

SHAPE JOURNAL

THE LOKA SUTTA

THE BUDDHA'S VIEW OF "THE WORLD"
AS SEEN FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A MODERN HOLIST

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www.e-journal.org.uk/shape

Shape Journal
Bild Art
11a Woodlands Road, Lepton
West Yorkshire. HD8 0HX UK



Shape Journal
Special Issue 21

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Introduction

Purposes of the Writer



Welcome to the 21st Special Issue of the **SHAPE Journal** on the Loka Sutta.

The writer of these papers is not a Buddhist. He is, however, a holistic philosopher, who sees his ancestry as stretching from the Buddha and Zeno of Elea in the ancient world, through Hegel and Marx in the 19th century, to his own attempt to carry the gains made by these great thinkers towards a wholly new form of Science.

This has not been an easy task !

In spite of a commitment to this basic position for almost all of his adult life, the task he set himself constantly generated other more urgent, more basic tasks, and in the end required the fullest possible investigation of the holist position in Philosophy, and the attempt to reclaim Science for this standpoint by a thorough understanding of just how such an all-embracing position could deliver an affective methodology.

It has demanded a series of preparatory works including a new Theory of Emergence, a substantial period of work on Iterative Techniques and Chaos in Mathematics, and finally a return to the Buddha's Loka Sutta, his foundation for what individuals conceived of as "The World".

What follows are my first real attempts to reconcile my own philosophical theories with those of that original and great holistic thinker.

Jim Schofield June 2013



The Loka Sutta

“The World” according to the Buddha

There is a major problem to be overcome!

The standpoint and consequent methodology that has dominated the Western World for millennia, and is now still spreading across the rest of the globe, has persisted, in spite of reaching its philosophical limit over a century ago. It has managed to do this because it is still the “delivering-standpoint” that accords with the current *economic* system – Capitalism. For it can, indeed, both predict and produce, and even “innovate”, though only in delivering its products quicker, smaller, cheaper etc etc, etc., within its specially arranged and maintained artificial areas. Yet its seemingly inevitable demise has been long delayed, by the survival of that economic context. And this has, in the realm of a continuing attempt at trying to understand the World, led to an ever-increasing crisis.

Both the initial success and subsequent failure of this system was based upon the Principle of Plurality, which though it did allow an increased analysis of aspects of the World, did so by effectively “nailing phenomena to the ground” – keeping them stable. It allowed analysis, but only by keeping things fixed, and hence as predictable, and useable processes. As long as the studied areas could be effectively restricted to their carefully erected Domains, and both investigated and used only therein, they could be accurately predicted and hence used to some required end.

But, such a World, inevitably, was founded upon non-changing things. Such an approach elicited the famed Formal Logic – the effective rationale of unchanging elements ($A = A$ being the key rule), and, of course, Analysis, Reductionism and a belief in Synthesis could, with such contexts deliver almost everything.

But, such an approach could never address Change, nor its self-produced Contradictions. The very assumptions and consequent methodology was bound to generate such situations regularly, because the basis and physical constraints imposed upon Reality were totally inadequate to a changing and indeed evolving World.

With such restrictions upon Reality, all paths of study would inevitably lead to contradiction. And the pragmatic solution of hiving off the alternatives in the contradictory pairs so produced into separate and self-contained Subjects, could never resolve them. They just constantly multiplied the categories of study or Specialisms, which very quickly came to talk in their own often very different languages about their own individual realms.

The crucial and debilitating omissions from all this was, of course, real qualitative Change. For, it had been, as far as possible, eliminated (except for purely quantitative measurements within the essential stable Domains of study). Hence, the actual, real Development of Reality was excluded, and even much more minor qualitative changes were also left out as irrelevant.

To break out of this dead end - this cul de sac of understanding, required the rejection of Plurality and all its consequences, as a true feature of Reality, and its relegation to what it actually is – a pragmatic and useful rig!

But, what could we replace it with?

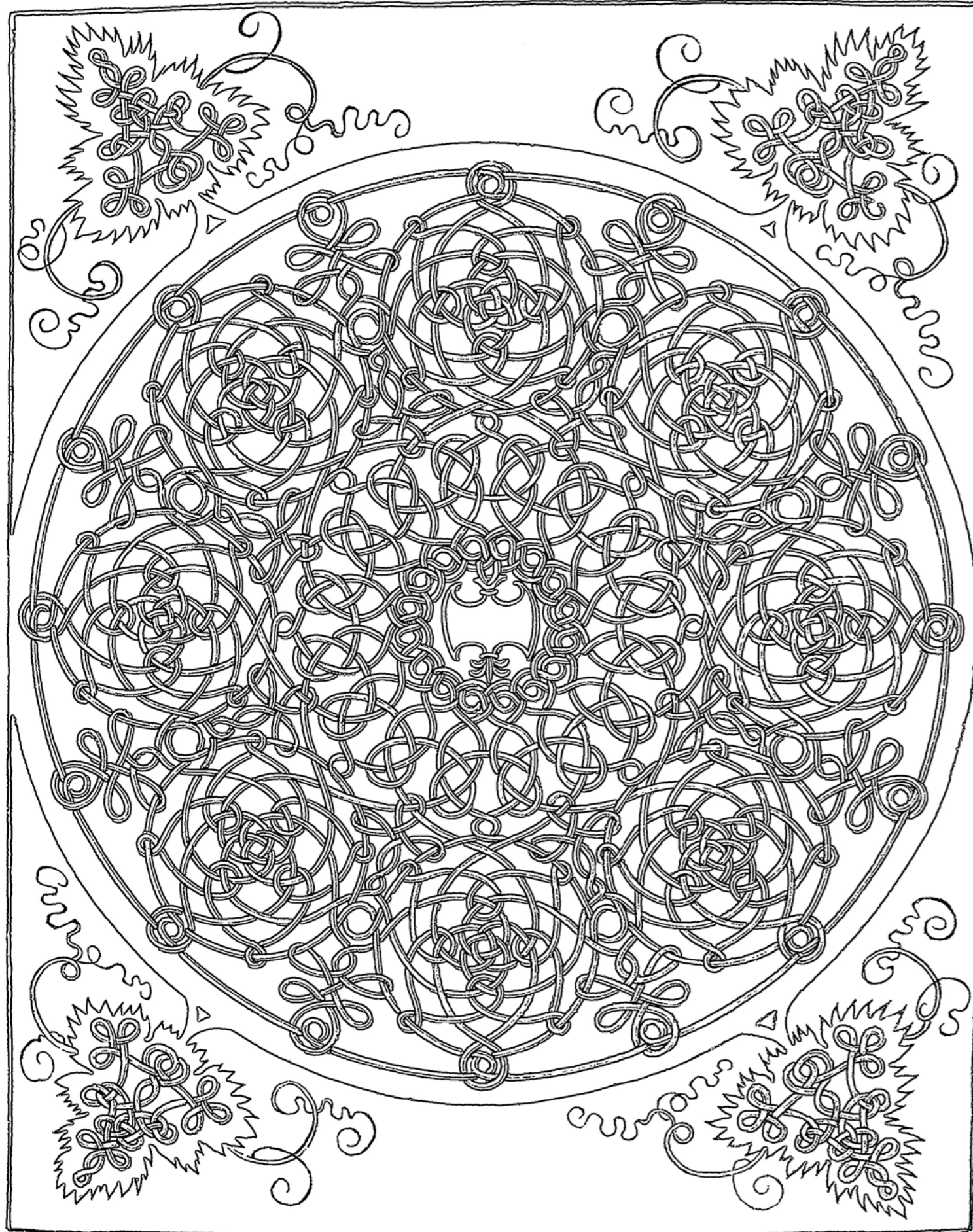
The evident alternative, Holism, seemed believable but inadequate to the important tasks of prediction and production, so had been shelved for centuries.

Hegel, some 200 years ago, tried to buck the trend, and develop a Logic of Change, but the bulk of his contemporaries sidelined his contributions.

In parts of Asia for many millennia, the Buddha’s holistic standpoint had indeed survived, but as a religion, rather than an evolving philosophy.

Surely, the task is now to rescue Holism from its historical and geographical limitations? But, to do that, we must surely first understand what the Buddha had delivered, which had entranced millions of Asians for thousands of years.

Such a study must start with the *Loka Sutta* – “The World” according to the Buddha.



Truth, Falsity, or Something In-Between?

A Necessary Preface on “Truth” to the Loka Sutta

What actually is a proof?

There are many different ideas of what actually constitutes a definitive and final proof, but which of these is the best, and which are totally unacceptable? Or is it that they are all compromised in one way or another?

For, Brian Cox - the physicist, believes that the proof of what he calls a “theory”, but which is actually only an extracted relation, is supposed to be definitively delivered by a reliable and repeatable prediction from it, which matches the “real world” situation.

While, in a very different way, a philosopher might consider the application of the rules of Formal Logic, that always ends with a single and repeatable conclusion would also be required for a really adequate proof.

Finally, we might be of the standpoint that would consider it absolutely essential to establish a supposedly true conclusion only via a return to the Supreme Arbiter—Reality itself - via a series of purposely designed experiments to test that “truth” across its supposed complete range - this being the “I will believe it, only if I can see it” school of defining Truth.

Yet, absolutely every one of these turns out to be inadequate as a complete confirmation of the correctness of the idea, theory or equation involved! And the reason that every single one of them is not sufficient, is that they are all predicated upon crucial assumptions and/or strictly defined and particular contexts. For, we can never extract Absolute Truths independent of their concrete contexts, for such are always impossible! Absolute truths would require that they would be exactly the same in absolutely all-possible-circumstances, and that is never possible.

Let me clarify this somewhat!

Everybody agrees that things will appear different in different circumstances, but they would explain that by asserting that though our “Law” is unvarying, it will be accompanied by a varied set of many, many others, so that, in-sum, the results will vary. But, this is predicated upon the man-made Principle of Plurality, which assumes that all Natural Laws are independent of context, and hence, by appropriate and careful “farming” of the experimental Domain, can each be extracted “as they really are”!

Any extracted equation is never an eternal Natural Law (as is assumed by scientists like Brian Cox). And though we can isolate, by concrete situation constraints, and thereafter

by formal abstraction as an Absolute Form. But that is not what actually occurs in Reality: it is always an idealised and purely formal pattern. For what we find in Reality is always limited to the exact conditions in which it was extracted. And the famed Formal Logic (the basis of all these consequent principles) only holds when the entities involved are permanently fixed, and do not change into something else.

The opposing alternative to this nexus of assumptions is the idea of Holism, in which everything can, and indeed will, change into something else given time and circumstances. In other words, if that alternative is closer to the way of the World, then Absolute Proof in this concrete World is a myth!

NOTE: interestingly, the exact opposite position has been expressed in the novel *A Certain Ambiguity* by Gaurav Suri and Hartosh Singh Bal. It is well worth the read to see where it leads from the opposite perspective.

