in order to contrast its content for the purpose of dismantling whatever is harmful.

However an important difference between the two practices needs to be highlighted relating to the requirement of a teacher who guides the process of breaking the experience down. Whereas in Buddhaghosacārya's training the main contemplative practices for breaking down experience are done in isolation, EUDE relies heavily on the technique the Art of Questioning, the set of questions that the teachers ask in order to train the children to internalise during their time in the simulator. In fact the simulator is nothing other than the physical and objective representation of the mental image whose components the children learn to see with clarity so that they can separate what is factual from what is not. The set of questions that prompt the children to disaggregate their subjective component using the simulator is a key area of EUDE's practice. The aim of teaching the children self-interrogation is to make possible, and eventually, habitual, their ability to break down and investigate their individual experience through a questioning process that intrinsically includes learning how to hear the voice of another, so that later they can become the voice of another to others during social interaction. Let me draw a comparative example to show how both practices break

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<sup>429</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 6.

down the experience in their unique way, but work with its content in a similar way, regardless of the higher and more complex purpose of Buddhaghosacārya's aim.

As explained in Chapter 2, the simulator is a 'factory' divided in rooms, each room representing in a generic sense the different parts of the mental object of the children's experience. So, for example, there is the room of causes and the room of conditions, the room of personages, the room of the present sensory experience, which fixes the temporality of the experience only in the present, and the room of analysis, where the children sit and debate where each part of their sensory and mental object has to be placed. The filtering of the data they place in the simulator does not happen during the breaking down of the experience, although sometimes while placing the part, they filter data that does not belong to the present experience or data that cannot be equated with the factuality of the sensory experience. Hence a kind of reconfiguring takes place with the exercise of breaking down the experience.

The parts of the simulator mainly cover three aspects of what needs to be contrasted, examined, and analysed by the children: the temporality of the data, and whether the data is intrinsic or extrinsic. Taking the example of Ruffo from Chapter 2, the children break down their subjective appearance by separating what comes from inside (intrinsic) from what comes from outside (extrinsic) through questions such as: "*Is Ruffo a present physical object or a mental object?*" "*Is this present dog Motita biting you?*" "*If it is not, then is the biting inside or outside the simulator?*" "*Has Ruffo attacked you in the past?*" "*Are you talking about your experience with Ruffo three years ago or are you talking about your present experience with Motita?*" The questions prompt the children to place the factual conditions inside the simulator, and to place the conditions that are not part of the present experience outside the simulator. So the memory of Ruffo is placed outside the simulator because it is not in the present experience. However, it is also placed in the room of conditions because it is present in their memory of past experience. The new dog Motita is placed inside the simulator because it is what is in the present sensory experience and that includes what the children see

as the characteristics of the present dog through their senses, what they see or hear etc. Thus, for example, they see the present dog moving its tail or its tongue, its ears slightly backwards, as being outside. They therefore also place fear of Ruffo in the room of causes, even though they have now discerned that Ruffo is not there. At this point, the children have one empty card placed in the room of analysis, which refers to the card of emotions where they realise that they do not know how they feel about this new dog named Motita whose only resemblance with Ruffo is the fact that it is also a dog.

Breaking down experience, and accommodating and placing its parts inside and outside the simulator enables the children to see what is placed inside and outside the simulator more objectively, which is nothing other than their mental image distributed and arranged accordingly. This prepares them for the next part of the process: the removal of harmful thoughts and emotions.

This process of breaking down experience is more complex in Buddhaghosacārya's method than in EUDE. In one practice, Buddhaghosacārya, using the *Abhidhamma* system, breaks down experience in different ways as I have already explained in Chapter 3. One way of breaking down experience is through the five collections of constituents of human experience, the *khandhas* (the 'aggregates'), if the idea is to remove craving to identity view. Another way is through Dependent Origination, a process that leads to seeing the conditionality of experience. A third way is to use any of the contemplative practices that produce a counterpart sign<sup>430</sup> depending on what it is intended to achieve. For example if the intention is to remove particular orientations then the breaking down of experience will be done through one of the foulness meditation subjects, whereas if the practitioner wants to be detached from the pleasures of the body then he may use the template for breaking his own body into parts so that through direct attention to its repulsiveness he becomes detached from it. What I am emphasising here is that breaking down the experience in Buddhaghosacārya's method is linked with a more complex purpose relating to what needs to be attained or understood

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<sup>430</sup> The counterpart sign only gets produced in the following twenty-two contemplative practices: the ten *kasinas*, the ten kinds of foulness, mindfulness of breathing, and mindfulness occupied with the body; the rest do not have counterpart signs as object. Vism III.117.

or removed. This marks a key difference with the EUDE programme, since for EUDE breaking down experience is a static and more simplified process. Regardless of whether the object of attention is past or present, inanimate or animate, a person or an event, the breaking down of experience always follows the same process and uses the same rooms for placing the data of the experience. The process is always to place inside the simulator what is factual and outside the simulator what is self-centred or an assumption of phenomena from the subjective appearance (mental image). That is because EUDE only seeks to dismantle dogmatic thinking (generalisations and judgments). It does not, for example, examine the idea of an identity view as Buddhaghosacārya explicitly does in the *Visuddhimagga*. This is because EUDE assumes that rigid notions of self and other are not present in young children and that its methodologies should train them to Care for the Experience instead of assuming, talking about, and thus reinforcing structures and concepts of self and other. In fact, EUDE deliberately avoids reinforcing structures of self and other. Thus breaking down experience refers solely to breaking down the mental image into sufficient parts that serve the purpose of identifying generalisations and judgments that cause dogmatic thinking. Buddhaghosacārya, by contrast, breaks down experience for the purpose of helping the practitioner to work out different ways of reading experience and then to shift his phenomenology in accordance with his attentiveness<sup>431</sup> in ways that serve to dismantle the most deeply-rooted human tendencies such as ignorance, craving and hatred.

Thus, the shared similarities of both practices at this point are in breaking down experience for the purpose of reconfiguring it, no matter in what form or with what device, or how complex or simple it might be. What matters for the purpose of our analysis is that the children or practitioners are able to identify the varying subjective components of experience. We will now examine how both programmes remove harmful thoughts and emotions, and by doing that we will see what kind of methodological framework begins to emerge for EUDE.

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<sup>431</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 20.

#### **4.2.2.2 Reshaping One's Phenomenology by Reinterpreting the Content of Experience**

For EUDE, as already explained, thoughts are egocentric ideas, that is, principally dogmatic generalisations linked to absolutising judgments. The emotions resulting from these thoughts are regarded by EUDE as the cause of much of the hostility in human interaction. Thus the process of breaking down experience is followed by the removal of these harmful thoughts - a process that EUDE divides in three distinctive sets of practices, as seen in Chapter 2. Buddhaghosacārya, by contrast, dismantles harmful thoughts and emotions such as hatred, ignorance and craving, through the *jhāna* template and the distinctive forty objects of attention, where each object of attention brings different ways of seeing experience and enhances proclivities that can be discerned during these contemplative practices. How then can a comparison between these two dissimilar techniques, with their distinct aims, articulate any coherent explanation for the process of removal in EUDE?

This question can be answered by focusing on Ram-Prasad's psychological and philosophical analysis of the contemplative practices in Buddhaghosacārya's method, which can shed light on the dismantling of harmful thoughts and emotions in the EUDE process. His analysis examines the different ways in which contemplative practices and the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*) or "imitative sign"<sup>432</sup> as he terms it, can be used for therapeutic means,<sup>433</sup> which he explains as working with the subjective content of experience in two distinctive ways. In one way what is perceived from the object of attention is subjectivised through means of imagination in order to reconfigure emotional states. The other is where the self-centred egocentric ideas get objectivised in order to remove harmful thoughts. Using the Buddha's words, Ram-Prasad describes these two ways, as we have seen, as a "basic contrast between 'tangled' phenomenology and 'disentangled' phenomenology."<sup>434</sup> If we understand the contrast correctly, this implies that changing one's subjectivity is a way to changing one's phenomenology, and the use of imagination is key for this purpose.

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<sup>432</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 11.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

At this stage of the EUDE programme, the second simulator becomes the means for making imagination more pragmatic for the children as the teacher guides them to work with the content of experience by comparing objective facts, that is, data perceived through the senses, with self-centred egocentric content (judgments and generalisations). This leads to a dismantling of harmful emotions. And vice versa, the children compare self-centred egocentric content against the objective facts of experiences, which leads to a dismantling of harmful thoughts. This shows that the EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya programmes work at the level of phenomenological transformation as the result of working with the subjective content of experience.

Although a detailed analysis of how both programmes can lead to the removal of harmful thoughts and emotions was offered in Chapters 2 and 3, I want now to examine the two ways of working with the subjective content of experience using specific examples for each of the three distinctive sets of practices. This will allow us to appreciate the implications of EUDE practices in light of Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenological discipline.

### ***Removing Harmful Thoughts***

**EUDE's first set of practices** begins by teaching the children the set of questions that they need to ask, then showing them how and when to apply those questions so that self-centred fixed ideas can be dismantled. The labs use objects of attention that are not physically present. These objects can come from past experience, or they can be subjective descriptions or ideas about others, as in the example where children say things like "*I do not like my teacher because she shouts at me all the time,*" or "*I don't like my sister because she takes my toys all the time and she is not clever*" or "*my mum is the best mum in the whole world.*" In the simulator these summaries of past experiences become the objects of attention where the factual data from memory is contrasted with the subjective self-centred fixed ideas. These are deconstructed and reconstructed with the help of the teacher using two sets of questions. The first set of questions helps to identify any fixed ideas (judgments and generalisations) in the children's mental image by breaking down the mental image and placing non-factual data outside the simulator and leaving the factual



data inside the simulator. The second set of questions compare and contrast the data placed inside with the data placed outside the simulator in order to see if the self-centred fixed idea can be sustained with what is left inside the simulator. This leads the children to reconstruct the mental image using only what is left inside the simulator. Thus at this stage the children can see objectively how the splitting and analysing of the data is done through the Art of Questioning so that later they can reproduce the same process in the form of self-enquiry.

