

# Wakefulness before awakening: The role of *jāgariyā* according to the Pāli Nikāyas

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*Uṭṭhehi nisīda Kāṭiyāna mā niddābahulo ahu jāgarassu /  
mā taṃ alasaṃ pamattabandhu kūṭeneva jinātu maccurājā // Th 411*

Stand up, Kāṭiyāna, pay attention; do not be full of sleep, be awake.  
May the kinsman of the indolent, king of death, not conquer lazy you,  
as though with a snare (Norman 1997: 48).<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

*Jāgariyā* is a term that frequently occurs in the Buddhist Nikāyas, and may be explained as the quality of being wakeful, alert, and vigilant.<sup>2</sup> Such quality well resonates with certain descriptions of *nibbāna* as complete awakening (*sambodhi*) from a dream or from sleep. The cycle of life and death as we know them, i.e. our whole perception of reality, is thoroughly delusional, hence it is comparable to a dream wherein living beings remain imprisoned. This awakening is also the perfect maturation of crucial and profound qualities like *paññā*, *sati*, *samādhi*, etc. In this

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<sup>1</sup> The commentary thus explains *jāgarassu*: *jāgariyānuyutto hohi*, “be devoted to wakefulness”, Pd (Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā) VI, 7; PTS II.175.

<sup>2</sup> PED: “keeping awake, watchfulness, vigilance, esp. in the sense of being cautious of the dangers that are likely to befall one who strives after perfection”. Cone: “wakefulness, watchfulness”.

article I would like to explore how even the concept of awakening may indicate the ripening of a relatively accessible quality, namely *jāgariyā*. As will emerge, the description of this quality combines, through the meditative lexicon of the Nikāyas, a complex set of practical instructions with a suggestive metaphorical symbolism.

The question that this work addresses is: what is the relationship between the final awakening, the goal of the Buddhist path, and *jāgariyā*, the alertness, the ‘physical’ wakefulness that a bhikkhu should be devoted to? Or, in other words, how does being wakeful in a very ordinary way help develop that crystal awakening to the ultimate nature of physical and mental phenomena? In the ensuing analysis I will highlight certain mechanisms of meditative practice, presented in the Nikāya, that reveal how simple instructions about not indulging in sleep (and food) may affect concentrative skills and intuitive understanding. In a way, basic wakefulness (*jāgariyā*) can be reasonably considered as the first vertebra of a backbone constituted of mindfulness (*sati*), wisdom (*paññā*), and ultimate awakening (*bodhi*): wakefulness promotes the final awakening directly (through sharing features with it) and indirectly (supporting key factors of the path).<sup>3</sup>

It is worth noticing how the concept of awakening has a role in meditative practice from the very beginning. There would be no path without a concept that in some respects represents the end of the path.<sup>4</sup> The pattern of the four true realities is very clear in this sense: moving away from suffering (first true reality) and from the cause of suffering (second true reality) is not enough, because without any perception of a completely different destination (third true reality), it would be impossible to carve out the right path (fourth true reality) from any bewildered roaming.<sup>5</sup> The idea of awakening works as a lamp through the path and must

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<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, as Mattia Salvini correctly pointed out in a private discussion, vertebrae move simultaneously; this metaphor is helpful only if we keep in mind that what it attempts to explain is ultimately a transformative process wherein *bodhi* is the goal.

<sup>4</sup> A good example in this sense is the metaphor of the Buddha discovering an ancient path leading to an ancient city (e.g. in the *Nagarasutta*, S II.65, PTS II.104-107; *Nidāna Saṃyukta* V.28 ff., Tripathī 1962: 103 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> In translating *sacca* with ‘true reality’ I followed Harvey 2009. A good alternative translation is ‘actuality’ (e.g. Ñānamoli 1982, *passim*).

be considered as a factor like any other one. But every meditative factor, to be efficient, requires a certain level of familiarity with it, and this raises a possible contradiction: how is it possible to be familiar with awakening while dwelling in a condition of sleep? How can a ‘noble disciple’ fill the gap between an abstract idea of awakening and awakening itself? Or, in other words, how can a blurry and distant concept be helpful in the path? Clearly, the condition of metaphorical sleep that binds an individual to suffering must contain some breaches that allow the cultivation of efficacious factors such as mindfulness (*sati*) or wisdom (*paññā*). Faith, as will appear, is actually a kind of breach, which is provoked by a first elemental awakening and represents a turning point from craving for sense-gratification to stepping the path to liberation. Faith is not just an initial ingredient of the practice, but is eventually nourished by and combined with other factors, through a mutual relation that goes on till the final awakening. Among these factors, *jāgariyā* plays an intriguing role, being it located at the beginning of the path and yet possessing *in nuce* the quality of awakening. I will support my claims about the relationship between initial wakefulness (*jāgariyā*) and final, perfect awakening (*bodhi* or *sambodhi*) by examining passages that describe each of them and showing their lexical and conceptual affinities.

### ***Bodhi and bujjhati***

Before investigating the meaning and role of *jāgariyā* within the *Tipiṭaka*, I shall briefly examine the concept of ‘awakening’ as conveyed by the term *bodhi*; this is further personified by the inspiring figure of the Buddha, the ‘Awakened One’.