All such proofs that are claimed to be universally applicable, most certainly aren’t; they require the right conditions and the exact same entities involved to perform in the exact same way. As in the famous Jules Feiffer cartoon, the response to a final and damning assertion was, “*Let us define your terms!*”

Now, apart from winning an argument (or losing one), the real value of these denunciations is that most assumed-to-be-final proofs of something or other very rarely are. Indeed, the most used belief in Science is that successful prediction proves the given “truth” It doesn’t!

Not only has the situation to be exactly right for the given theory, but also the whole thing – equation and prediction is only about description and never explanation. We can correctly identify what is claimed to be the essence of a phenomenon, as merely a formal description of what occurs in the allowed circumstances. In no way is an explanation involved. A real theory would certainly explain the reasons for a behaviour, and though it would also never be the Absolute Truth, it would be incomparably more important than any totally unexplained formal relation. It puts content above form, as it should!

Indeed, the “truer” principle involves the impossibility of Absolute Truth. Only a cut-down and tailored situation could ever deliver a “supposed Absolute Truth”, and then only in a “world” composed entirely of such disembodied abstractions. In fact, it is this “unreality”, which causes us to label such an abstraction-only world as Ideality.

Now, it is understandable that many people involved with such things choose to muddle these two realms. Reality is the actual concrete, everything included world, whereas Ideality does not actually exist concretely at all, but can be constructed out of extract-able and abstract-able formalisms. The fact that they can be used in highly tailored and maintained environments does make them useful, but to turn the clever frig into Reality is incorrect. It is as unnatural as a knitted woolly jumper compared with the living fleece of the sheep. You cannot say that the woolly jumper is the result of a naturally occurring and playing out Law!


But, we haven’t finished yet.

In the Buddha’s Loka Sutta, when considering “*becoming*” as the constructor of ideas out of Reality (either as full explanatory theories or even mere formal relations), he concentrates solely upon the impossibility of Absolute Truth, and the certainty of therefore being misled by our tailored extractions. But, seeing it that way, the process “*becoming*” is interpreted as always leading to major negatives, and this is certainly not true.

Though no extraction is ever absolutely true, one kind of extraction can indeed be better than another of the same phenomenon. And here the word “better” means “closer to the truth”.

We say that the extraction has greater *Objective Content* than the lesser alternative: so it is quite definitely an advance upon it, and can be used in an explanatory way, either more widely, or more accurately.

The “*becoming*” of such an explanatory extraction can therefore have some merit. We merely cannot, and should not, assume that it is the last word. This important aspect of “truth” seems absent in the Loka Sutta. The “something-in-Between”, or the Objective Content, doesn’t come into it.



Preface to my Initial Responses to The Loka Sutta

The following set of papers were a response to a particular account and its translation of the Buddha's Loka Sutta - *The World*, and though definitely worth keeping, they have certainly misinterpreted what was being communicated.

The problems were, first and foremost, in the use of common English words in the translation from the Pali, which have different common meanings from what they meant there. But also, and even more importantly, in the interpreting of what was delivered in this Sutta was also taken from the position of much later ideas of Holism by both Hegel and Marx.

The words being used, like "*Becoming*" and "*Birth*", were interpreted as having the same meanings as they do now, but they clearly did not, indeed even our usage has changed of these words, and mean something very particular in Philosophy, which does not match everyday usage.

Yet having made these mistakes in interpretation after reading other different accounts of other descriptions by the Buddha, the differences between the Buddha's Holism and, for example, Hegel's version have been clarified, so the exercise has been worthwhile. In addition describing in detail this wrong turning cannot but help avoid the same mistakes being taken by others following the same sort of investigative path.

Hence, in reading these first few contributions, the reader will be aware from the outset of the wrong turns taken, and will approach them with the necessary degree of scepticism.

NOTE: All these accounts of the Loka Sutta are included in the Appendix to this set of papers.

Strict Causality

...or the Loka Sutta?

Apart from the dichotomy between Plurality and Holism, there are still deeper difficulties to fathom if we are to really begin to comprehend the Way of the World - how it works, and, most important of all, how it evolves!

Though I believe that I have a handle on the weaknesses of the Whole and the Part (Plurality), there is still some way to go with that seemingly endless conundrum of Holism. For, it seems to be self-defeating from the outset by its complete and even reflexive interconnectedness and mutual determinations, so that, at first we are at a loss as to how to plumb ANY causal sequences contained within it. This contrasts very strongly with the situation if we accept the alternative pluralist position, for there a methodology is well established which enables all things (Parts) to be subject to control and subsequent analysis, in such a way that “causalities” are immediately available, and indeed, almost legion

The problem arises in Holism, because “everything affects everything else”, and even their forms and structures are similarly determined.. They are not only bottom-up, but also top—down, and even side-to-side! To Mankind, Reality seemed to be full of Form, but that Form was often ungraspable and even untrustworthy. The World around Man promised understandability, but would cruelly Change when seemingly within his grasp.

No wonder primitive Man assumed a peevish and all-powerful Hand, that could usurp seeming constancies, and ruin his careful formulations and concepts.

But nevertheless, Mankind did progress! With an intelligence unsurpassed in any other known creature, he realised that his conceptions were true, but not perfectly and dependably true all the time. They were NOT constantly true! He therefore stuck to his gains in spite of calamity, and at first without much hope of success, sought some measure of control of that wondrous yet fickle World. Slowly, he found small ways.

He, first among all creatures on Earth, began to actually fashion tools. By trial and error, he discovered that the almost ideal stone for that is flint, and over the millennia evolved the first Technology. With these crude first tools he actually became a tool-maker using other available substances. From wood initially, and then, via hunting with his flint-tipped weapons, he included ALL the resources of his prey animals. He obtained not only high protein meat, but horn and bone, sinew and hide. He fashioned them into a wondrous variety of aids and tools. And slowly he discovered how to transform them into wholly new

resources. Stiff hide became supple leather! Sinew became thread and even rope. When they found the Ice Age man in the Alps, his clothes and accoutrements were both beautiful and delicate, and remarkably functional for human use, in spite of his only tools being slivers of flint, and needles of bone. He did indeed begin to achieve a small but increasing measure of control of the world around him.

He then conquered the greatest threat of all – Fire, and turned it from the destroyer of the virgin forest into this tamed provider of heat and cooking, all the way to a weapon in and of itself. Control was changing too. But progress was still very slow. The vast majority of the World was still beyond the slightest control, and his most profound gains could be wrecked totally by the whims and hostility of the “wilful” World.

He conceived of an Almighty Man, with ALL the virtues of Mankind amplified to absolute Knowledge and complete Control. He saw the Sense of the World, and could see it as the ideal construction of such an Absolute Man. He also ascribed the Anger, Jealousy and Hatred evident in his fellow men into his Almighty conception, which he came to call GOD. He demonstrated his realisation of the Godhead to that superior Being by fervent prayer and elaborate ritual. He also sought to both please and influence God, by sacrifice of his animals and the enactment of expensive ceremonies and rituals of appeasement. These activities were enhanced by all participating in them. The whole family, gens, clan or even wider community co-operated in these events in the hope that God would intervene positively on their behalf. Such Religion also greatly reinforced the confidence of the group both in itself, and in “its” God, and Mankind increased his progress.

Now, in case you are beginning to wonder, this is NOT meant to be any sort of History of Early Man, and anyone who knows about such things will immediately disagree with this or that point in my brief description. But such criticisms would be misplaced, for that is NOT my intention. What I am doing though is unavoidable, for I am concerned with the problems that Mankind encountered, and still encounters, in attempting to deal with the World that surrounds him.

I am concerned with the relationship of Mankind with the World, and the means by which he increasingly extended his at first meagre control, and most particularly how this process FORMED his conceptions and methods. Indeed, how he invented and developed his penetration into Reality, AND, most importantly, how it affected his World View.





This animal, Man, was NOT placed in the World ready-made. It evolved from lower animals, with which it is intimate kin. It could therefore NOT be a priori equipped with the understanding he was increasingly aware that he NEEDED. He had to construct it for himself from scratch! Thus any Godlike handing down of “The Nature of the World” was not, and still is not, GIVEN! It has to be seen, recognised and thought about, and very slowly turned into an increasingly “correct” (let us say “useable”) World View.

Mankind had to create a World View, that had to be built first out of grass and flint, but increasingly out of Knowledge, Skills and Control. To achieve this he needed Concepts. Man was a thinking animal and he began to “mine” fragments or aspects out of Reality primarily to USE! The means by which Mankind constructed his World was indeed a whole series of remarkable and entirely NEW techniques, each of which constituted an Emergence – a creative Event which established things which had never existed before, and which transformed the World’s potentialities dramatically.

Now, there had been Emergences before. Indeed, the most important had been that which resulted in the Origin of Life on Earth. But that was a “physical” Emergence. What was taking place in Mankind was NOT. It took place in his head! He created Concepts about Reality, which he preciously remembered and employed wherever he could. This type of process had begun small, embedded in his pragmatic gains in food gathering, hunting and the rest of his climb above the other animals. But, he then did more than see his these things locked within his techniques. He realised their generality – their generalised applicability, not only in what he was DOING, but in a wholly NEW way – in Understanding Necessity. He Invented Abstraction!

Now even this idea has to be qualified significantly. For his dearest achievements in Understanding could (and indeed often were) smashed before his eyes by calamity and Death. Even the best of his gains were partial, relative and always temporary, but to call them WRONG would be drastically incorrect. They were NOT wrong! They were incomplete and usually mistakenly presented. BUT what he DID have were ideas that had real objective content, though never Absolute Truth. To condemn what he had is stupid! Out of this flawed but objective content, he proceeded to build his World.

Now, how he did this, is the most transfixing, intriguing and amazing story that could ever be told. It was no straight-forward staircase to Truth, built out of small truths. Indeed, it zig-zagged about from one extreme (and vitally flawed) position to another diametrically opposite (though similarly flawed) one. And, to cap it all, neither of this dichotomous pair were the direct way forwards. They supplied a didactic path which could lead to real gain. In fact these incorrect paths contributed by providing

“high Ground” viewpoints, from which much better paths could be revealed. But this latter interpretation was not consciously accepted for many a millennium. It was seen, but NOT generalised!

Now the reader may be forgiven for wondering why I am presenting this in this particular way. What indeed is my purpose? Am I about to deliver the Wisdom of the Ages, and short circuit such incessant zig-zags? No! But I know of a man who got further than anyone in the World at his time. It was, of course, the Buddha!

He lived 2,500 years ago in India, and his contribution was the most profound up to and including that time. We do not go to him for all the answers. I, for example, am not a Buddhist, but he is, without doubt, one of Mankind’s greatest heroes, and still has much to teach even the philosophies of today. The Buddha effectively founded a religion that still exists today: a religion without a God. He was a real man, a superlative man. There is not a lot wrong in revering a great man. Making him a God is, of course, nonsense, but if his thoughts are studied and thought about, the supplicant will be infused with great wisdom.