In Buddhaghosacārya's work a similar application can be founded in the *jhāna* practices using one of the ten recollections relating to the contemplative practices of 'mindfulness occupied with the body'. In this contemplative practice the counterpart sign is repulsiveness, so the cherished body is to be viewed as nothing more than thirty-two<sup>435</sup> separate elements of the perceived body, including their respective repulsive side. The contemplative practice "takes what is lived and objectifies it to prompt subjective states that can then be therapeutized,"<sup>436</sup> and in this case the experimental exercise is used for removing the attachment to the body. Let me now turn to the detailed comparison of both programmes so that we can appreciate what has been explained.

In EUDE when the children make a statement such as "*my mum is the best mum in the whole world*" or "*my teacher always shouts at me*," this is subjective data that through the first set of questions is objectified. As previously stated, the objectified data does not relate to metaphysical reality, but to the factuality of experience that for EUDE is the subjective data perceived through the senses (past or present). This is different from the subjective self-centred ideas triggered by personal desires or attachments. Here, the object of attention is the factual experience, in contrast with the generalisation in question. Thus, the teacher asks the children to contrast what is placed inside the simulator against what is placed outside the simulator, such as "*how many mums do you know?*" and "*are we*

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<sup>435</sup> The thirty-two aspects of physical body matter are defined as: "head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, dung, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine." Vism VIII.44 and MN iii.90.

<sup>436</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 9.

*talking about your experience with your mum or your experience with other mums?"* Inside the simulator is one card with 'me and my mum' and another card about the child's feelings for her, while outside the simulator are 'other mums' and 'the best mum in the whole world'. When the data is compared the child realises that the statement is untrue to the his/her lived experience because it is impossible for him/her to know all mums since he/she only has one mum and therefore cannot know about the rest of the mums in the whole word.

This objectification process of EUDE also takes place when the practitioner is about to objectify his body, or for that matter anybody, by removing the subjective ornaments that makes the body desirable or causes strong attachment to it. Thus, the practitioner has to follow a similar process explained in the earth *kaṣiṇa*, but now the object of attention is one of the thirty-two elements and the counterpart sign will be its repulsiveness. Using the example of the Head Hairs<sup>437</sup> Buddhaghosacārya explains:

Firstly head hairs are black in their normal *colour*, the colour of fresh *aṇipphaka* seeds. As to *shape*, they are the shape of long round measuring rods. As to *direction*, they lie in the upper direction. As to *location*, their location is the wet inner skin that envelops the skull; it is bounded on both sides by the roots of the ears, in front by the forehead, and behind by the nape of the neck. As to *delimitation*, they are bounded below by the surface of their own roots, which are fixed by entering to the amount of the tip of a rice grain into the inner skin that envelops the head. They are bounded above by space, and all round by each other. There are no two hairs together. This is their delimitation by the similar. Head hairs are not body hairs, and body hairs are not head hairs; being likewise not intermixed with the remaining thirty-one parts, the head hairs are a separate part. This is their delimitation by

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<sup>437</sup> Vism VIII.85-89.

the dissimilar. Such is the definition of head hairs as to colour and so on.<sup>438</sup>

Buddhaghosacārya adds five ways that head hairs are repulsive – by colour, by shape, by odour, by habitat, and by location. Repulsiveness in colour, for example, is described as follows:

For on seeing the colour of a head hair in a bowl of inviting rice gruel or cooked rice, people are disgusted and say, ‘This has got hairs in it. Take it away.’ So they are repulsive in colour.<sup>439</sup>

The point being made here is that once the practitioner has done this same exercise systematically with the other thirty-one elements, he ends up objectifying the body by removing each layer of subjective adornment normally placed in the body, or for that matter, any other body.

What I am trying to emphasise is that both practices use subjective data, and in their own distinctive ways, remove it by objectifying it through the factual sensory data. The achievement in both practices is to remove the non-factual data in order to dismantle - in the case of EUDE judgments and generalisations, in the case of Buddhaghosacārya craving and desire. The second set of questions focuses on the reconstruction of the mental image with what is left inside the simulator, a reconfiguring that EUDE then takes further by helping the children to articulate verbally what they reconfigure so that they also learn how to reshape their language accordingly, more accurately and in line with what they are really experiencing in relation to the present object. Reconfiguring their experience through reshaping their mental image - since mum is not present – enables the children to see that they have no experience of any other mums except their own, and therefore the more accurate use of the language has to be the one that particularises their own experience instead of using generalisations.

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<sup>438</sup> Vism VIII.85.

<sup>439</sup> Vism VIII.85.

Language for EUDE is shaped by the content of experience. Therefore reinterpreting experience through the removal of harmful conditions means reshaping language too. Thus at this point in the EUDE programme, a further tool is used, which is the pieces of cardboard that indicate whether the language used represents the factual sensory subjective experience of the children or their self-centred assumptions of phenomena. Looking at the simulator they realise that there is only one sticker with their mum on it and another sticker with their feelings for her, so the teacher uses the second set of questions to help them reconstruct the mental image and verbalise it. Here the focus of attention is exclusively on what is on the cardboard. So the questions are: what is on the cardboard? How can we accommodate what is on the cardboard in order to express what you want to share with us? The final sentence may be something like *"I love my mum,"* or *"my mum is so good to me."*

Buddhaghosacārya is less explicit on the topic of language; however if we follow what has been explained so far, we can understand that reinterpreting experience transforms one's phenomenology.<sup>440</sup> In this case the topic of language in Buddhaghosacārya's work does not have to be explicit because is intrinsic to his practices, so by reconfiguring the phenomenology of the practitioner, as explained by Ram-Prasad, the practitioner changes his ethical stand which accordingly has to include the reshaping of language, since language is an important means for communicating one's experience. With the children the teacher has to spell it out for them in a more pragmatic and explicit way. To help the children to avoid ontic statements and remain faithful to the description of their subjective experience, the teacher repeatedly has to ask: *"are you referring to the real object or your mental object?"* This constant questioning by the teacher helps the children to make a habit of distinguishing between the factual data and the self-centred harmful content in experience, and this distinction enables them to communicate with others with greater accuracy. After various repetitions with different experiences they are able to identify their object of attention and see the signs of judgments and generalisations by themselves without the help of the teacher; they

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<sup>440</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 11.

become acquainted with the way to objectivise their experiences so they can dismantle generalisations and judgments.

**The second set of practices** for dismantling harmful thoughts are labs that by using animate objects physically present prompt certain proclivities in children, as with the case of the dog Motita where fear prompts strong judgments towards other dogs. In the second group of labs, the process of breaking down the experience and the set of questions asked are the same as in the first. The difference now is that the children take the objective data perceived from the physical object and compare it with their judgments and generalisations. To do that they have to perform self-enquiry, which means applying themselves the questions they have learned from the teacher in the previous practices. In the case of Motita the dog that has been previously discussed, the children aim at dismantling hostile attitudes towards dogs - including Motita. The breaking down of the experience, should lead the children to separate the data, as with our previous group of labs, but now the children compare the facts and the emotional summary of their previous encounter with Ruffo against the conditions surrounding their encounter with Motita. For example, they phrase questions such as: *“what is bad about this dog”* or *“do I know all dogs in order to say that they are all bad and bite?”* Through the comparison they realise that *“Conditions are different and so I do not know this dog, and this dog is not Ruffo. Ruffo is not here, Ruffo is only in my memory.”* The same process is applied to other physical animated objects, which promote strong judgments because the children feel aversion or strong attachment to them. This set of practices can be compared with any of the ten types of foulness<sup>441</sup> meditation that detach the practitioner from pleasure or desire. The meditation on foulness drives the practitioner’s attention to a variety of types of corpses as meditation subjects under the sign of ‘foulness’. And so, after Buddhaghosacārya explains the different things that the practitioner has to consider<sup>442</sup> before sitting in front of a corpse, he explains the mode of using body-decay as essentially like that used with the *kasīṇa*. The meditator, with a

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<sup>441</sup> The ten kinds of foulness are: the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm infested, and a skeleton. Vism VI.1.

<sup>442</sup> Vism VI.12-64.

fixed attention and concentration on the corpse, sits there until the counterpart sign arises, a sign that he carries with him and is able to reproduce at will. Buddhaghosacārya explains that the difference between the two signs is that the learning sign appears as a hideous, dreadful and frightening sight, while the counterpart sign appears like a man with large limbs lying down after eating his fill. Does this bear comparison with EUDE? It does when we read that Buddhaghosacārya explains that “a capable *bhikkhu* should apprehend the sign wherever the aspect of foulness is manifest, whether in a living body or in a dead one,”<sup>443</sup> as it did to the Elder Mahā-Tissa who lived at Cetiyapabbata, and to the novice attendant on the Elder Saṅgharakkhita, who while watching the king riding an elephant saw the king under the form of a corpse, or the Elder, who looking at a woman’s teeth one day, suddenly saw her whole body as a collection of bones referring to the skeleton sign. Thus, the connection between EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya so far is that both practices take the objective facts of experience and through them reshape the subjective appearance of experience, which frames two important principles of EUDE. The function of the learning sign in Buddhaghosacārya’s method sheds light on the process in EUDE when the children first see clearly the judgments or generalisations they make. The counterpart sign explains the analytical self-questioning that the children perform using the subjective appearance, which then becomes a means for reinterpreting experience.

