CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

In the five preceding chapters, an attempt has been made to study the relation between mind and body in both the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna Schools of Buddhism. In this final chapter, we shall sum up what has been said so far to understand the thesis in a nutshell.

The study of the relation between mind and body has been an interesting subject matter for many philosophers, psychologists and religionists. In this world, the two most familiar aspects, yet most complex for us are our mind and our body. There are theological, metaphysical and psychological explanations of the mind-body relation. When one understands the actual meaning and concept of mind and body, it is easier to control one’s mind and regulate the body according to Buddhism.

In our day-to-day life style, the mental or psychological realm and material or physical realm are the two basic truths. Both the mental and the material interact and work together. Whatever we understand as ‘physical’ is, in some way or other, related to ‘mental’. For instance, when we feel hungry, our mind will be anxious and it reacts to the feeling of hunger. The anxiety arising from wanting food is removed after getting food our bodies becomes calm and normal. It clearly shows that there is a relation between mind and body.

The mind is a formless continuum that functions to perceive and understand objects. Because the mind is formless, or non-physical, by nature, physical objects do not obstruct it. Thus, it is impossible for our body to go to the moon without travelling in a spaceship, but our mind can reach the moon in an instant just by thinking about it. Knowing and perceiving objects are the uncommon function of the mind. Although we say, ‘we know such and such’, in reality it is our mind that knows. We know things only by using our mind.

There are three levels of mind: gross, subtle, and very subtle. Gross minds include sense awareness such as eye-awareness and ear-awareness, and all strong delusions such as anger, jealousy, attachment, and strong self-grasping namely, ignorance. These gross minds are related to gross inner winds and are relatively easy to recognise. We fall asleep or die, our gross minds dissolve inwardly and our subtle minds become manifest. Subtle
minds are related to subtle inner winds and are more difficult to recognise than gross minds. During deep sleep, and at the end of the death process, the inner winds dissolve into the centre of the heart channel wheel inside the central channel, and then the very subtle mind, the mind of clear light, becomes manifest. The very subtle mind is related to the very subtle inner wind and is extremely difficult to recognise. The continuum of the very subtle mind has no beginning and no end. It is this mind that goes from one life to the next, and, if it is completely purified by training in meditation, it is this mind that will eventually transform into the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

After understanding how our mind and body are separate entities, we can understand how, even though the body disintegrates at death, the continuum of the mind remains unbroken. Instead of ceasing, the mind simply leaves the present body and goes to the next life. For ordinary beings, therefore, rather than releasing us from suffering, death brings only new sufferings. Not understanding this, many people destroy their precious human life by committing suicide or by leading a highly immoral life.

Although mind and matter have different characteristics and qualities, such as mental is abstract while matter is concrete, they work together. Everything that arises in this world comes from three unwholesome roots (Akusala-mūla), to wit, greed (Lobha), hatred (Dosa) and delusion (Moha). Wars arise because of these unwholesome roots; Wars are fought, killing thousand of ignorant civilians, destroying millions of property and creating environmental destructions and imbalances.

War begins in the mind of man: when the mind is not pure, it is not filled with love and compassion; the body acts violently in relation to the mental attitudes. How to control the mind? How to channelize bodily energy through constructive path?

In Buddhism, deep study of the relation between mind and body is the ultimate objective for getting enlightenment. The Buddha himself practised for many years controlling His mind and body, and ultimately got Enlightenment, which is the fruit of controlling His mind and body. Today Buddhists and non-Buddhists derive valuable knowledge from His doctrine and practice, and His followers all around the world are able to learn and to practice to control their mind and body.

The ultimate objective of both the Hiñayāna and the Mahāyāna Buddhism is
‘escape’ from worldly sufferings. So in our present life we must control our mind and body, try to reduce the three unwholesome roots and cultivate three genuine wholesome roots (Kusala mūla) in our self, namely compassion (Alobba), love (Adosa), and wisdom (Amoha).

Other Indian Systems and Western Thoughts also have studied the relation between mind and body. We can find, in ancient systems like Veda, Brahmaṇa, Āraṇyaka and Upaniṣad; and the six schools of Hinduism, such as Saṅkhya, Nyāya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṁsā, and Vedānta, a detailed analysis of mind-body relation. Some Western Thinkers like Rene Descartes, George Berkeley, Gilbert Ryle and others have explained the relation between mind and body.

The Sutta Piṭaka indicates physical conditions for success in meditation, and also the acceptance of a not-self single-principle (primarily Viññāṇa), which is (usually) dependent on the mortal physical body. The Buddha explained the method of relationship of five aggregates (pañcakhandha). In the five aggregates, only one division is the matter (rūpa) and other four divisions are name (nāma) as follows: rūpa (matter), vedanā (feeling), saññā (perception), saṅkhāra (mental formations) and viññāṇa (consciousness). And twelve sense-fields (Āyatana) and eighteen elements (Dhātu) are explained in Sutta Piṭaka.