The Buddha realised that the World was holistic.

Everything affected everything else.

Things were multiply determined and constantly changing. Forms emerged, but ultimately subsided and disintegrated, only to recur again later as part of a profound cycle. Now all of this can, and was, turned into a pattern of religious belief. It always happens! In the modern day, the achievements of the greatest scientists are invariably converted by them (or their followers) into false, generalised World Views that are “believed” unquestioningly. It is almost inevitable! But that does not invalidate the gems that initiated each and every rationalisation.

I have been struggling with Philosophy for years, and by this I mean *real* Philosophy – what amounts to a coherent and comprehensive World View. As a trained mathematician and scientist, and a dedicated artist and musician, I have long rejected the consensus position of the majority of my colleagues in Physics, and have sought a detailed criticism and understanding of their banker methods. I have written on Formal Logic, Abstraction, Plurality, the Scientific Method and many other related subjects. I believe that I have made several original contributions in these areas, but I have NOT replaced each and every realised flawed technique with its “proper alternative” (as you may have guessed). But, I am still working on many of my outstanding evident problems, and have no doubt that Holism is the correct standpoint, but a holistic Science eludes me as yet.

But the elements for consideration are clear!

The most important are Emergences, such as the Origin of Life on the Earth, Human Consciousness and even Social Revolution. But as the revolutionaries in 1917 admitted, insurrection was an Art, not a Science.

The means of profoundly studying these vital developments are still to be grasped. Hegel begun the task 200 years ago, and Marx wedded Hegel's magnificent achievements to Materialism, and produced a Philosophy of General Applicability. But, such "emergences" in Thought are never achieved by a single person. The tasks are nowhere near a breakthrough even today!

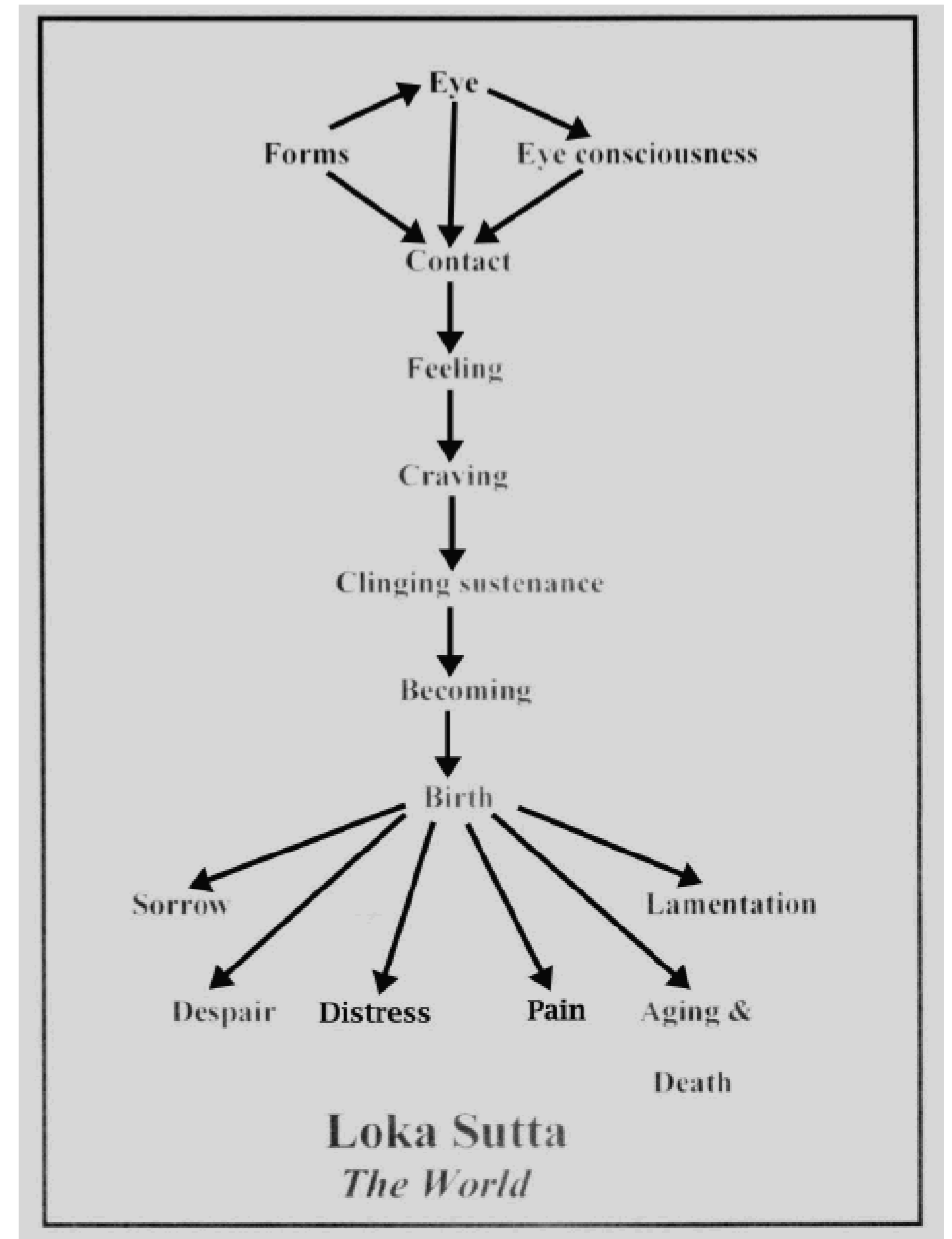
So, I have started out on a great trek through the thinkers of the past to elicit clues as to how we should deal with Holism, both profoundly and effectively.

I have at great length studied both Zeno and those who have talked about his contributions, and all the western scientists and philosophers, but I am, more and more urgently propelled to address the father of Holism, the Buddha himself.

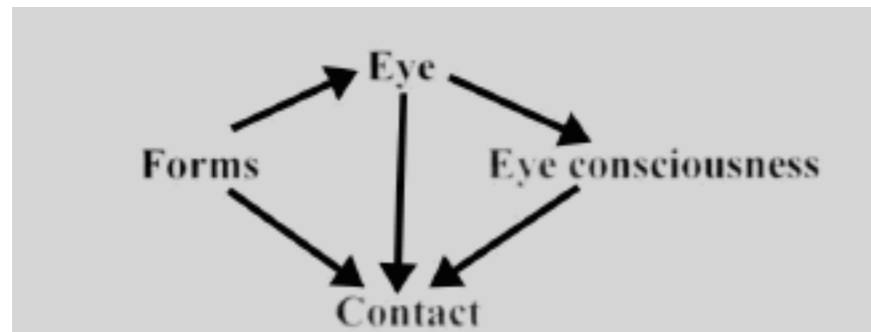
Yesterday I read his Loka Sutta, and this paper is the first response.

From THIS ground, I will deliver a whole set of papers dealing with what the Master says in his very short essay subtitled "The World".

The Loka Sutta Diagrams



The document *The Loka Sutta* by the Buddha is a short, seemingly repetitive statement subtitled “The World”. It contains deceptive depth and subtlety, and for me, at least, requires vital diagrams. Though the Sutta contains a narrative including ALL the senses, the Form for each is identical, so I will include the first of his statements here to represent them all. It is shown above on the previous page.



In a nutshell you have a description which is entirely holistic. These transitions are unusual yet vital. From Form we have a transition into the Eye, which then generates Eye consciousness. So far, so good, they seem to be a caused sequence, and yet the “product” is NOT Eye-consciousness, as you might expect, but a “combination of all three of these in what he terms Contact. Thus these are not a linear causal sequence like some sausage machine, but persisting stages, which must THEN be taken together, in a continuing way, to get the real result. With Eye consciousness achieved we have to return to the Form and the Eye to transcend what we have into the complete process. It is a kind of recursion. It immediately departs from the usual forms by the results affecting the causes to produce what is really going on. It is holistic from line one.

Now, a formally schooled reader may well be full of questions at this stage, wanting to know what all these things are, and of course demanding to know what Contact involves. The Buddha wants *you* to think! He wants you to seek your own answers. He wants you to question the normal linear, causal and mechanistic ways of explaining such things for a much deeper consideration.

Now, as it happens these considerations have recurred many times since in the history of Thought. The most important “modern” exponent was Frederick Hegel some 200 years ago, who knowing that the usual methods of dealing with the World were inadequate in the face of Change (particularly qualitative Change) determined to develop a new approach. The only area that he could see that was constantly available to him for study was his own Thinking. He embarked upon his Science of Logic with that intention. Remarkably he too arrived at many of the stages that occur in the Loka Sutta, though the Buddha had arrived there some 2,300 years earlier.

Even with the diagram, the way that it is presented in words, which is of course appended to this paper, infers processes which are not obvious to those schooled in either Plurality, Logic or both. He describes the initial section in a very special way, which involves initial transitions from the Form to the Eye and thence to Eye consciousness, but then he goes in a different process from all three of these to Contact.

Hegel did not complete his task, and though there have been followers of various kinds. His objective is still outstanding and unfinished.

In my own meagre work in this area I have concentrated on what are termed Emergences. The most profoundly important of these was the Origin of Life on Earth from inanimate matter. This Emergence has been the template for all those that followed, the most important of which has to be the development of Consciousness in Mankind. All attempts by scientists and philosophers using the usual consensus methodologies have got nowhere in this field, and never could, as long as they stayed loyal to the established assumptions of Plurality and strict ONE-WAY Causality. Lip service is often paid to Holism, but it frankly has defeated them all. Compared with the easy, blinkered pathways delivered by Plurality, Holism seems unfathomable. They soon abandon it as a useable description of the World.

And for many centuries now, they have got away with it. The pragmatic possibilities of Plurality have swamped the profundity of Holism. Mankind has preferred the patchwork quilt of separate relations and equations to holistic attempts to Understand and Explain the World. But linear sequences are proving increasingly inadequate in a host of areas, even the heart of the most mechanistic of the Sciences – Physics is itself in deep crisis due to its pluralist methodology, and has abandoned its once ever-present, holistic Explanation completely, for a “bag of equations”.

Buddha’s Loka Sutta is about the holistic World View. It is about how Mankind perceives and internalises the World, and it is crucial to today’s epistemological questions and the future of our hopefully effective methodologies in dealing with the World.

This single Sutta is only a start, but from line one it opens up the nature of a human’s processing of his senses, and the delivery of the World to him. Let us go into some detail on the Sutta via these diagrams of mine, which I hope will help.

It must be made clear from the outset that what concerned the Buddha was just how Man dealt with the World, and this meant that via the senses, everything that was necessary could be internalised. Yet, the model of these processes is NOT that which dominates most thinking on these matters.