**The third set of practices** is a complex one in both practices. In EUDE, it is done while in interaction with other people, where certain emotional and preconceived ideas about other people’s ideas may prompt judgments or generalisations, as we have seen in the case of the dispute between the two children over the poster of the Disney characters. In the case of the practitioner, the process of the contemplative practice that resembles this last stage of EUDE’s process for removing harmful thoughts is the breathing meditation. King highlights that this particular meditation is a favourite one of Buddhaghosacārya, and notes how different and difficult this meditation is when saying, “There is a transition

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<sup>443</sup> Vism VI.94.

from passive body concentration, that is, on its parts and inherent decaying impermanence, to the far more difficult concentration on the body active.”<sup>444</sup> King adds something that helps to highlight what is similar in both practices when he notes that this meditation is like “a case of the actor trying to catch himself in action and seeing even this positive, dynamic aspect of selfhood as also the embodiment of impermanence, impersonality, and dissatisfaction, And even more difficult, and further reaching, the meditative centre of attention proceeds even more inward until the feeler and thinker contemplates his own feeling and thinking process, catching them on the wing, as it were.”<sup>445</sup> Ram-Prasad writes that breathing meditation is for the refinement of insight, “this takes the control of breathing to be a means of stilling the practitioner’s bodily sense of himself, and triggers a process of fine-grained awareness of how he is presented to himself.”<sup>446</sup> Our comparison with EUDE does not include the first point made by Ram-Prasad, since the goal of EUDE does not include any kind of spiritual insight. However the second part of his point together with King’s analogy of the breathing meditation is comparable with EUDE in that both practices require the children and practitioners see themselves as observers of their own actions, thoughts and emotions. This has not been the case in the previous stages of EUDE or in the previous contemplative practices in Buddhaghosacārya’s method.

The children in this third group of labs need to observe their subjective image of the present moment while in interaction with others, and check all the time in their minds whether any judgment or generalisation is being formed. If so, they have to dismantle it on the spot or abstain from language that articulates it. Thus, for example, in the case of the poster of Disney characters, one child heard another child saying, “*Pluto is not funny, he is nasty.*” Rather than responding in an aggressive way - as did the child who was not part of the EUDE programme - he should ask the following questions to himself: “*where is my focus of attention; on the poster or in my experience of Pluto?*” If the answer to the question is that he wants to express his experience of Pluto he then would have said: “*Pluto is my*

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<sup>444</sup> King, 1980, p. 71.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Ram-Prasad, 2018, p. 9.

*favourite character because he makes me laugh* instead of “*Pluto is my favourite character because he is funny*.” The first statement describes the factual experience, while the second describes the idea the child has about the object prompting and ontic reflexion, and thus, judgments and generalisations. This constant discernment through questions, and knowing what to question, as well as knowing the different places where attention can go, helps the children to guard their minds more objectively. Guarding their minds is akin to what Nyanaponika referring to the breathing meditation, describes to as “bare attention of what actually happens to us and in us, at the successive moment of perception.”<sup>447</sup> This is what Caring for the Experience in EUDE is.

The children have another resource if guarding their mind fails, and that is the language. Attention to what they say, and questioning whether ‘what I just said comes from my self-centred assumptions or from factual data of experience,’ helps the children become aware of when they lose attention and when guarding their minds is not happening. For that there are questions they ask themselves before making a statement, especially if someone emotionally affects them. The questions are: “*does what I am about to say contain any judgments? Or generalisations? If so, do not say anything and review where your focus of attention is.*” King summarises the full activity of the breathing practice in a way that helps to understand this third group of labs more clearly, when he writes that the meditation aims at “contemplating the body in the body, the mind in the mind, the feelings in the feelings and contemplating mental objects on mental objects including the nature of the subjective desires.”<sup>448</sup> What then can be achieved with these three practices for reconfiguring experience? This question will be answered next.

### ***Removing Harmful Emotions***

For EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya emotional states are triggered by harmful thoughts. Emotions are also seen as conditions that cloud the mind and get in the

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<sup>447</sup> Nyanaponika, 2014, p. 27.

<sup>448</sup> King, 1980, p. 67.



way of fairness and clear conceptions of factuality. Thus, when harmful thoughts are dismantled, harmful emotions fade away. However there are emotions such as resentment or hatred where Buddhaghosacārya recommends various techniques because he recognises that shifting attention to a different interpretation of experience, when one has resentment or hatred, may prove to be rather difficult. We will now use specific examples to show how EUDE deals with similar scenarios so that we can to understand the similar way both practices work with the content of experience.

The example I am taking refers to the emotional state of anger that fades away through the technique of the five *khandhas*. The *khandhas* (five aggregates) enable the practitioner to see and understand that an ontic person cannot be found when each *dharmā* is examined, there is no being that is the foundation for assuming 'I am' or 'I'. In the ultimate sense, there is only name-form. And in the ultimate sense, the idea of a unified self is nothing other than a series of processes that are highly conditioned and highly impermanent. Buddhaghosacārya applies this *abhidarmic* analysis to anger in the technique called the resolution into elements, which we have seen in Chapter 3 with the simile of the king and the flute. How does it apply to resentment? Buddhaghosacārya says:

Now, you who have gone forth into homelessness, when you are angry with him, what is it you are angry with? Is it head hairs you are angry with? Or body hairs? Or nails? ... Or is it urine you are angry with? Or alternatively, is it the earth element in the head hairs, etc., you are angry with? Or the water element? Or the fire element? Or is it the air element you are angry with? Or among the five aggregates or the twelve bases or the eighteen elements with respect to which this venerable one is called by such and such a name, which then, is it the materiality aggregate you are angry with? Or the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the formations aggregate, the consciousness aggregate you are angry with? Or is it the eye base you are angry with? Or the visible-object base you are angry with? ... Or the mind base you are angry with? Or the mental-object base you are angry with? Or is it the eye element

you are angry with? Or the visible-object element? Or the eye-consciousness element? ... Or the mind element? Or the mental-object element? Or the mind-consciousness element you are angry with? For when he tries the resolution into elements, his anger finds no foothold, like a mustard seed on the point of an awl or a painting on the air.<sup>449</sup>

Like Buddhaghosacārya, EUDE asks the children to break down experience, and as they place its components inside or outside the simulator, the teacher asks them to locate the judgments and generalisations attached to the emotions of anger or resentment. It is important to note that EUDE does not work with emotions in a direct form, but with the judgments and generalisations attached to them. This can be seen in the example of Juan and Pedro who were good friends. Juan invited Pedro to play, but Pedro refused because Juan had mistreated him the day before and Pedro was angry and upset about it. When the teacher asked Pedro what had happened, Pedro said that Juan was not a nice boy, and he hated Juan because he was bad.

Pedro is projecting emotions linked to past events on to the new event and in doing so he fails to see what is happening in his present experience. Language also represents an important component of his emotion when he declared that Juan: “*is not a nice boy.*” Instead of saying “*my experience of him yesterday was not nice,*” which would reflect a subjective response to what happened the day before, he makes a generalisation, as if Juan is always “*not nice,*” thus judging him as “*bad.*” Questions that contrast the data enable the children to see a different perspective of a particular scenario, one with a more pragmatic approach that reconfigures their subjective appearance of the present moment. The dialogue below represents the role of questions and answers of EUDE that help the children to accommodate the parts of the experience in a way that enables them to locate their emotions more accurately and to gain a clearer emotional perspective of the present moment.

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<sup>449</sup> Vism IX.38.

The teacher asked Pedro, "*Why aren't you playing with Juan?*" Pedro responded, "*Because he is not a nice boy.*" Then the teacher asked, "*When was Juan not a nice boy? Is Juan not being nice to you now?*" Pedro said, "*Yes, he is, but he was not nice to me yesterday, haaa!!*" The teacher asked, "*So where should we place the sticker with this fact 'not nice to me yesterday', inside the simulator or outside?*" Juan responded, "*Outside the simulator.*" The teacher then asked, "*Is Juan not nice to you all the time?*" Juan replied, "*No.*" The teacher asked, "*Then where should we place the sticker?*" Juan responded, "*Inside the simulator in the room of conditions. Juan is my friend, and I had a bad encounter with him yesterday.*" The teacher asked, "*So, where should we place the sticker that says that he has been nice to you other times?*" Juan responded, "*as a condition inside the simulator.*" The teacher then asked, "*Are the conditions of yesterday's event the same as the conditions of today?*" He replied, "*No.*" The teacher then asked, "*Did Juan approach you with the same attitude?*" "*I don't know I was too angry I did not look.*" Then the teacher said, "*Ok, then we have another important sticker. Where should we place it?*" Juan replied, "*The sticker with 'I don't know should be placed in the room of causes.*" "*Right,*" said the teacher and added, "*Is there a possibility that Juan approached you with a different intention?*" He thought for a moment, and then replied, "*Yes, that's possible.*" The teacher then invited Pedro to review what was inside the simulator and decide from there what his next action should be. By that point Pedro was calmer and more pragmatic about the situation, so his generalisation about Juan not being nice to him and his judgment of him as a bad person were placed in yesterday's event outside the simulator. What was interesting for Pedro was the sticker inside the simulator in the room of causes with the statement 'I don't know'. Because of it, his next action was to approach Juan and ask him what his intention was when he approached him. A few hours later, the teacher saw Pedro approach Juan to ask him to play with him. When the teacher asked him what had happened he said, "*I was angry about what*

*happened yesterday but my anger died down after our talk and now we are ok."*

What the reported experience and the passage from Buddhaghosacārya demonstrate is not merely the dismantling of resentment by creating mental impartiality, as in the case of Juan and Pedro, or the practitioner whose anger finds no foothold. Our previous detailed analyses indicate something else: the change in attitude that this mental impartiality brought about. Impartiality shapes one's ethical position as we will see more clearly in what follows.

