THE BUDDHIST ANALYSIS OF TWO EXTREME PRACTICES

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In this paper I propose to give a brief account of two extremes as they are elaborated in the Buddhist texts. It appears that the Buddha was well conversant with the different types of practices prevalent in other contemporary religious conventions. He examined also their futility and after due consideration, prescribed the path known as the Middle Path. In his very first discourse at Isipathana and later on several occasions, he introduced this new path, refusing the two extremes. It appears that the practices prevalent at the time tended either towards leading a life of ease and luxury or a life of austere penance. He regarded both of these extremes as fruitless in bringing purification to mankind. He thought that the only path that can be morally, spiritually and in other respects fruitful is that which avoids these two extremes. It is for this reason that this path is called the Middle Path. Therefore, it would be better here to scrutinize these two extremes before exploring the Middle Path of the Buddha

There is an event in the Dhamma way-faring of the Buddha where a headman asked the Buddha's view regarding asceticism. "I have heard Lord, that Gotama the recluse censures all ascetic ways, that he downright chides and abuses any ascetic who lives a rough life. Those who say thus, that Lord Gotama the recluse does so, do they speak in conformity with the Buddha's view, without misrepresenting the Buddha by stating what is wrong? Do they speak in

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