If we look again at the initial diagram we see that ONLY Form is external to the observer/interpreter. From that single concrete source, initially via the eye, everything is thereafter “mind-stuff”. To establish that inner version the Buddha has that initial triangle of processes.

Now, the initial input is from Reality, but the Buddha realises that to enter the following system what is transferred cannot be material. It must be something that is insert-able and compatible with the nature of that through which it travels, where it is stored and how it is processed. His extraction from Reality is therefore termed Forms. Obviously, each step in this initial set of processes differs from the last. To go from external Form, into what the eye extracts will be different from, the next transition into what he terms Eye-consciousness.

And the crunch comes in establishing this transferred thing soundly into the mind, and he does this by saying that the next process does NOT merely follow Eye-consciousness, but recursively involves both Form and the eye as well to achieve what he calls Contact.

Such processes are an attempt to indicate something of what really happens in a holistic situation such as this. Indeed, in much more modern conundrums associated with perception, there has been a whole history of pluralistic (generally failed) attempts to explain these transitions, which have often concluded that real knowledge of anything in Reality is impossible, and that all we have in our heads is electricity. Of course, such positivist ideas are rubbish, and we DO indeed re-create things internally in a dependable form.

It is surprising just how many Psychologists spend large amounts of time proving how unquestioningly unreliable are our sense perceptions.

Now the Buddha, doesn’t say it overtly, but the very fact that he repeats the whole sequence for each and every sense, shows that he considers them together – as a whole. For example, any ambiguities in any perception are generally removed by use of other senses, AND the use of many, rich past experiences. We use the equipment we possess very well, and our senses are what they are supposed to be – a

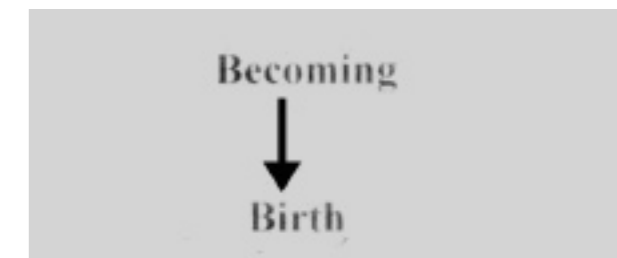
bridge to the World beyond the self, and NOT a barrier as the pessimists seem to imply.

Contact then, even when we restrict it to a particular sense, is a “making coherent” of the three stages and producers in this initial process.

But, as you would have guessed, that is by no means the end of the process. He takes us onwards through Feeling, and Craving to the most important – Becoming.

I assume that the Buddha meant a very similar thing to what Hegel meant when he used the exact same word. Becoming was the crucial, creative and necessary stage, such that what was now in the mind, yet was as near as possible to what existed outside in Reality. Contact and then Becoming led to Birth – the final step begetting a whole spectrum of mental states (all of which were highly negative).

At this point, I must say a little more about Hegelian ideas on such things, which are roughly my own position too. For Hegel the crucial phases were those, which map onto the following part of the Loka Sutta.



These two steps map very closely related to those of Emergence and Emergence Level in modern ideas on Qualitative, indeed Revolutionary Change. These differ from both Hegel and the Buddha in that these Events occur in the physical World as well as in Thought. Now Hegel was almost entirely concerned with processes within Human Thought, as I think the Buddha was too. Hegel had literally the same names as those used by the Buddha, and the crux of his Science of Logic was undoubtedly Becoming.

Now, there are significant differences between all following philosophic contributions and the Buddha’s Loka Sutta when it comes to the stage which he calls Birth, for it is shown to lead ONLY to negative human states in the mind of the seeker. This to the Buddha is unavoidable. The emergence into Birth alone does not transcend the enclosing World, but, on the contrary, reveals for the first time its deep melancholy.

To get further involves another different process, NOT of the World, but of the Self. Yet none of this is in this Sutta, and I wouldn’t presume to predict the content of the Buddha’s other work before I have studied it.

What I must do however is relate this Sutta first to Hegel's version, and thereafter to the broadest extension of all – into the material World itself, its own development and indeed its evolution, and the creation of everything in this World, including the Consciousness of Man.

Hegel was very much more positive about Becoming than the Buddha. Indeed, his mental processes, which included this crucial stage, was full of Creation. The Thinker transcended each dead-end by arriving at a newly generated Level - Ideas and Concepts that were wholly NEW, when they were first realised. He saw them as an infinite series leading to his Absolute Idea. (The temptation to map this to the Buddha's Nirvana MUST be resisted).

Now, as I have already stated, Hegel did not complete his self-apportioned task, and neither could he. He was an idealist, and his chosen theatre of operations was Human Thought, indeed his OWN Thought. The crucial step following Hegel HAD to be the extension of all his ideas into concrete Reality itself., which is of course no job for an idealist!

All these processes were NOT just of Thought, but also of Reality!

Now this was an enormous step. In thinking "becomings" could appear at a remarkable rate, while the Thinker sat quietly, without producing external indicators of any kind. But, if such processes and "becomings" were to be properties of concrete Reality itself, its seeming equilibrium and "static" nature would surely be quite clearly shattered. In seeming constancy, or almost imperceptible changes would accelerate and become revolutionary. Instead of a becoming of ideas, there would have to be becomings of physical entities and relations, which we could only call Emergences.

And, as science revealed more and more of the distant history of the Earth, it became increasingly clear that such things had happened in the distant past and were indeed cataclysmic. They were tragedies of the first water, that seemed initially to be wholly negative and indeed destructive.

And so they were, for they had to involve the dissolution of past stabilities as part of the evolution of Reality into wholly New Forms.

What were clearly constants, or at least dominating factors, before the cataclysm, had to be terminally undermined by seemingly destructive factors. The result must at first have been close to Chaos, but it did not continue "all the way down" to random formless noise. On the contrary, these situations always resolved into stable, new and certainly "higher" Levels.

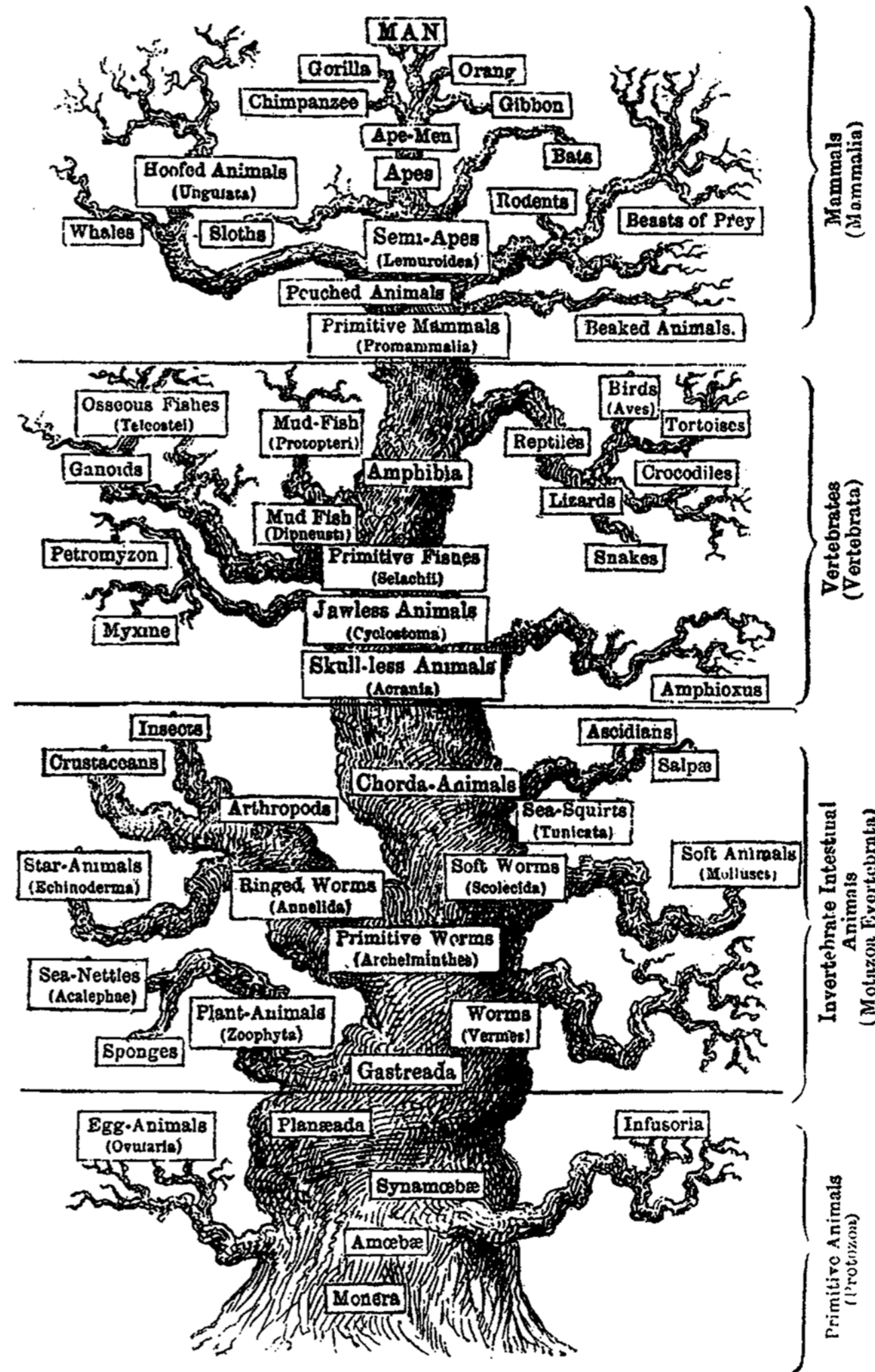
The clearest case was the Origin of Life on Earth, which resulted in a New World, in which myriads of completely new, never before in existence, things proliferated, and were self maintaining.

A new stability at a higher Level had undoubtedly emerged.

So the Buddha's Birth stage leading to wholly melancholy qualities of mind was incomplete.

The very same stage would also lead to Creation, Expansion and even Promise!

PEDIGREE OF MAN.



Contact

Crucial processes and productions in the Loka Sutta are there only given names, without any detailed explanations. This is, at first, surprising, as you would think that these, more than anything else, require amplification. And so they do, but it is YOU who must do it!

In addition, these ideas are not Science. Neither are they the Truth!. They provide a path to Truth: a path that cannot be surveyed and mapped, then forgotten. Persistent renewal is considered essential: for, like a path through the wilderness, it is in need of constant renewal, or else it will be lost. In a sense it HAS to be cryptic. For then you are forced to return to it, and to think about it in many diverse circumstances, wherein as those will be very different, so will be the path. It will certainly change because it is not a description of a section of Reality, but a generalised “path”, which though it will always be the “same” will reflect exactly where it is being used. The things which are the same are conceptual not geographical. It will also reflect where YOU, the traveller, are conceptually - as in the Tao in Chinese philosophy it is the Way to enlightenment.