#### **4.2.3 The Space Between - Discernment**

At the beginning of the chapter, I explained that attention in EUDE is divided in two main areas: attention to experience and attention to The Space Between. In EUDE attention to experience is for the purpose of equipping the children with the tools for reconfiguring the subjective appearance of their thoughts and emotions. This other attention, which focuses on The Space Between where humans interact and co-create experiences is the ultimate concern of EUDE. Its purpose is to equip the children to become the 'gatekeepers' of its content so that interactions can flow without harmful corruptions and hostility. I have shown in Chapter 2 how this is done in EUDE and how, without making the children keepers of any sort of truth, they learn how to invite others, solely through the Art of Questioning, to see the content of their own subjective appearances, and then help them to discern by themselves if the content posited in the Space Between (judgments, generalisations) can be sustained considering the present conditions of the co-created experience.

I have also shown that this is the moment in EUDE where all the previous cultivations and trainings converge and where all the abilities the children have developed are put to the test. It is at this point that the teacher, who has shown the children how and what to question during the past two years, steps back and leaves them to take on a different role. It is now the turn of the children to ask the questions that invite others to see what is in the subjective appearances that they are putting as content in The Space Between. By doing this, they push the other to

take responsibility for what he/she places in this shared space where co-creation of experiences takes place. It should be emphasised, however, that the focus attention of the children is not on the other, nor on themselves, but on the content of The Space Between.

Although this practice can be more difficult to find directly and explicitly in Buddhaghosacārya's work it can be found in his emphasis on 'the voice of another' noted in the previous chapter as one of the conditions, together with wise attention, for the attainment of right view. The emphasis here is on the engagement both practices place on other people - teacher, good friend or what Buddhaghosacārya names the 'voice of another' - thereby demonstrating that the children and practitioner are not entirely autonomous but integrated with other people.

The voice of another, like the teacher in EUDE, uses a set of specific questions and answers that play a key role in reshaping the discernment of others. This way of reshaping the experience of others through questions and prompting conscious attention by sharpening discernment is viewed in EUDE as an act of love, in part because it reduces hostility by lessening judgmental thinking, but also because it opens up different ways of viewing experience for those others. Thus, this comparison helps us to emphasise that sharpening discernment includes an important ethical dimension, which both practices share. This means that in both practices clearing obstructions through wise discernment while interacting with another or others helps to reshape each other's phenomenology, which in turn reshapes the ethical positions of both of the people involved. This process should make evident the distinctive ethical transformation that attention to the content of The Space Between enacts in children.

#### **4.2.3.1 *Caring for the Content in The Space Between***

An interactive example for seeing the full potential of the role of questions is useful here. A good example can be found in the conversation between Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Punna based on *sutta* MN.24, where both of them show a very clever accommodation, following the principles of Dependent Origination, through an

impressive dance of questions and answers. The dialogic encounter between the two is not in the *Visuddhimagga* however; Buddhaghosacārya highlights the set of questions that the Buddha used in his work as an important and integral part of the process of discernment. The following interactive and dynamic conversation between the two monks makes this explicit.

The conversation between Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Punna analyses what is, and what is not, the holy life lived under the Blessed one.<sup>450</sup> This conversation exemplifies how Ven. Sariputta equips Ven. Punna with the tools to foster his discernment, but it also shows how Dependent Origination works in a fine-grained way through the three important forms of questioning that are used for sharpening discernment. This sheds light on the purpose of the Art of Questioning in EUDE.

Both practices use a similar set of questions for sharpening discernment, which is striking if we consider that the Art of Questioning in EUDE was born as an outcome of a set of questions from the standard Boolean system used in Artificial Intelligence,<sup>451</sup> while Buddhaghosacārya's questions refer to the questions that the Buddha used as a standard way to shape another's discernment. These questions are the three main types that I outlined in Chapter 3; categorical, cross-reference and analytical. EUDE also divides questions into three categories: identification, contrasting and reflective. Identification questions in EUDE are similar to the categorical questions of Buddhaghosacārya and serve to shift attention to the details of experience. Contrasting questions used in EUDE for sharpening inferential thinking are similar to cross-reference questions. Reflective questions used in EUDE for the purpose of sharpening discernment are similar to analytical questions. It should be clear at this point that questions play an important role in both practices. In both practices, questions are not intended to be directed to ontic assumptions about objects, people and events, but are asked in order to focus on the conditions of experience. This is a distinct way of using questions when in interaction with others and the reason why EUDE names it the Art of Questioning.

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<sup>450</sup> See Appendix V for *sutta* MN 24, the Relay Chariots (*Ratha-vinita*).

<sup>451</sup> For more information see Frank Markham Brown (1990) *Boolean Reasoning: The Logic of Boolean Equations*, Air Force Institute of Technology, Spring Science + Business Media, LLC.

Hence the dialogue, based on three forms of questions and answers, began when Ven. Sariputta arose from his seclusion, then went to Ven. Punna and asked him:

“My friend, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?” - “Yes, my friend.” - “And is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of virtue?” - “No, my friend.” - “Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of mind [concentration]?” - “No, my friend.” - “Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of view?” - “No, my friend.” - “When asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of virtue, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ When asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ For the sake of what, then, my friend, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?”<sup>452</sup>

This first part of their dialogue quoted above uses categorical questions. The answers given are therefore categorical answers. The questions serve to refine the frame for both parties by asking for details about the terms of correct seeing and appropriate attention.

A similar way of using questions in EUDE can be seen when Joris<sup>453</sup> entered into conversation with his classmates and using the simulator designed for this purpose Joris asked his classmates to review what they did not know about the event in question. He did it using only identification questions. “*Was everybody running?*” “*Not everybody was running, just some of us.*” “*Was the classroom messy?*” “*Yes, it was.*” “*Was the teacher angry?*” “*Yes, she was.*” “*Were we all*

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<sup>452</sup> MN 24

<sup>453</sup> The example of Joris needs a context: It was during the morning, the classroom was messy and almost everyone in the class was running around and making a lot of noise. After the teacher had told the children twice to sit down and be quiet, they were all punished including those who were sitting down. They thought that the teacher’s punishment was unfair to those who were sitting down.

*punished?" "Yes we were." Then Joris recapped saying: "And so, could we say that the room was not clean, that some of us were running around, that the room was messy, and that we got all the same punishment, and we could say that some of us are angry because we think the punishment was not fair?" They all answered, "Yes."*

Joris's questions invited his classmates to see the factuality of the event to which they had all contributed, with different data eliminating any possibility for things that did not happen. His task was to make sure that everyone's focus attention was on The Space Between (the simulator and the data in it). This resembles what Ven. Saripputa is attempting to do with Ven. Punna by framing correct seeing.

The next part of their dialogue includes analytical questions with their corresponding answers. The aim is to establish a coherent sequence of thoughts by defining what is possible and what is not. The questions make clear that each of the conditions is not the goal in itself, merely a condition for the sake of the other person. This way of establishing a line of thought clears up any possible misunderstanding and eliminates any possibility of corrupt ideas during the process of sharpening attention into the details of the sequence. Thus Ven. Sariputta continues:

"The holy life is lived under the Blessed One, my friend, for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging." - "But is purity in terms of virtue total unbinding through lack of clinging?" - "No, my friend." - "Then is purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision total Unbinding through lack of clinging?" - "No, my friend."

"Then is total Unbinding through lack of clinging something apart from these qualities?" - "No, my friend." - "When asked if purity in terms of virtue... mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way...



knowledge & vision is total Unbinding through lack of clinging, you say,  
'No, my friend.'"<sup>454</sup>

In the case of our example of Joris, he continued by asking; *"Could we say that we don't know if the teacher was angry or not right? And could we also say that we are unhappy about the punishment?"* His classmates all answered, "Yes." Joris then asked, *"More importantly do we know why we were punished? We are angry because we think the punishment was unfair but do we know why we were punished? If the punishment is because we were running we could say it was unfair, but if the punishment was because the classroom was dirty then the punishment was fair, and if the punishment was for both reasons we could say that it was fair and unfair. What we conclude then is that we don't know why we were punished."* These questions invite his classmates to examine what they know and what they do not know. They then examine what they know to check if it is possible to understand the outcome of their actions. What follows in the dialogue between Ven. Sariputta to Ven. Punna is cross-questioning:

"But when asked if total Unbinding through lack of clinging is something apart from these qualities, you say, 'No, my friend.' Now how, my friend, is the meaning of these statements to be understood?" -  
"If the Blessed One had described purity in terms of virtue as total Unbinding through lack of clinging, my friend, then he would have defined something still accompanied by clinging as total Unbinding through lack of clinging. If he had described purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision as total Unbinding through lack of clinging, then he would have defined something still accompanied by clinging as total Unbinding through lack of clinging. But if total Unbinding through lack of clinging were apart from these qualities, then a run-of-the-mill person would be totally