The mind and body relationship is seen as a pattern of interaction between two types of processes. The interactions, which take place between these two sets of processes, are part of an overall network of interactions, which also include mental and physical interactions. Neither the two sets, nor the processes they comprise, are independent substances, for they are streams of momentary events, which could not occur without the interactions, which condition their arising. Meditation has the power to alter the usual patterns of interaction into non-normal configurations, which accordingly affect the type of process-events that arise.

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka, especially Dhammasaṅgaṇī, divides cittā (consciousness) into 89 or 121 kinds and rūpa (matter) into 28 kinds. The 89 or 121

1 Refer to Chapter I page 28
kinds of consciousness, it is divided into two groups namely, Lokiyacitta (Mundane Consciousness) 81 kinds, and Lokuttaracitta (Supramundane Consciousness) 8 or 40 kinds.

The supraliminal consciousness may be classified into normal or sensuous (kāma-citta), supernormal or exalted (mahaggata). Normal consciousness pertains to the sensuous world and is of fifty-four types. As supernormal consciousness reaches the sublime or exalted state, it is called ‘supernormal’. It is of two types: formal (rūpāvacara) which is of fifteen types and formless (arūpāvacara) is of twelve types. The materiality (rūpa) can be traced in the former but not in the latter. Sensuous, form and formless types of consciousness are regarded as ‘mundane’ or ‘worldly’ (lokiya). World (loka) is the cycle of rebirths owing to its dissolving and crumbling (lujjana) characteristics. States, which are conjoined to the world by being included therein, are called worldly (lokiya).

Transcendental or Supramundane consciousness transcends the eight spheres of consciousness. Traditionally it is stated as a thing which has passed beyond the worldly (lokiya), being not included therein, and is termed ‘transcendental…’ In what sense it is ‘transcendental’? Because it crosses over the world, passing beyond the world it stands overpowering it. When he (Yogi) develops the ecstatic Jhāna of one momentary flash of consciousness. It is ‘going out’ because it goes beyond the cycle of rebirths; or because a person goes forth by means of it.²

S.Z. Aung has explained the meaning of transcendental consciousness as follows: Transcendental consciousness is termed Lokuttaracitta, because it is altogether out of all the three lokas or worlds. (i.e.), out of the sensuous, formal and non formal planes).³ And rūpa (matter) is divided into two groups namely, Nipphannarūpa (concretely produced matter) 18 kinds and Anipphannarūpa (Non-concretely produced matter) 10 kinds.

The most common way of dividing the component processes of a person is ‘nāma’;

'name' and 'rūpa', 'form', 'material shape'. Rūpa is said, in the Suttas, to consist of 'the four great elements', or 'the four primaries': solidity (earth), cohesion (water), heat (fire) and motion (air), and rūpa 'derived' (upādāya) from these. The Theravādin Abhidhamma enumerates the forms of 'derived' rūpa divided into 23 kinds as follows:

1-5: the sensitive parts of the five physical sense-organs; 6-9: visible appearance, sound, smell and taste; 10-12: the faculties of femininity, masculinity and physical life; 13-14: bodily intimation and verbal intimation; 15: space; 16-23: lightness, pliability, workableness, integration, maintenance, ageing, impermanence of rūpa, and nutritive essence; later texts also add the 'heart basis'.

Of these, items 10-23 cannot be sensed by the physical sense organs, but are known only by the mind, be this by inference or clairvoyance. Apart from the occurrence of the four great elements and the various forms of 'derived' rūpa, all of which are mutually conditioning in various ways, there is no 'material substance': rūpa is just the occurrence of these states or processes. However, D. J. Kalupahana argues that the four primary elements can be seen as 'material substance' as they are the underlying basis of 'derived' matter.

In the Mahāyāna Buddhism, an analysis of the relation between mind and body is very important. Explaining the relation between mind and body, the Yogācārans say that consciousness has been divided into eight groups, and kāya (body) emphasize the Buddha body. According to the Yogācāra philosophy, body of the Buddha is divided into three kinds namely, Nirmāṇakāya (Transformation Body), Saṃbhogakāya (Passionate Body) and Dharmakāya (Essential Body). But the Mādhyamika School has conceived of two kāyas (body) namely, Nirmāṇakāya (Rūpakāya) and Dharmakāya, which was used in two senses, one being the body of Dharma Collection of practices, which makes a being, the Buddha, and the metaphysical principle underlying the universe—the reality (Tathatā).

After a study about the relation between mind and body in the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna Buddhism, we come to the ultimate aim of Buddhism, that is, Nibbhāna or

4 Dhs 596
5 Ibid., 980
6 D.J. Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy, p. 100