In pluralistic Science the scientists crack a certain phenomenon in given circumstances, and we, the users, get close to believing that we have their previously revealed essence in our hands. We would then exactly replicate what was done before with predictable results. Such things are utilitarian in themselves, and in their common use, do not insist on reflection. They are tools! We don't think deeply about the hammer in our hand, we just use it!

Though millennia and mountains of Knowledge lie between them, the modern equation and the knapped flint tool are essentially the same. We delight in them and applaud their beautiful efficacy, but don't ponder on them – for they are unchanging!

The Loka Sutta is very closely related to some of Hegel's work. Indeed, he also use the word “becoming”. This similarity is because these are about “processes as such” and NOT this process or that process. Though Hegel stated openly that he was working towards a Science of Logic, or more accurately, a Science of Change, it was NOT a Science like Physics. The Science he was searching for would never be complete and “tool-like”. It would become a general methodology requiring repeated “use with awareness and attention”.

The Loka Sutta was something to think about again and again. And what would be revealed on each iteration, would be yet another slant or aspect.

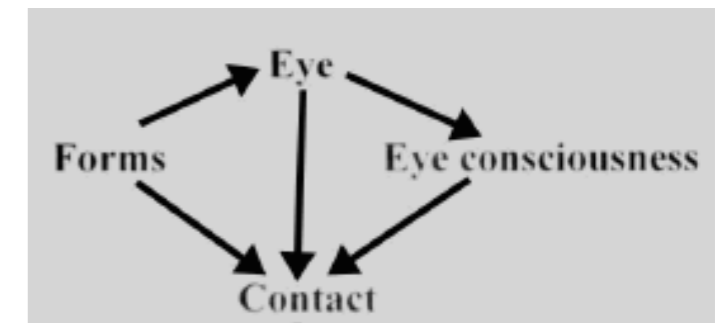
Now this preface to the purpose of this paper may not have been well expressed, and if so, it is not surprising.

With the western pluralist tradition, we don't usually do anything like that! And when expressed as I have attempted to do it above, it sounds to one and all as being decidedly obscure.

But, in the Loka Sutta it gains merit or brickbats by whether it succeeds or not in its purpose, and the indicator of that must, to some degree at least, be shown by its survival and role through the ages.

Of course, as in all religions, such things can become ritualistic, and even a kind of social engineering, but the very nature of these “sayings” will always be radically re-interpreted too – indeed revitalised. For those who go to such things are seekers!

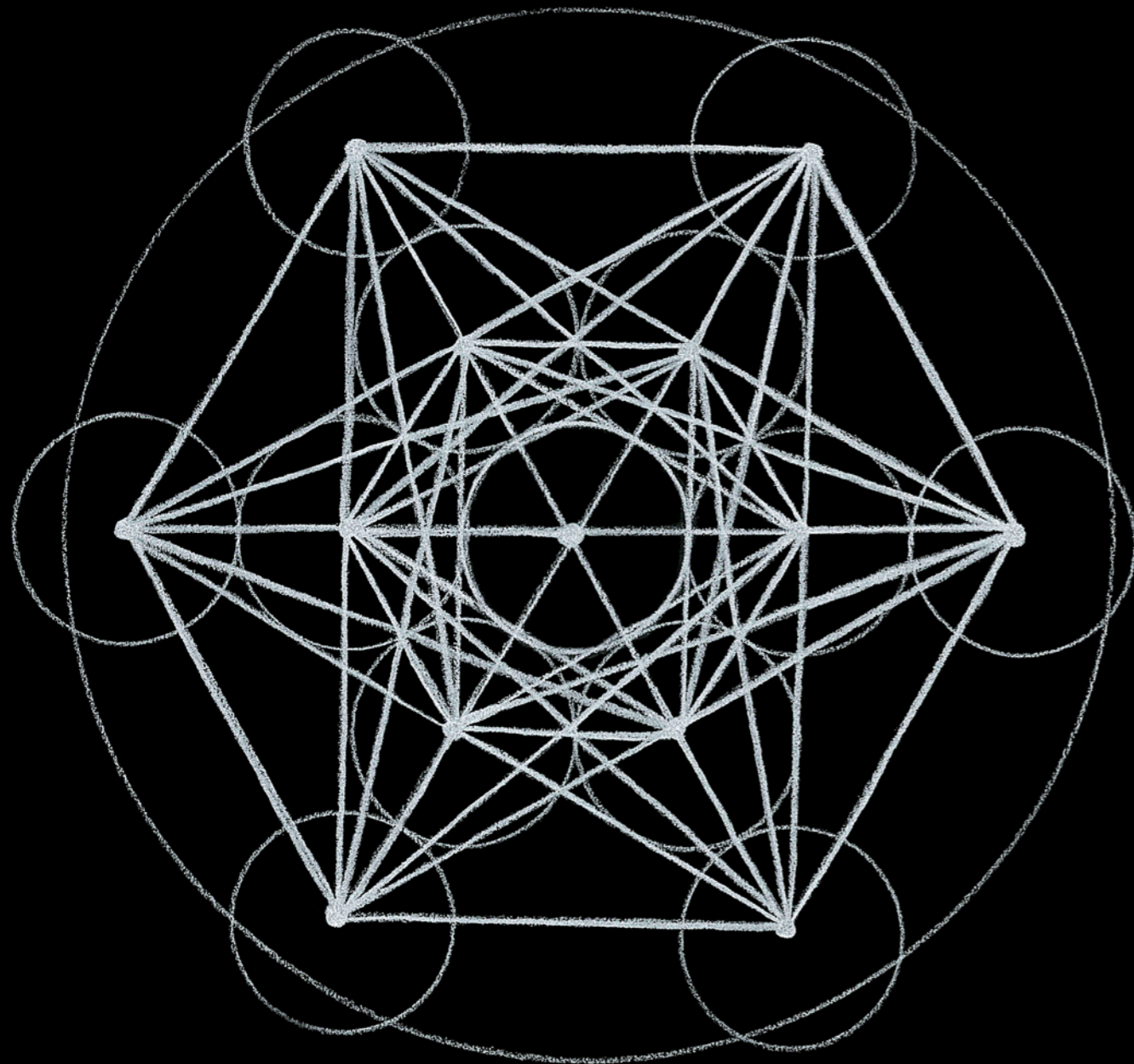
Now, the word that demands my attention is Contact. It appears in every stanza of the senses in the Loka Sutta, in the form:-



This was the first statement in the Loka Sutta, and for me it is important because I have spent the last 20 years struggling with the contradictions and the wonders of how human beings miraculously deal with the World by *Seeing*.

My preoccupations have been with Dance and the perception and delivery of expressive movement. My media for this study had to be some sort of manipulate-able record, for dealing only with Dance on-the-fly considerably restricts what you can do as a teacher. The continuing dominance of the “Do-as-I-do” method proves this. For residing in such a technique the resonances of body-feel allow both teacher and pupils to deal with certain movements WITHOUT any real understanding or analysis of what they are doing, but instead rely on built-in abilities to recreate the moves as required. But, we can't all have our own personal guru, and, when you don't, more sophisticated methods are necessary, AND deliver a great deal more than mere replication.

So I had to use Video as my main medium. Even so, I immediately came up against the problems of dynamics via the usual means of delivery. Video Tape players were total rubbish in these contexts and whether you used Analogue



Video (smeared frames) or Digital Video (frozen stills) true dynamism was lost.

So over many years I was concerned with precisely this little “triangle of Seeing” that occurs in the Loka Sutta (though I didn’t know it at the time).

I bring in the Loka Sutta into this area because the Buddha was dealing with Seeing profoundly, because he knew it was NOT a mechanistic process. Of course, he was directing his auditors to thinking deeply about HOW seeing “delivered the goods” in Man. My problems were different, I had to deliver sufficient of the essence of a movement using video for the students to SEE what was involved and get there ALONE.

Let us return to the Loka Sutta, before my diversion gets too big!

From Form, which is IN Reality, there is a passage to the Eye. The Eye is a miraculous physical entity which is NOT “before us” for study, but “within us” as a natural and unconscious part of study. But, by itself, it can DO nothing. It must somehow deliver sufficient to the Brain, which can “make sense” of what it receives (make coherent?) via eye consciousness. But still, we have not got SEEING!

We need all three – Form, the Eye and Eye-consciousness to come together in Contact.

Now this is special! Going from external Form to the Eye and thence the Eye-consciousness, seems to be steps in a process, and so they are. BUT for SEEING to appear there must be a coming together of all of these. In a way there has to be returns to each and every one of the sequence of steps after those earlier processes. They must all be “returned to with content”, with “awareness of the path”. And such “returns” are recursive and cyclic. TOGETHER they allow a stepping up to a new level and in so doing generate “seeing” in the Brain. This process is Contact!

Indeed, what is involved is a holistic process - mediations go all ways! In stead of a simple bottom-up determination of each new thing, we get a total set of interconnections, and indeed their determinations including top-down. All determines all, and their individualities are transcended into something higher – Seeing!

I always was surprised when the Cubists talked of the sphere, the cone and the cube as being the essential elements of their Art, but saw the real meaning when Modigliani insisted that “Art is the articulation of Form”. Forms were not merely added, but necessarily and meaningfully related. The transitions between them – the processes – reveal all!