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<sup>454</sup> MN 24

unbound, inasmuch as a run-of-the-mill person is apart from these qualities.”<sup>455</sup>

The cross-questions are sometimes accompanied by a simile, which illustrates by helping discerning people to understand the meaning of what is being asked. In the case of our example there is a simile in the *sutta* MN 24, which I, however, will not use because it is not relevant for our comparison. What is important is to see the way cross-questioning is used by Joris. He asked, “*If the punishment was for having a messy classroom would we feel the same?*” With this cross-reference question Joris arrived at the final conclusion where he invited others to take the lead now that all the information was in The Space Between. When he asked, “*Do we really know why we were all punished?*” Mariana answered, “*Not really, so why don't we go and ask the teacher?*” In a similar way Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Punna establish the final answer to the first question posed by Ven. Sariputta by arriving at it through the causal relation of all the parts discerned by the previous examination:

In the same way, my friend, purity in terms of virtue is simply for the sake of purity in terms of mind. Purity in terms of mind is simply for the sake of purity in terms of view. Purity in terms of view is simply for the sake of purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity. Purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision is simply for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging. And it's for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> MN 24

<sup>456</sup> MN 24

The comparison may seem forced, considering that the topic Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Punna are discussing is highly complex compared to the topic the children are addressing. It might be asked why I am making the comparison if the difference and level of complexity is so evident. I am seeking to highlight what is important about the use of these questions for sharpening discernment, regardless of the topic in question or the context in which they are used. The identification questions and contrast questions asked by Joris invites his classmates to open up to other possibilities; it is a question that breaks any fixations the children may have on their subjective appearance and invites them to think of other possible actions, as Mariana did when inviting her classmates to have a chat with the teacher. But more interestingly, they are a set of questions that invite others not to make ontic assumptions about their content of experience. And that is precisely what Ven. Sariputta does to Ven. Punna. The examples are useful in two ways. First, as beautiful examples of human interaction where the sole purpose is sharpening each other's discernment through knowing how and what to question and through knowing how and what to answer, since it is not only Ven. Sariputta and Joris who sharpen the discernment of the other, or others, through their questions, but the other/others who sharpen(s) the discernment of Ven. Sariputta and Joris through the answers they give. Secondly, the examples show the use of Dependent Origination - what is the cause of this and this is cause by what - which includes discarding the elusive ontic component that could wrongly be used for answering the first question posed by Ven. Sariputta and Joris so that in the end the answer is co-constructed and not simply told.

#### **4.2.3.2 The Ethical Dimension of Both Practices**

EUDE is a programme that explicitly aims to foster ethical development in children; its name and its aim focus on this topic. Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenological method is strongly directed towards his ultimate framing of spiritual perfection. As I noted in Chapter 1, Buddhist ethics is a large and diffuse field, even Buddhaghosacārya does not make explicit any theories of ethics or enter into philosophical discussions relating to ethics. However, my reading of the *Visuddhimagga*, and the insights offered by Ram-Prasad's analysis of Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenological method, have shown not just the strong

ethical dimension of his practices but the distinctive way in which he engages with ethical transformation. This is a view shared by the Dalai Lama who in the message he wrote for the translation of the *Visuddhimagga* says:

What I find especially encouraging about a book such as this is that it shows so clearly ... within a structure based on the traditional three trainings of ethical discipline, concentration and wisdom ... detailed instructions on how to take an ethical approach to life.<sup>457</sup>

Heim also offers a further example of the intrinsic ethical dimension of Buddhaghosacārya's teaching when, writing on the topic of phenomenology of love and compassion, she notes: "While Buddhaghosa (importantly) does not expand on the potential moral implications of this vision of equality of self and other and of the dismantling of differences among beings, other thinkers may see in this exercise a resource for cultivating the affective conditions helpful for constructing an ethic of social equality and justice."<sup>458</sup> We have seen that although, as Heim says, Buddhaghosacārya does not make explicit or expand upon the potential ethical or moral implications of the methodology, they are nevertheless implicit in his practices.

In our previous comparative sections, it is precisely the intrinsic ethics in Buddhaghosacārya's practices that enabled us to understand the ethical dimension of EUDE and articulate what is distinctive about both practices. For EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya, reinterpreting one's subjectivity reconfigures one's phenomenology and such transformation causes the transformation of ethical positions, thereby showing ethics to be an active performance and not a matter of theoretical speculation. In other words, for both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya there is no need for ethical theories, since for both practices ethics is the result of a disciplinary phenomenological transformation.

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<sup>457</sup> Vism p.xxiii.

<sup>458</sup> Heim, 2015, p. 8.

### 4.3 WHAT THIS COMPARATIVE EXERCISE HAS DONE FOR EUDE

What emerges from this comparative exercise of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya in terms of methodological practice, and what is distinctive about them, should by now be evident. Before proceeding to a consideration of what this comparison has done for EUDE, it is necessary to summarise principle concepts.

Buddhaghosacārya relies on and expands the complex and intricate psychological system of the Pali *Abhidhamma* – a very systematic and highly detailed phenomenological and analytic treatment of experience. EUDE, by contrast, has developed under the influence of principles borrowed from Artificial Intelligence, and from Buddhism in general, to develop its own understanding of human experience and human interaction. Nonetheless EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya share an important range of concerns.

Both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya seek to remove the harmful conditions that cloud the mind by cultivating attention until correct seeing of experience is attained. Both are concerned with developing tools such as imagination to bring about the examination and reinterpretation of experience taking it away from ontological reflections so that the removal of harmful thoughts and emotions is possible, then rooting out attachments, and dismantling egoism. Neither are interested in creating a theory of phenomena or seeking an ultimate reality or absolute knowledge. Theorising, or reflecting on the nature of experience, is therefore not the intention of EUDE or Buddhaghosacārya. Instead, both focus on how to equip the children/practitioners with the ability to attend to, and discern, how they experience. Both therefore seek to see their practices in action.

The way both methods are manifested in concrete practices differs greatly as we have seen. However what this comparative chapter has shown is that their practices of subjectivity are in alignment. By that I mean that: a) both practices work with subjectivity because both practices understand that experience provides the reflexive materials that dissolve ontic appearances, b) both practices seek to cultivate attention to experience and work with its content by means of imagination as a form of intervention that changes one's ethical position, c) for

both, attention is never a practice that works in isolation, context is part of the process of attention practices, and is embedded in the experience, and d) for both programmes - although Buddhaghosacārya does not make it explicit - Caring for the Experience and The Space Between means attentiveness through a continuous effort to guard the mind, so that the tendency to have content with harmful thoughts in experience does not relapse.

#### **4.3.1 The Methodological Framework of EUDE**

What then has this comparative exercise done for EUDE, and in what way has Buddhaghosacārya's method helped to articulate a coherent conceptual framework for it? In Chapter 2 we described what happens with the practice inside the EUDE labs. However this chapter has brought a coherent analysis of its principles, which gives a conceptual framework for its method. Without the help of Buddhaghosacārya and his understanding of *Abhidhamma* system, and the valuable insights offered by the work of Maria Heim and Ram-Prasad, this outcome would have not been possible, since the programmes I presented in Chapter 1 were insufficient for what needed to be articulated and analysed. Thus, what emerges from this comparative chapter is a disciplinary phenomenological methodology derived from the intense attention both programmes placed in working with the subjective interpretation of experience. This permits us to write about a phenomenology that is interested not in disclosing reality, but in reshaping intentions and actions, oriented to reduce suffering and hostility in human interaction.

Thus, EUDE's disciplinary phenomenological methodology offers **first**, a distinctive programmatic psychology that focuses on the "conditions" of ethical development, that is, the sensory, cognitive, and conceptual processes of living in the world with others that underlie and precede moral agency and moral decision-making. It does not engage with modern ethical assumptions and theories that articulate ethics as a matter of making decisions (such as those based on consequentialist or deontological considerations); neither is it a matter of the explicit cultivation of character formation, such as we see in virtue ethics or moral education. Rather, EUDE focuses on attending to the formation of concepts that

underlie experience, and this becomes a means for reconfiguring phenomenology. For this, the phrase ‘Caring for the Experience,’ created for EUDE is the key to understanding the nature of the phenomenological methodology, which involves scrutiny of the conditions of thought and action as a necessary, but often overlooked, area of ethical development. **Second**, the methodology shows that it is highly analytical with reference to the conditions of ethical action, and involves a detailed parsing of experience that is unusual – if not in fact largely unprecedented – either in other traditional accounts of ethical development, or in other modern programmes for ethical development in children. **Third**, it has shown that in the EUDE practices, descriptive accounts of what occurs in experience, as well as its programmatic exercises for managing it, are notable for sensitivity to the texture of the conditions and causes that prefigure ethical behaviour.

#### **4.3.2 EUDE and Buddhaghosa’s Contribution**

The unusual approach of both methodologies make a comparison between them fruitful for discerning the distinctive projects they undertake and charting this new direction in practical ethical education. The similarities also provide a platform for examining and articulating the significance of differences between them, which are not inconsiderable (differences such as soteriological vs. educational/ethical; monastic context rather than preschool contexts, etc.). However our comparison has shown that the essential psychological insight of their methodology is related to becoming a less harmful person, and to arriving at a point of refraining from doing those things that block the individual from becoming that person. That is the insight from which Buddhaghosa operates and that is what makes EUDE comparable to it. It is a principle that is transferable to different contexts because their programmes become expressions of this very principle, and this makes evident the importance of the distinct phenomenological discipline of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya’s method for current ethical concerns.