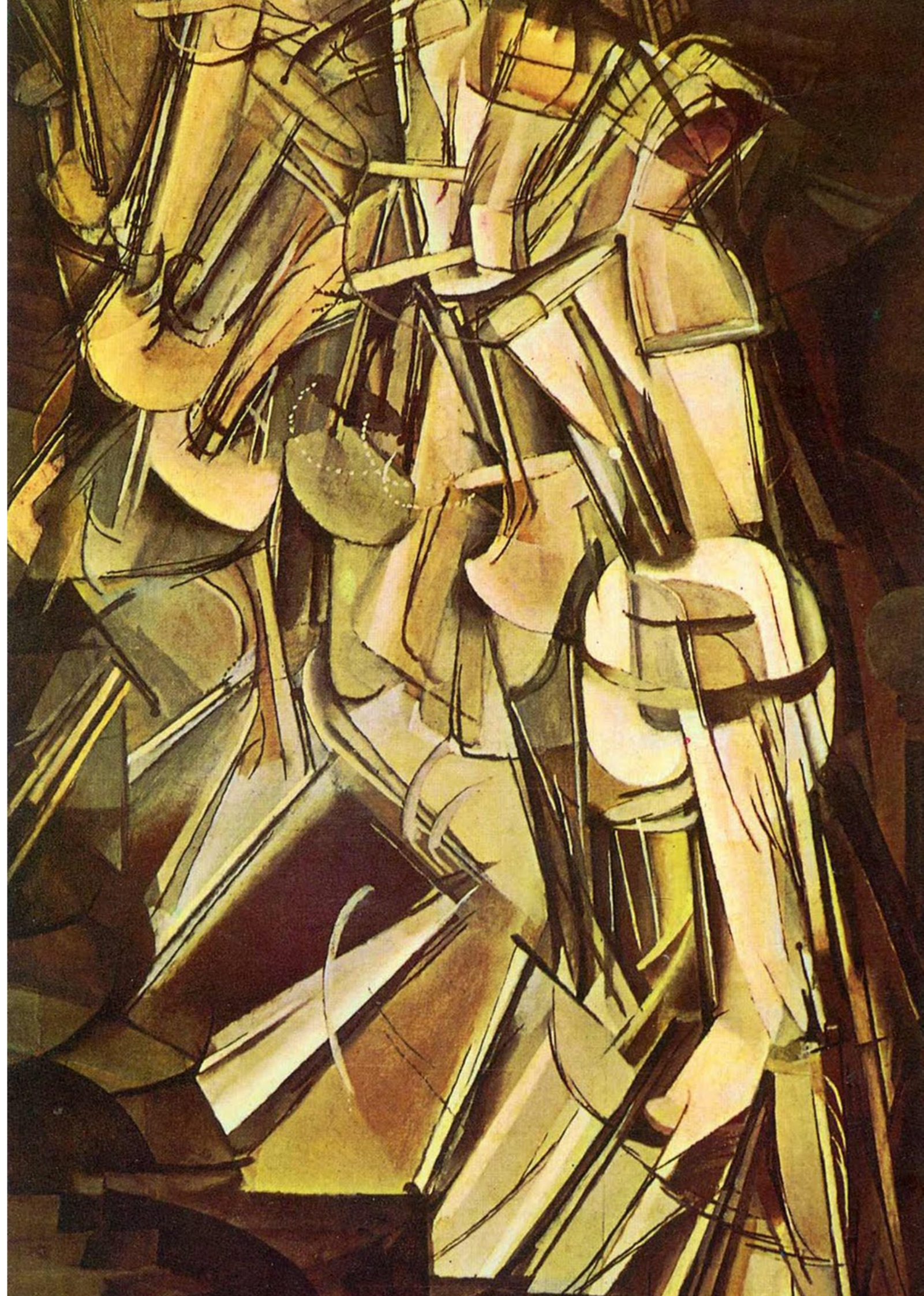
Now, there are problems with Holism, which must be admitted. The search for “paths” is a generalist conception, and dealing in generalities can be used to force-fit diverse

realities into incorrect forms, and nothing good can therefore accrue.

The only way to confirm generalities is to constantly renew them in new contexts and specific areas.

It is not by chance that the Buddha repeats these emergences over each and every Human Sense. In doing this he is insisting on YOUR recursions in different areas. He is emphasizing the renewal of the addressing of Contact in each and every case.

NOTE: Now, there has to be a vast distance between a philosopher of 2,500 years ago, and a modern day scientist such as myself. BUT, the remarkable things are the resonances between these distant poles. For many years I have been studying and applying the ideas of Zeno of Elea on Continuity and Descreteness in Time, Space and Movement to problems of today. My main area has been in Dance Pedagogy, and the surprise is that the latest result of these investigations has been a special Movement Camera, which I designed to deliver everything we needed in our Multimedia Packs for Dance.





Becoming & Birth

The part of the Loka Sutta which involves the stages Becoming and Birth, take the profundity of the earlier triangles of interrelations producing Contact a powerful step further, for these involve Creation.

[But, note, that he sees this process as totally misleading, and always a construct too far. Crucially Hegel concentrated upon the possible positives in these processes. Nevertheless, the Buddha's interpretation is extremely valuable, and must NOT be discounted. It is entirely true most of the time, even today.]

This will no doubt be disputed, but very similar ideas were present in Hegel, and his “becoming” is undoubtedly very close to the use of that SAME word by the Buddha. (Well, as close as two thinkers can be separated by around 2,300 years of constant changes, developments and progress that is!)

Both of them were concerned with Man and Thought. Hegel clearly grasped the *creation* involved in these particular transitions in Thought, for he recognised the constant emergence of entirely new ideas, and even correctly saw that Reality itself had changed via their occurrence. All of Mankind's ideas are creations! They are NOT mere reflections of Reality, but actually new mental tools for dealing with Reality, both to effectively use it and the understand it too.

Now, though Hegel was certainly well-read scientifically, he was not a scientist, but an idealist philosopher. But so was the Buddha! So the transference of their discoveries to Matter itself (as distinct from Man) and how it showed itself in development and indeed Evolution was NOT on either of their respective agendas.

For, such to be tackled, the ideas of both the Buddha and Hegel had to be rescued from man-centred Idealism and applied to Reality in general, and that is without doubt mostly Matter. The new standpoint HAD to be Materialist!

Now, such a sacrilege was opposed by almost everyone.

The Idealists condemned the mechanism and Plurality of scientist-materialists.

The scientists condemned the holistic ideas of the Idealists as “unuseable” and “pie-in-the-sky”.

It took a brilliant Hegelian philosopher to carry out the world-shattering transcendence of this impasse. That philosopher was Karl Marx.

But even Marx was living and making his decisive and significant contributions almost 160 years ago, if we take the turning point as the publication of the Communist Manifesto. Since then there has been a vast amount of new Knowledge and new Science – not to mention the “becoming” of truly World changing magnitude – The Russian Revolution.

The “becomings” in Thought have been proved to actually be universal throughout Reality AND into physical developments too. Becomings are the significant, high speed, qualitative Changes, indeed the revolutionary reorganisations in Everything!

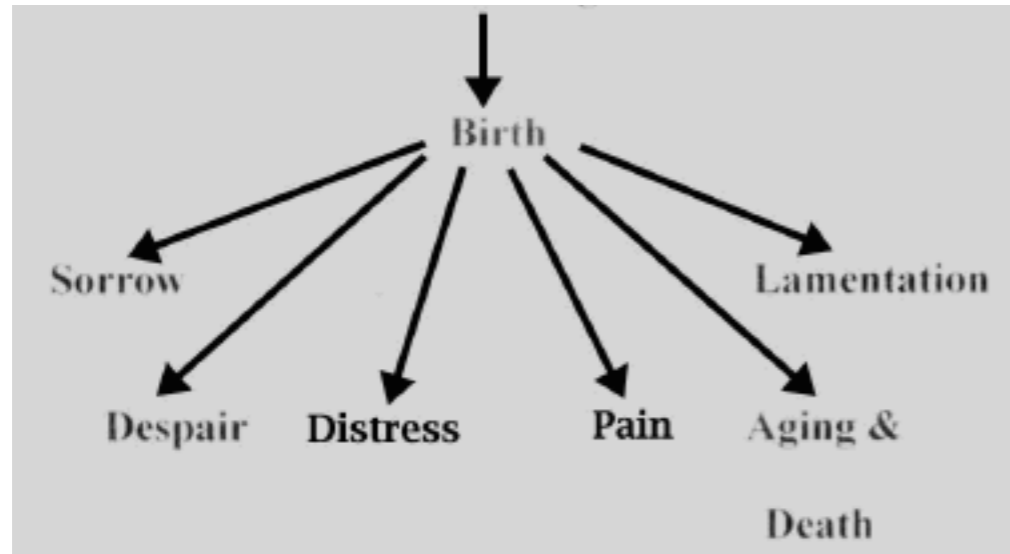
Just as Lenin determined to read Hegel materialistically, and by so doing equipped himself and his Party to lead the first Worker's Revolution in History, so we MUST do something, not only similar, but actually vastly wider.

We must establish The Method for all human studies and activities. By this I mean the correct philosophical standpoint that is essential in each and every discipline devised and conducted by Man. In particular, it must overthrow the current Idealism which dominates Sub Atomic Physics, and the multiple, speculative myths of idealist Cosmology. In addition, it must underpin political work by revolutionaries. It does NOT do this at present. Almost NO Marxists currently even exist – only activists espousing a “Marxism”, which has in fact become a creed. They clearly do not understand the way of the World, and make little or no theoretical additions and developments to Marxism itself. It has frozen into an old historical mode, which today equips no-one for the coming crises. They are protesters not Marxists.

I can see no alternative to a open and conscious re-building of dialectical Materialist philosophy from the GROUND laid by its founders, but encompassing all that has occurred since.

I wonder what these “Marxists” would think of my investigating the Buddha's Loka Sutta?

Let us return to that crucial part of the Loka Sutta which is represented by the following diagram:-

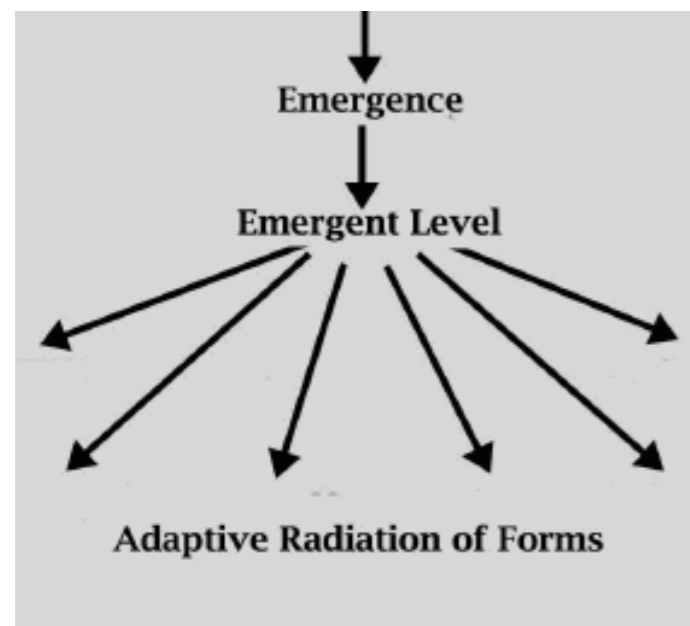


This is a remarkable figure! What on earth causes the explosion of qualities ranged across the bottom? These certainly emerge in the immediately prior stage Birth. Thus Birth, out of Becoming, generates all of these!

Though it isn't clear in the Loka Sutta WHY such an explosion occurs, there are significant analogues of this in the development of Matter – in the Evolution of Life!

If we take Hegel's Becoming as the SAME as the Buddha's Becoming, And take The establishment of a new Emergent Level as the SAME as the Buddha's Birth, We get The Adaptive Radiations that occur in Evolution as the SAME as the Buddha's proliferation of qualities out of Birth.

Let us look at the diagram which relates these things in Emergences.



Now, just comparing the two diagrams cannot be conclusive, but comparing the holistic conceptions involved in both these developments, and the by now considerable mass of evidence that these things definitely do occur, we CAN justifiably make these comparisons.

We are discussing Change itself.

Change in all things, from developing Reality to Human Thought.

And they are about the Rush of Change that occurs when things are revolutionised – completely and qualitatively changed over a short period – what is today called an Emergence.