## CONCLUSION

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Comparative methodologies are useful for sharpening understanding of what is being compared. In our case, the comparison has, on the one hand, helped to articulate the distinctive process and methodology of ethical development that EUDE offers through a close examination of its practices in the context of Buddhaghosacārya's phenomenological discipline. On the other hand, my presentation of Buddhaghosacārya's techniques throughout the thesis was determined by the arrangements of EUDE's processes. This is an original way of viewing Buddhaghosacārya's work, and one which shows Buddhaghosacārya as a collaborator in understanding many crucial elements of ethical development that are important in our own time and practice. This reading of Buddhaghosacārya has in turn demonstrated how ancient texts can bring wisdom to current concerns.

Based on the above, I would like to expand these two points further by highlighting the main findings of the thesis. I will then assess the contributions and limitations of the thesis before offering recommendations for future research.

### **The Main Finding of this Thesis**

During the process of framing EUDE through the comparison of both programmes, some important findings emerged that can be summarised as follows. The first is that the nature of the disciplinary practices of self-learning and cultivation in EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya practices are not linear but modular. By modular I mean that both practices use techniques and templates that depend on what subjective content needs to be rearranged or reconfigured in experience. The comparison has also demonstrated that in both programmes the modular process is a progression that enables a transformation of one's phenomenology due to the flexibility of such modularity. EUDE's approach is not a linear and rigid form of ethical cultivation, but rather ethical enactment through processes that enable children to explore the subjective content of their day to day experience.



The second important point is that the comparison made me realise not just why EUDE's conceptually coherent approach works the way it does, but also what is radical about EUDE. The processes of EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya provide a different way of developing an account of ethical life by offering an alternative approach of inquiry and self-examination that, if followed carefully, can enable a person to be ethical according to values that emerge through those very practices that demonstrate what an ethical life is. However while Buddhaghosacārya attaches those values to the Buddhist system, EUDE does not associate its purposes to any specific ethical system since its aim is not to provide a single universal abstract moral framework, but to show a non-conventional approach to ethical enactment that from a philosophical perspective makes sense, but from a pragmatic perspective makes EUDE's approach open and adaptable to different value commitments.

Indeed, this non-conventional and alternative approach is due to the fact that for both programmes ethics is a matter of enactment; prior theoretical explanations as a way of proceeding to outline practices of ethical cultivation are not needed since neither EUDE nor Buddhaghosacārya are theories of major values seeking to generate practices. The non-conventional approach of EUDE for example, contrast with other approaches where ethical cultivation resides in first laying a theoretical foundation outlining and arguing for the values - and often, metaphysical commitments - that are required for an ethics. I have described these conventional approaches in Chapter one in the context of areas such as moral psychology, moral education/character formation and contemplative studies. In the case of Buddhaghosacārya, his alternative approach contrast with contemporary metaphysical interpretations of the *Abhidhamma* system, as I have pointed out in Chapter three made by contemporary interpretations of *Mahāyāna* system such as the one given by Warren Todd in his book, *The Ethics of Sankara and Santideva* for example.

In the end what I have discovered is that, by focusing on practices, EUDE has in fact ended up being like Buddhaghosacārya's alternative approach to ethical enactment that is true to our lives. Both EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya offer

techniques and processes that are bound by a coherent phenomenological methodology that stays away from ontic conceptions of reality. This in turn opens up the adaptability, and flexibility of their practices and their transferability to other potential applications.

### **The Original Contribution made by this Thesis**

These findings also highlight three areas that I regard as the main contributions of this thesis; a fresh, non-conventional methodological approach to ethical development, a new perspective on to how to view Buddhaghosacārya's work and a new paradigm from where to explore ethical concerns.

#### *A Non-Conventional Methodological Approach to Ethical Development*

By articulating what is distinct about the approach of EUDE and the *Visuddhimagga*, the thesis shows the importance of processes and methodologies based on phenomenological discipline as programmatic and practical strategies for developing an ethical response to interaction with others. The phenomenological methodology of both practices contributes to the originality of the thesis by demonstrating that ethical development is not about overarching principles, but about the details presented in a sequence of very clear and focused practices and techniques which transform experience into a less harmful form. This contribution highlights that the non-conventional approach of EUDE and the alternative approach of Buddhaghosacārya can collaborate to shed light on our current global ethical concerns from a different angle.

#### *A New Perspective on How to View Buddhaghosacārya's Work*

The second contribution of this thesis lies not in the intrinsic philosophical ideas presented throughout the thesis, which are not my work, but in the way that my articulation of Buddhaghosacārya's techniques were driven by the arrangements of EUDE's processes. This can be viewed as a new and a fresh way of reading Buddhaghosacārya's work and one that can make a contribution in the field of ethical education. The contribution is therefore less about philosophical content; it is rather that, given that philosophical content, I have presented its performative

functionality in the context of practical ethical phenomenological discipline for children by a comparison of both practices. This has not previously been done in the field of Buddhist ethics.

### *A New Paradigm - The Original Question*

My way of reading Buddhaghosa was also determined by the original questions which led to the design of EUDE. I would like to think that this is a further important contribution of the thesis. Thus, the contribution lies not in how I frame questions that have already been defined from somewhere else; it lies in asking a different set of questions that focus on how we live life, rather than on an ideal that is supposed somehow to generate norms of conduct that ignore the uniqueness of human experience. Those questions were; (1) How can we become aware of our own subjective nature? (2) What will it look like to talk of a virtuous life free from self-centred ontic assumptions of experience (dogmatic thinking), not through the framing of an ideal and the aspirations to that ideal, but from the aggregation of day to day tweaking of perception and conduct? These two key questions define the perspective from which I approached both the design of EUDE and this research. They afforded me a different angle and a fresh line of enquiry from which to view the *Visuddhimagga* and to understand the distinct methodological approaches for ethical development that EUDE and Buddhaghosacārya offer.

### **Limitations of the Thesis and Recommendations for Future Research**

While contributions have been made by the thesis, there were also difficult decisions that were made in planning the research, leading to subsequent trade-offs, which rather than limitations due to the scope of the thesis I see them more in the light of an invitation for further research. This research, which I myself would like to pursue, is in three main areas. The first relates to placing EUDE's disciplinary phenomenological methodology within the context of the philosophy of education, where there is a need to link and highlight the importance of how correctly seeing the subjective content of experience has ethical and moral implications for character formation. The second area of future research is in the field of Buddhist scholarship. EUDE's approach provides an insight into how Buddhaghosacārya's work might be

viewed from another angle so that the potential contribution of his work to contemporary ethical concerns - principally in education - can be made more explicit. The third area is that of a more rigorously scientific analysis of EUDE' in order to increase the potential value of its impact. This research could include areas such as testing the impact of teacher intervention in the classroom, or teachers in the workplace, as well as the qualities and outcomes on children's lives at home. In the field of Artificial Intelligence, for example, future research could examine how we humans can move from creating algorithms for machine learning processes that are exponentially biased and the cause of social and human tendencies that lead to less freedom in our choices, towards algorithms that grow subjectively in a way that allows wisdom to flourish.

I conclude by stating that I would like to think that the thesis illuminates a different, non-conventional approach to ethical enactment which provides a new and fruitful place for reflection to those of us who continue to search for ways of caring for the human experience.

## APPENDIX I

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### Simulator - Caring for the Experience