In Evolution (as in all things ultimately) there are periods of very little significant Change, but which can be transformed into a Becoming (Emergence) after which there is what can be termed a ripening into a new Level with new entities – into an Adaptive Radiation for example. A whole range of New organisms appear and fill countless (often also entirely new) niches for Life to exist in.

Now, I am aware that I will be accused of “forcing” these comparisons, but I can only ask of such critics, “You tell me what is going on – both with the Buddha's Becoming and Birth, and with the Emergence and new Emergent Level that ensues!”

To those who themselves commence to rationalise some sort of construction of their own, I will interrupt and demand, “What of the Emergence of Life on Earth from inanimate Matter? Did that occur, or didn't it?”

Clever, wordy or even “logical” arguments only display the perpetrator's wit and ability. Such things cannot demolish the FACT of the Origin of Life. If the reader disagrees, then he or she is reading the wrong stuff! Go and join the consensus if you must. It is certainly much more comfortable there!

Here, we shall study the Buddha to equip ourselves for the battle. What is *your* purpose?

NOTE: This paper cannot be concluded without mentioning something of the modern developments, in order to show where these ideas have ultimately led.

The crucial developments came from the essential contributions of Hegel, but his version of “Becoming” was later realised to occur well beyond the processes of Human Thought, and could even take place within the development of inanimate matter at one extreme, and of Human Society at the other.

It became known as the occurrence of an Emergence, and in society, as a Revolution. And, recent work has led to the outlining of the actual trajectories of these vital qualitative transformations. The crucial realisation was that these events were invariably precipitated by crises so profound that they accelerated into wholesale collapses of the prior stabilities, and seemed to be heading for total Chaos, until a turn around would usually occur and begin an ascent to a new, and higher stable situation.

But clearly, such detailed researches are entirely inappropriate for full description here. What is worth emphasising, however, is the potentialities of the original ideas, and where they have led in the present era.



Pain

After the mounting crescendo of profundity that is the Buddha's Loka Sutta, the culmination is devastating. Via Contact, Becoming and Birth we get a veritable explosion of:

sorrow, lamentation, distress, despair, pain, and aging & death

For modern Man this is a major let-down – a veritable, negative shock.

Expecting a positive and constructive culmination, we are faced instead with unremitting pain and indeed suffering, and are mystified as to the Buddhist message. The Loka Sutta is “The World”, and it is clear that his culmination must have been absolutely correct for the mass of the people of his day.

Having visited Chennai (Madras) in 1980 and seen the state of the ordinary people even then, I realised to whom he was speaking, for way back around 500 BC things will have been incomparably worse. To acknowledge their spectrum of despair struck a chord with the poor and desparate. Even the honest recognition of perpetual pain promised something. And the Bhuddha delivered – an almost possible salvation by one's own humanity – Nirvana.

Elsewhere, he described the Wheel of Life, wherein death was inevitable, as was Re-Birth, but virtue could accrue through many lives. So many chances were available. The path to Nirvana did exist, even if it was almost impossible. People became Buddhists in droves and his godless religion conquered a continent. And, of course, we must not forget this!

A hero of mine is the pharaoh Akhnaten. Why? It is because he realised that the source of everything was the Sun. It surely is! He also revolutionised religion and Art.

It would be stupid to condemn him, as some do for his still religious vision, or as others do, for destroying the Old Religion which had been established in Egypt for centuries. Surprisingly no-one has a good word to say for this remarkable man. He even gets criticised for NOT being a militaristic monarch and not maintaining and extending the territory of his country. Some modern people are very odd-bods indeed. But considering the time of his life, what Akhnaten did was truly revolutionary.

Looking back from the beginning of the 21st century, we are not going to find innumerable resonances with the Buddha's catalogue of suffering – that is, most of us will not do so. Yet there are still those who do.

We go to his writings for other things. Even the very rich queue up for some salvation, but many recognise a truth in his picture of the nature of the World, and our relation with it.

After a lifetime of Thinking, and attempting to understand “the World”, I got to a point where the consensus pluralist methods of today were found to be seriously wanting. The World is not naturally analysable into Parts, right down to fundamental units. And, what is even more important, it became clear that Reality actually evolved.

To address this evidently new nature impelled me to try to make sense of the alternative approach to Plurality – that is to Holism. And, of course, the main source of this approach is the Buddha.

But, one cannot study the available texts and immediately find the Truth, if only because the Absolute Truth is, and always will be, unattainable.

We have to study the sources of what we require, carefully and responsibly, AND honestly extract what we can from a matrix of error, and attempt to construct a coherent picture.

Profundity will not fall into our laps It must be mined, and then filtered, and finally very carefully studied. Out of Buddha's “suffering” we must also extract “joy”.

We must also redirect his *cycles* and discern *progress* – we must address Evolution and its most important repeated events, Emergences.

Divisions Due To Roles

We cannot fully address the topics required in these papers without first clarifying how the actual life-lived by a particular human being would have to colour that person's ideas.

For example, while the normal life for an ordinary person at the time the Buddha lived, was necessarily of incessant toil in the struggle to survive and reproduce, the contemplative life of someone like the Buddha could not be more different. There would be no reason for there to be room, in the thoughts of the former, for higher concepts and interpretations. His thoughts would necessarily be focussed upon how to successfully carry out his activities in order to live. To actually spend most of your life thinking about things would leave no time for the necessities dominating the former's thoughts, and he would surely perish. The contemplative life would have to be supplied with all the necessities of living by others.

No matter what moral standpoints were considered to be being followed, the view of the World would unavoidably be very different. Yet, without a doubt, the life of incessant toil, and living always close to the threat of failure, would allow no new ideas. On the contrary, the developments in consciousness would be tiny or non-existent. The privileges of the contemplative were essential, if such new thoughts were to be achievable. The ordinary person could not spend any of his time "thinking about thinking", he would be too constrained by the imperatives of the hunt or the cultivated plot. So, the point I am making is that the privileges of the contemplatives, though essential for that mode of life, will also separate a participant from the rest of humanity: the World will certainly be seen differently.

Now, the way that this problem has been posed is, it must be said, an extreme case. These extremes are not the only possibilities. For example, in a valley in Southern France at the end of the Ice Age, a relatively sedentary group of hunter/gatherers were able to not only survive, but also actually flourish, due to the reliable passage of their prey animals along that valley, as the only available route to and from seasonal pastures. Hunting was easy, and there was time for other things. In that place there occurred a flowering of Art, in the form of paintings of the prey animals and a religious belief that by so doing, it was they who were maintaining the continuing and excellent access to those prey. Elsewhere, groups of hunters learned to move with the herds (particularly of caribou or reindeer), and start an association that was similarly advantageous, and would lead elsewhere to animal husbandry. With such advantages, something other than mere survival could indeed be thought about. Yet even in that context the forms of thinking would be determined to some real extent, by what they did all day.

Could there be, in the ice-edge valley such people as full-time painters? There could certainly be expert weapon-makers, to whom many would go to get the very best hunting equipment, for which they could pay with a part of the kills from their hunts. So, such weapon makers might well spend most of their time connecting their thinking with ever better hunting tools. They would not be isolated from the rest of the community, but both included and valued.

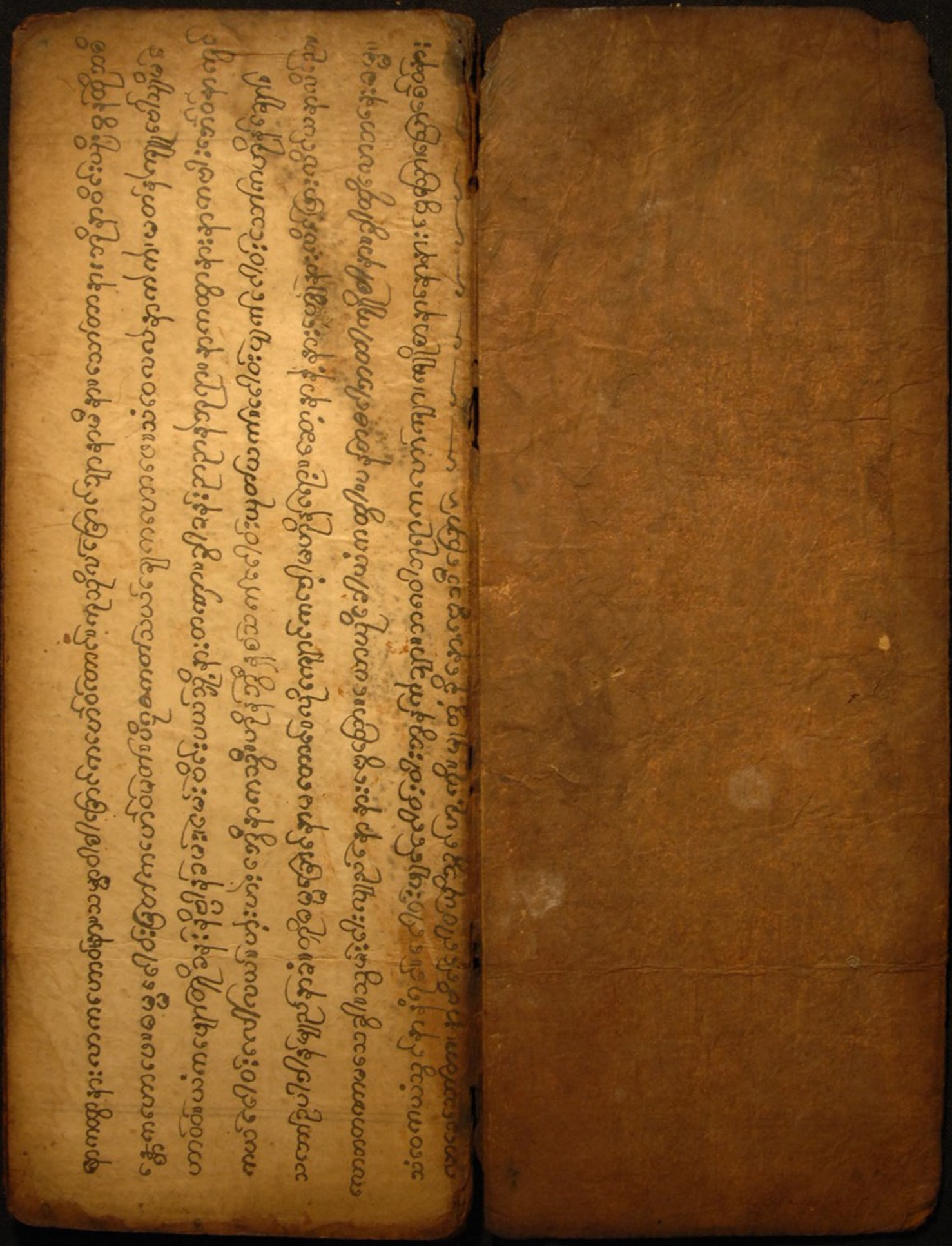
But, returning to thinkers like the Buddha, the essence of productive thinking is that you do it to the exclusion of everything else.