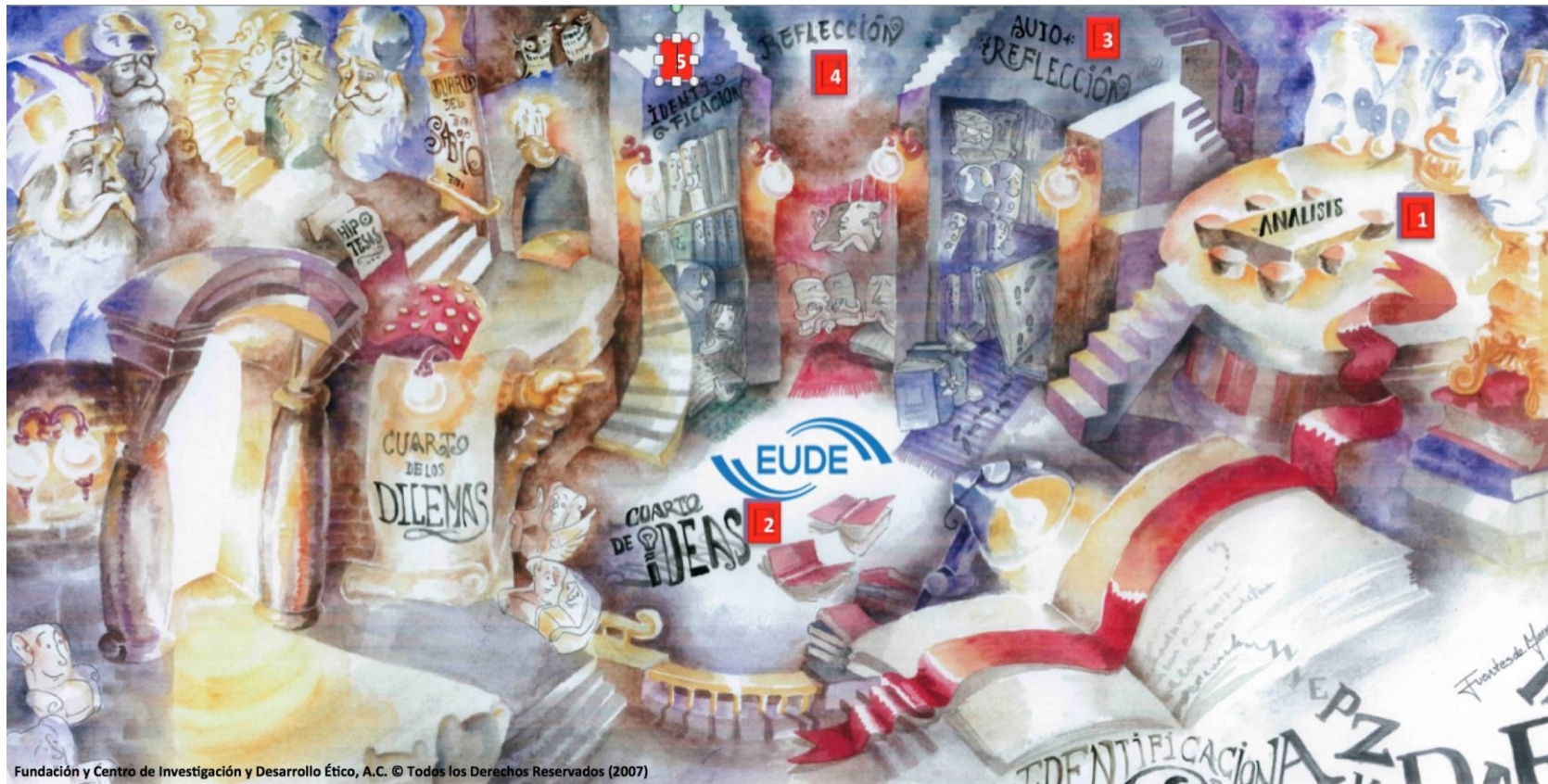


The simulator is a board 3metres by 2 metres. The children stand on the simulator to play with it.



## APPENDIX II

### Simulator - The Space Between



The simulator is a board 3metres by 2 metres. The children stand on the simulator to play with it.

## APPENDIX III

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### *Ecological Simulator - Year III*

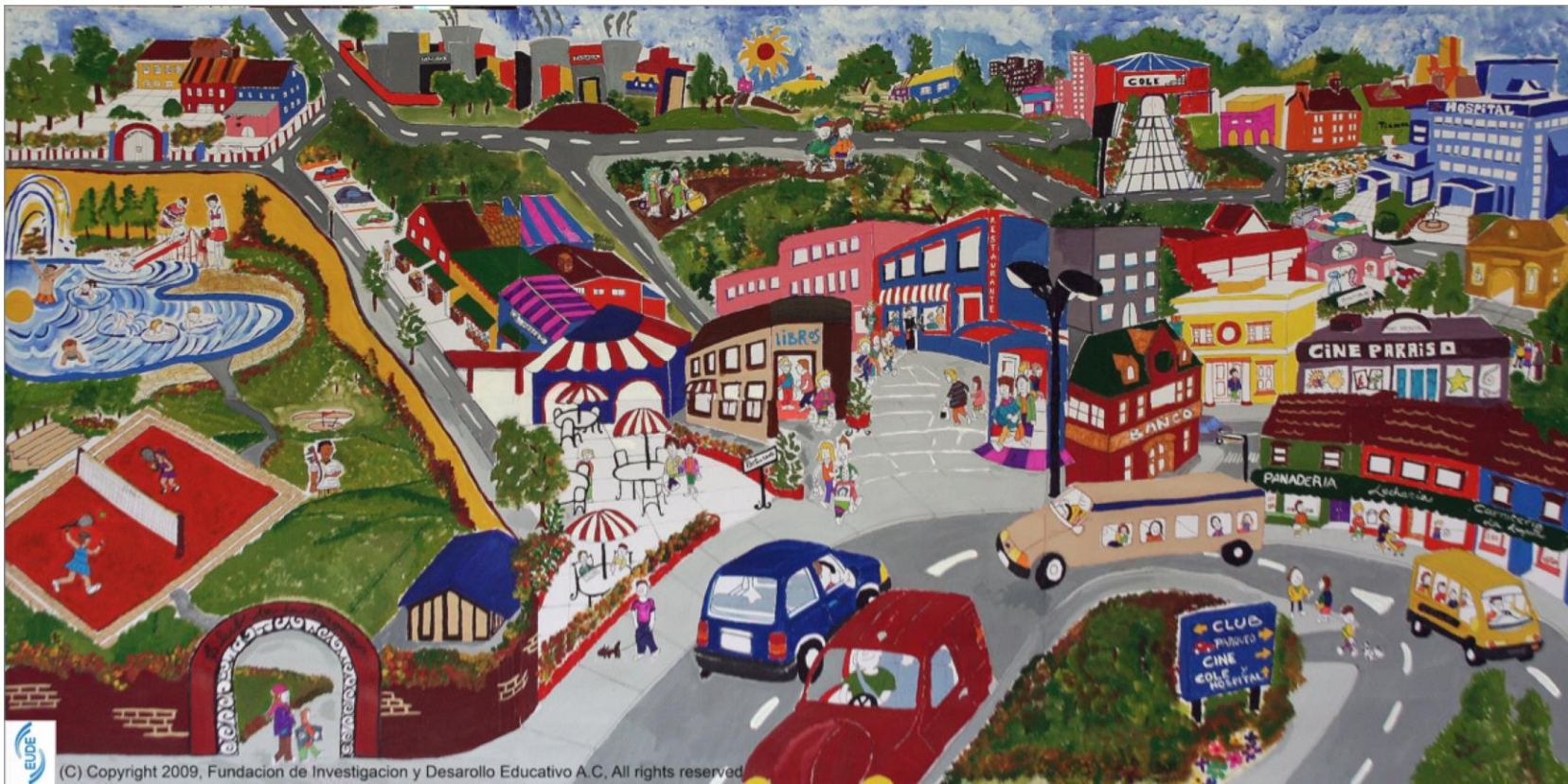
For an example of how this is played go to the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HT27TFedQp0>





## *Social Simulator*

For an example of how this is played go to the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgKTvOBhiJg>





## *Ideological Simulator*

For an example of how this is played go to the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esq0XqmHzBQ>

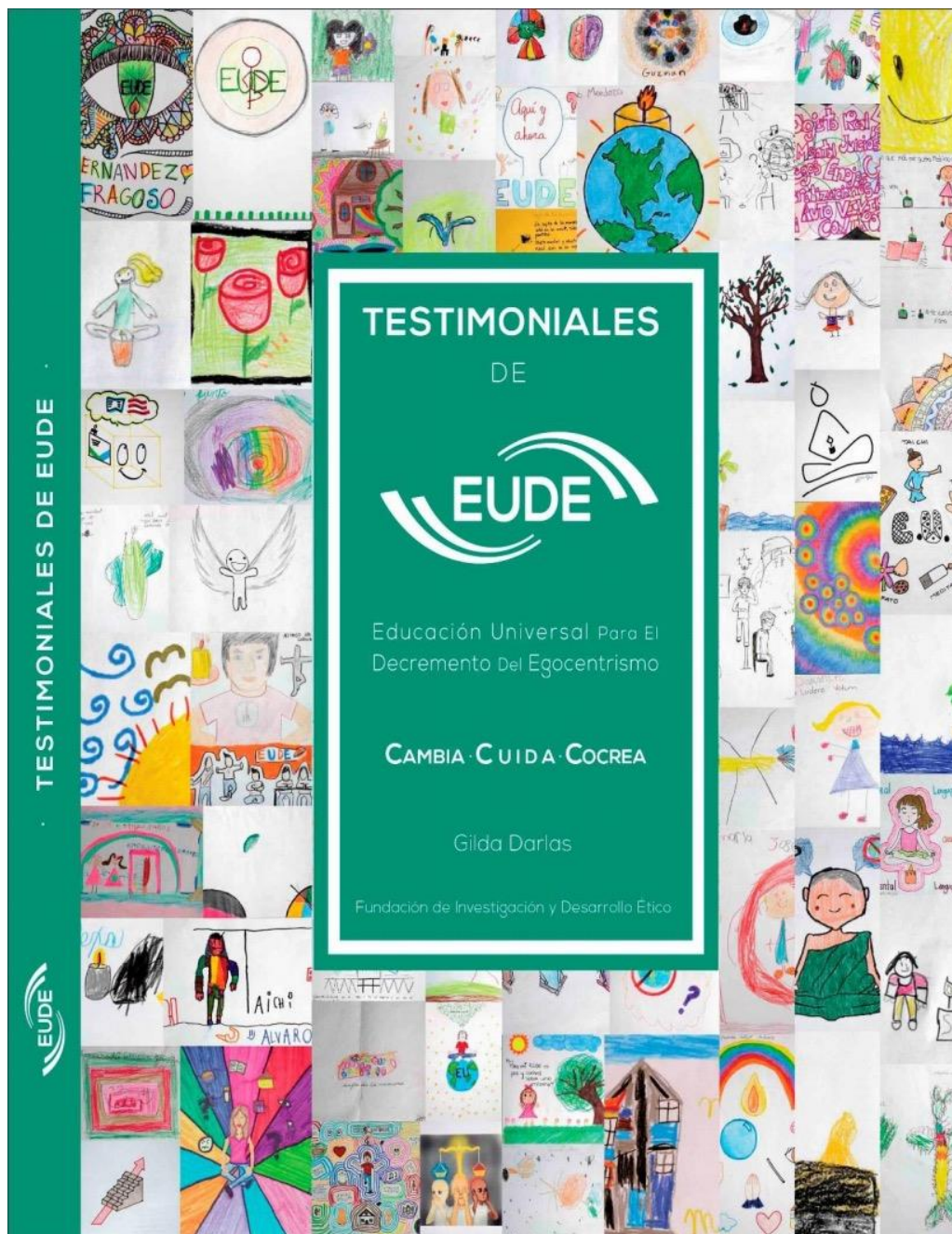


## APPENDIX IV

### Testimonies

We compiled a book of testimonies in 2015. This includes testimonies from teachers, parents, teenagers and young children. The book is in Spanish. To access the book in the original Spanish, go to the link below.