Since becoming a writer, I have experienced what seemed to be a significant acceleration in the flow of Time. It is an illusion, of course, but it shows how thinking gobbles up time at a significant rate. I can put my pen to paper, and, in what seems to be no time at all, hours can flash by. So, thinking is extremely time-consuming, for it is never strictly linear. It is like climbing a ladder, but instead of it being a one-way always-progressive process, it turns out generally to be the wrong ladder and in the wrong place, and always turns into the ascending and descending of many ladders in many different places, before ever finding a better path to truth. And crucially, never actually finding any Perfect Truths, but only relatively better approximations than were depended upon previously.

So unlike our "thinking technicians" (such as the weapon-makers), a total-thinker like the Buddha would rapidly become determined by what he thought about. Indeed, rather than mere thinking about practical problems (say in hunting with a bow), you would have to move to another level – say "Thinking about Thinking", which would mean very little to the expert technician, and absolutely nothing to the toiling hunter.

The very divisions of labour, and the need to support and supply our specialists, would separate them off. While they could make important gains, they would be all in one area. It would be no use asking the Buddha about hunting or a better weapon. He would be totally involved in quite different areas of Thought.





Interpretations of the Loka Sutta

Three different accounts

On finally having access to three different descriptions of the Loka Sutta made by the Buddha at different times and places, it became clear that my first interpretation was more about my own position than his.

Indeed, the usual error of reading something from an established standpoint, undoubtedly colours what you think is being said, and this writer has spent many years establishing his own idea of Holism, from more recent writers such as Hegel and Marx. So, in having finally got a reasonable idea of what Hegel meant by words such as “becoming”, then had it updated by Marx’s materialist position, it was natural that I should alight upon the use of what seemed to be the very same word in this Sutta.

In addition, the important subtitle of the Loka Sutta as I was familiar with in current usage, namely, “The World”, could, and indeed was, easily misinterpreted (by a materialist) as meaning Reality, when what the Buddha was really talking about, was the conception of that Reality in our heads. He certainly, saw the mind-processes of “becoming” and “birth” as damagingly misleading, and instead of leading to a deeper understanding, invariably led to such misunderstandings as to always lead to many, many problems.

Now, the Buddha lived some 2,500 years ago, without any of the benefits that have been achieved in that following period, and in Holism itself. There is a relationship between the Buddha’s use of these words and that developed by Hegel, but he considered these “mind-processes” as perhaps the highest product of Human Thinking, whereas it became clear over the various interpretations of the Buddha’s view, that he considered them as involving the construction of misleading concepts, and insisted upon a more direct absorbing of Reality-as-is, to avoid these misleading misconceptions.

So, “The World” from the Buddha’s point of view was our reconstruction via our senses and our “thinking” of that real World, and certainly NOT material Reality itself. Indeed, as an idealist philosopher, that “World” inside our heads was the subject of his standpoint, and how to rescue it from misinformed conceptions. It is clear from the Loka Sutta, that the Buddha considered these processes of becoming and birth as separating the thinker from Reality, and not delivering it to him. The Buddha saw all the usual sense data plus “thinking” as leading you away from the “Essential Reality”, which only his direct methods could deliver. Clearly most “reasoned” conceptions of it were to him invariably *rationalisations*.

It is interesting that the actual achievement of that appreciation is probably unachievable, even via a whole series of “re-births”, and perhaps only possible when (and if) Nirvana is finally achieved.

This is not so negative as it sounds, for it bears a close similarity to the concept of an always-unachievable Absolute Truth, and the consequently infinite task of forever attempting to approach it.

Even Hegel sees an almost infinite process, culminating in what he calls “The Absolute Idea”, which he has as the source and, indeed, cause of everything.

You just cannot “read” pieces like the accounts of the Loka Sutta, interpreting “the World” via modern usage of that term. It clearly matters when the Buddha uttered them, and when, and by whom, the sayings were related.

We must remember that the Buddha lived when there was no Science, no prior Philosophy, no experimental investigations, and even no Formal Logic.

We, living now, are imbued, as is our usage of words, with around 2,500 years of development, of both good and bad kinds, we cannot but interpret these with our built-in worldview.

The Loka Sutta

And what is the origination of the World?

Dependant upon the eye and forms there arises eye-consciousness

The meeting of the three is contact

From contact as a requisite condition arises feeling

From feeling as a requisite condition there 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 and despair come into play

This is the origination of the world

This excerpt constitutes the first few lines of the Loka Sutta, and then repeats the same points about hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. The point is about the self-made image of Reality, which the Buddha calls “The World”. In addition, there are already inferences about how whatever initiates those sense perceptions, it is a mind-made conception as the result.

Also there are three different explanations of the Loka Sutta by the Buddha, that were studied to begin to realise what point he was trying to make. And there have been many more interpretations ever since.

The three accounts were all translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bikkhu, and can be accessed in full by the following references to be found at

www.accesstoinsight.org

with the following detailed references:-

1. SN 12.44 specialist [PTS sii 73 CDB i 581]
2. Ud 3.10 specialist [PTS : Ud 32]
3. SN 35.82 specialist [PTS : iv 52 CDB ii 1162]

Also the talk Moving Between Thought Worlds given by Thanissaro Bikkhu in 2008 gives a modern slant , particularly on Meditation. It too is also available on the same website, with Reference Meditation 5, Dhamma Talks





Assessing and Moving between Thought States A Review of a talk on Mediatation by Thanissari Bikkhu [2008]

On reading the talk by Thanissaro Bikkhu on Meditation, a great number of resonances with other distinctly different holistic positions were clearly revealed.

Though primarily concerned with the techniques and benefits of Meditation, there is implicit in the whole talk a thoroughly thought-through foundation of what “The World” really is in our minds. Crucial principles are evident, such as the impossibility of attaining Absolute Truth, and the unavoidably partial nature of the truths we can arrive at by a particular state of mind (or some consistent system based upon a certain set of assumptions). And, in addition, on the necessity of switching states to attempt to find ever more of these “truth fragments”, which are positively useful to the thinker.

It, for example, relates closely to my own definition of *Objective Content* in theories, which though not the Absolute Truth, do indeed contain these fragments of truth, which take us a step forwards. Of course, as is unavoidable when considering a Buddhist approach, and, in particular, Meditation, it is, as it can only be, a personal journey. And, in the Buddha’s time, as for isolated individuals even today, that is the only way. But, these same considerations can become social – that is, instead of being the features of a particular human’s mind, they can become external to that single mind, as part of a social consensus, and hence communicated one to another within some economically defined social group for example.

For, that is what Science, at its best, attempts to do. Yet, even these false “becomings” into negative states cannot be guaranteed against: in Modern Sub Atomic Physics, the wrong turning of the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Theory has become just such a detrimental, general “becoming”, and led to innumerable contradictions and impasses.

It would therefore be wrong, to make Science the necessary next step to a personal attempt at seeking Truth, for though it can, and sometimes does, make gains available as society developed and improved, it can also do the exact opposite, and then become a strong and damaging imperative. It can seem to deliver the wisdom of many, and hence be more correct than any individual’s efforts. And, this can indeed be true, but only if the founding social and philosophical standpoint is sound! For, if it isn’t, then it cannot take us, as we would like, beyond the limits of a single mind, into socially achieved new heights.

Perhaps the most important part of this talk, is about Holism itself, for it is certainly very clearly described. From the outset of the talk, Thanissaro Bikkhu attempts to define the “states of mind”, using the example of dreams, and how we continue with it as if it were Reality, until we wake, and then put it away as merely a “mind-made construction”. He describes how even the “awake” individual can only construct other partial mind states out of experiences, and never a single, monolithic “Truth”. And his basis for such a stance is, of course, Holism.

Such a necessary establishment of an alternative to the “essence” of Science, which insists that a single integrated “Truth” is indeed attainable, yet can, at best, only deliver a host of these different sub systems of ideas, each with their own founding assumptions (and also their limited Domains of Applicability too).

Thanissaro’s talk recognises that the same multiple systems, or “states of mind” are the best that the individual can achieve, and emphasizes the “philosophic” attitude to them. Not raising any one to overall status, and making everything fit. But, instead, with equanimity, “deftly” moving from one to another for purely pragmatic reasons. Yet knowing full well that all are constructs, employing them for their fragments of truth. It has a similar appearance to Post Modernism, but lacks the ambition and striving that that particular pragmatism displays. It is instead both universal and unambitious!

The Context: Towards a Holistic Science

The following list of papers constitutes suggested further reading for those who wish to gain a better understanding of the context of these studies into the Buddha's Loka Sutta - it being the objective of establishing Hegel's intended "Logic of Change" and the establishment of a truly Holist method of Science. Of course, neither such objectives or any of the gains of modern thought would have been available to the Buddha.

The initial list is that comprising the preparatory papers prior to deciding on this topic as such. They are therefore very diverse. These are included on Page two, as they are very unlikely to feature as such in any extended publication. These preparatory papers amounted to 10,095 words. They are sufficient to identify the component strands which are later dealt with in a more integrated way in the following directed papers.

1. Holistic Explanatory Reason
2. Holistic Explanatory Reason
3. Holistic Equations
4. Holistic Equations
5. Holistic Equations
6. Holistic Equations
7. The Power to Prohibit
8. The Power to Prohibit
9. The Transformation of Causes I
10. The Transformation of Causes II
11. The Myth of Analysis I
12. The Myth of Analysis II
13. More on the Myth of Analysis
14. Level to Level & Back Again?
15. Holistic Development
16. Modelling Holism?
17. Towards an Holistic Science (INTRO)
18. Solving the Unsolvable
19. Prep. On Holistic Equas.
20. Extant Holistic Science
21. Alt. Paths to Change
22. Significant Parameters
23. Need for Holistic Science
24. Simulation – Holistic Plurality? I
25. Simulation – Holistic Plurality? II
26. Strict Causality or Loka Sutta?
27. Loka Sutta The Buddha
28. Eternal Cycles or Development?
29. Contact
30. Becoming & Birth
31. Loka Sutta Diagrams I
32. Loka Sutta Diagrams II
33. Pain
34. Implications of Contention I
35. Implications of Contention II
36. Cont. Functns. & Iterative Forms I
37. Cont. Functns. & Iterative Forms II
38. Holistic/Pluralistic Weave I
39. Holistic/Pluralistic Weave II
40. Holistic/Pluralistic Weave III
41. Close-to Formal Relations

These amount to 47,282 words (or 57,377 including the earlier papers) and will form the backbone to a full exposition (I hope)

Preparatory Papers on Holism

1. Dealing with Holism
2. Abstraction without Plurality
3. Abstractions of Change
4. Pluralist & Holistic Abstractions
5. The Road to Understanding
6. The Pluralist Loop
7. Everything has a Cause!
8. Pluralistic Systems?
9. Objective Content
10. Form?

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