<http://www.eudeglobal.org/2016/assets/pdf/testimoniales.pdf>



## APPENDIX V

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### *Sutta* MN 24

#### The Relay Chariots (*Ratha-vinita*)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rajagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. Then a number of monks from the [Blessed One's] native land, having completed the Rains Retreat in the native land, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side.

As they were sitting there, the Blessed One said to them, "Monks, whom in our native land do the native-land monks — his companions in the holy life — esteem in this way: 'Having few wants himself, he gives talks to the monks on fewness of wants. Contented himself, he gives talks to the monks on contentment. Secluded himself, he gives talks to the monks on seclusion. Unentangled himself, he gives talks to the monks on non-entanglement. Having aroused persistence in himself, he gives talks to the monks on arousing persistence. Consummate in his own virtue, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in virtue. Consummate in his own concentration, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in concentration. Consummate in his own discernment, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in discernment. Consummate in his own release, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in release. Consummate in his own knowledge & vision of release, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in the knowledge & vision of release.[1] He is one who exhorts, informs, instructs, urges, rouses, & encourages his companions in the holy life."

"Lord, the monk named Punna Mantaniputta (Mantani's son) is esteemed by the native-land monks — his companions in the holy life — in this way: 'Having few wants himself, he gives talks to the monks on fewness of wants. Contented himself, he gives talks to the monks on contentment. Secluded himself, he gives talks to the monks on seclusion. Unentangled himself, he gives talks to the monks on non-

entanglement. Having aroused persistence in himself, he gives talks to the monks on arousing persistence. Consummate in his own virtue, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in virtue. Consummate in his own concentration, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in concentration. Consummate in his own discernment, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in discernment. Consummate in his own release, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in release. Consummate in his own knowledge & vision of release, he gives talks to the monks on becoming consummate in the knowledge & vision of release. He is one who exhorts, informs, instructs, urges, rouses, & encourages his companions in the holy life. ”

Now at that time Ven. Sariputta was sitting not far from the Blessed One. The thought occurred to him: “It’s a gain, a great gain for Ven. Punna Mantaniputta that his knowledgeable companions in the holy life speak his praise point by point in the presence of the Teacher, and that the Teacher seconds that praise. Maybe sometime or other I, too, will go to meet with Ven. Punna Mantaniputta; maybe I’ll have some conversation with him.”

Then the Blessed One, having stayed at Rajagaha as long as he liked, set out wandering to Savatthi. Wandering by stages, he arrived there and stayed in Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s monastery. Ven. Punna Mantaniputta heard, “The Blessed One has arrived at Savatthi and is staying near Savatthi in Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s monastery.” Setting his lodgings in order and taking his robes & bowl, he set out wandering to Savatthi. Wandering by stages, he went to where the Blessed One was staying in Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s monastery. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged him with a *Dhamma* talk. Then Ven. Punna — instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged with the Blessed One’s *Dhamma* talk; delighting & approving of the Blessed One’s words — got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and went to the Grove of the Blind for the day’s abiding.



Then a certain monk went to Ven. Sariputta and, on arrival, said to him: “Friend Sariputta, the monk named Punna Mantaniputta whom you have so often praised — instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged with the Blessed One’s *Dhamma* talk; delighting & approving of the Blessed One’s words — has gotten up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and has gone to the Grove of the Blind for the day’s abiding.” So Ven. Sariputta quickly picked up a sitting cloth and followed right behind Ven. Punna, keeping his head in sight. Ven. Punna plunged into the Grove of the Blind and sat down in the shade of a tree for the day’s abiding. Ven. Sariputta also plunged into the Grove of the Blind and sat down in the shade of a tree for the day’s abiding.

Then in the evening, Ven. Sariputta arose from his seclusion and went to Ven. Punna. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Punna, “My friend, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?”

“Yes, my friend.”

“And is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of virtue?”[2]

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of mind [concentration]?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of view?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision?”

“No, my friend.”

“When asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of virtue, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ When asked if the holy life is lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ For the sake of what, then, my friend, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One?”

“The holy life is lived under the Blessed One, my friend, for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging.”[3]

“But is purity in terms of virtue total unbinding through lack of clinging?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision total Unbinding through lack of clinging?”

“No, my friend.”

“Then is total Unbinding through lack of clinging something apart from these qualities?”

“No, my friend.”

“When asked if purity in terms of virtue... mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision is total Unbinding through lack of clinging, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ But when asked if total Unbinding through lack of clinging is something apart from these qualities, you say, ‘No, my friend.’ Now how, my friend is the meaning of these statements to be understood?”

“If the Blessed One had described purity in terms of virtue as total Unbinding through lack of clinging, my friend, then he would have defined something still accompanied by clinging as total Unbinding through lack of clinging. If he had described purity in terms of mind... view... the overcoming of perplexity... knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path... knowledge & vision of the way... knowledge & vision as total Unbinding through lack of clinging, then he would have defined something still accompanied by clinging as total Unbinding through lack of clinging. But if total Unbinding through lack of clinging were apart from these qualities, then a run-of-the-mill person would be totally unbound, inasmuch as a run-of-the-mill person is apart from these qualities”.

“So, my friend, I will give you an analogy, for there are cases where it’s through analogies that knowledgeable people can understand the meaning of what is being said. Suppose that while King Pasenadi Kosala was staying at Savatthi, some urgent business were to arise at Saketa; and that between Savatthi and Saketa seven relay chariots were made ready for him. Coming out the door of the inner palace in Savatthi, he would get in the first relay chariot. By means of the first relay chariot he would reach the second relay chariot. Getting out of the first relay chariot he would get in the second relay chariot. By means of the second relay chariot he would reach the third... by means of the third he would reach the fourth... by means of the fourth, the fifth... by means of the fifth, the sixth... by means of the sixth he

would reach the seventh relay chariot. Getting out of the sixth relay chariot he would get in the seventh relay chariot. By means of the seventh relay chariot he would finally arrive at the door of the inner palace at Saketa. As he arrived there, his friends & companions, relatives & kin would ask him, 'Great king, did you come from Savatthi to the door of the inner palace in Saketa by means of this chariot?' Answering in what way, my friend, would King Pasenadi Kosala answer them correctly?"

"Answering in this way, my friend, he would answer them correctly: 'Just now, as I was staying at Savatthi, some urgent business arose at Saketa; and between Savatthi and Saketa seven relay chariots were made ready for me. Coming out the door of the inner palace in Savatthi, I got in the first relay chariot. By means of the first relay chariot I reached the second relay chariot. Getting out of the first relay chariot I got in the second relay chariot. By means of the second relay chariot I reached the third... by means of the third I reached the fourth... by means of the fourth, the fifth... by means of the fifth, the sixth... by means of the sixth I reached the seventh relay chariot. Getting out of the sixth relay chariot I got in the seventh relay chariot. By means of the seventh relay chariot I finally arrived at the door of the inner palace at Saketa.' Answering in this way, he would answer them correctly."

"In the same way, my friend, purity in terms of virtue is simply for the sake of purity in terms of mind. Purity in terms of mind is simply for the sake of purity in terms of view. Purity in terms of view is simply for the sake of purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity. Purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of what is & is not the path is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision of the way is simply for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge & vision. Purity in terms of knowledge & vision is simply for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging. And it's for the sake of total Unbinding through lack of clinging that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One."



When this was said, Ven. Sariputta said to Ven. Punna Mantaniputta: “What is your name, friend, and how do your companions in the holy life know you?”

“My name is Punna, friend, and my companions in the holy life know me as Mantaniputta.”

“How amazing, my friend, how astounding, that Ven. Punna Mantaniputta has answered point by point with profound, profound discernment in the manner of a learned disciple who has rightly understood the Teacher’s message! It’s a gain, a great gain, for any of his companions in the holy life who get to see him and visit with him. Even if they had to carry him around on a cushion placed on top of their heads in order to see him and visit with him, it would be a gain for them, a great gain. And the fact that I have gotten to see him and visit with him has been a gain, a great gain for me.”

When this was said, Ven. Punna said to Ven. Sariputta: “And what is your name, friend, and how do your companions in the holy life know you?”

“My name is Upatissa, friend, and my companions in the holy life know me as Sariputta.”

“What? I’ve been talking with the disciple who is like the Teacher himself without knowing that it is Ven. Sariputta? Had I known it was Ven. Sariputta, I wouldn’t have answered at such length. How amazing, my friend, how astounding, that Ven. Sariputta has questioned point by point with profound, profound discernment in the manner of a learned disciple who has rightly understood the Teacher’s message! It’s a gain, a great gain, for any of his companions in the holy life who get to see him and visit with him. Even if they had to carry him around on a cushion placed on top of their heads in order to see him and visit with him, it would be a gain for them, a great gain. And the fact that I have gotten to see him and visit with him has been a gain, a great gain for me.”

In this way did both great beings rejoice in each other’s good words.

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