The word *buddha* is the past participle of *bujjhati* (Sanskrit *budhyate*), translated with “to be awake, to be enlightened in, to perceive, to know, recognise, understand” (PED). The Buddha is awakened to the way things are: to the threefold characteristic of phenomena, the four true realities, and dependent origination. As past participles in Pāli can be either passive or active, we may also translate Buddha as “the one who knows”, “the one who deeply understands” (Ole Holten Pind 1990: 209). In this light, awakening implies an act of understanding, of deeply realizing what was

hidden within the slumber of consciousness: we awake to (some) reality. The perfection of awakening, which corresponds to ultimate liberation, is the apex of wisdom. The *Saddanīti* relates the verb *bujjhati* (to awaken), as well as *bodha*, *budha* and *bodhana* (wisdom, awakening), to the compound *niddakkhaya*, i.e. the dissolution of sleep (Sadd I.1133, PTS I.483). In the relevant passage, *niddakkhaya* is part of a threefold definition that includes *ñāṇa* (knowledge) and *vikasana* (enlightenment). Interestingly, the same compound is employed to explain *jāgariyā* itself, along with its relative forms (Sadd II.736, PTS I.428).

Being a definition of the ultimate goal, awakening is an object of faith (*saddhā*), and is meant to inspire the practitioner at the beginning of and throughout the path to freedom from suffering. An extensive formulation wherein *saddhā* has *bodhi* as its object occurs in several suttas; in the *Saṅgītisutta* or in the *Bodhirājakumārasutta*, for instance, faith in awakening is the first in a list of five factors of effort (*pancimāni padhāniyaṅgāni*):

*Bhikkhu saddho hoti, saddahati Tathāgatassa bodhiṃ – ‘itipi so bhagavā araham Sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇa-sampanno sugato, lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi sathā devamanussānam Buddho Bhagavā’ti. D III.317, PTS III.237; M II.344, PTS II.95.*

A monk is faithful, he has faith in the awakening of the Tathāgata (as follows): “Then he, the fortunate one, the arahant, perfectly awakened, perfect in knowledge and practice, well-gone, knower of the world, unsurpassed guide of practitioners, teacher of gods and human, awakened, fortunate.”

The relation between faith and effort may perhaps be understood in terms of the inner logic of practice: effort is indispensable to a meditative path, and every effort requires motivating factors. One of the most efficient motivating factors may be the conviction that the end of the path is worth the effort. Faith (*saddhā*) can direct itself to some concept about ultimate awakening and about its qualities as embodied by the Buddha. Functionally framed in the instructions for the practice, and pervading the various depictions of the qualities of a Buddha, faith represents both a picture of the final destination and a compass pointing to it.

In order to be effective, faith must be based on concepts which are not completely unknown to the disciple, and which he

accepts to be very positive. The question may therefore be framed as follows: how could ultimate freedom, by definition ineffable and beyond concepts, become a familiar idea for someone at the initial steps of the path?

The metaphorical contraposition between the dream of ignorance and complete, perfect awakening can perhaps evoke a familiar concept, while at the same time pointing at something beyond concepts. Awakening is described with such a lexicon as to imply that sleeping is in some respect unsatisfactory. Sleep is synonymous with lack of knowledge, deficient perception, and absence of understanding. What is apprehended in dreams is eventually proved to be false; hence, it is deceitful. This view of sleep, when presented to the disciples as applicable to the inner quest for lasting happiness, may propel them towards meditative exertion.

Awakening encompasses an active aspect and a function of understanding; we may therefore examine the object of such understanding. In the *Kassapagottasutta* of the *Vanasamyutta*, we find an instance where *bujjhati* is used in reference to the Dhamma (that in this case plausibly indicates the teaching). The following admonishment from this sutta is given by a devata to Kassapagotta:

*Suṇoti na vijānāti/ āloketi na passati/  
Dhammasmiṃ bhañṇamānasmiṃ/  
atthaṃ bālo na bujjhati/ S I. 223, PTS I.198*

He hears but does not discern, he looks but does not see;  
when the Teaching is proclaimed, the foolish does not awaken  
to its meaning.

Here the object is the teaching on reality, while *bujjhati* is intended as understanding, wisdom, and this would imply that awakening (*bodhi*) is the capacity to know, penetrate and completely understand reality; this, as we have seen, well accords with the basic etymological sense of the verbal root. A thorough account of the lexicon based on *budh-* is found in the *Visuddhimagga*:

*Yam pana kiñci atthi ñeyyam nāma, sabbass'eva Buddhattā  
vimokkhanānāvasena Buddhho. Yasmā vā cattāri saccāni  
attanā pi bujjhi, aññe pi satte bodhesi, tasmā evam ādīhi pi  
kāraṇehi Buddhho. Vism V.52, PTS 209.*

Because of having awakened to everything, namely to whatever is there to be known, and because of knowledge of the resultant liberation, he is called the ‘Awakened One’. Or, he is by himself awakened to the four true realities, and he awakens other sentient beings: for this and other reasons he is the ‘Awakened One’.

Buddhaghosa explicitly refers to an extended set of formulas from the *Mahāniddeśa* and the *Paṭisambhidamagga*, wherein the term Buddha is explained as akin to *bujjhitar* (one who awakens to, a discoverer) and *bodhetar* (awakener; Paṭism I.162, PTS I.174; Mnidd 192, PTS 457).

### Definitions of *jāgariyā*

The practice of wakefulness is concisely defined as being devoted to absence of sleep.<sup>6</sup> Yet, many passages show an active cultivation of alertness that provides the mind with purification from hindrances and prepares the soil for the application of specific meditative factors.

Several features of *jāgariyā* are common to the contemplative factors of *sati*, *appamāda*, and *yoniso manasikāra*: these include attention, diligence, protection of the mind, watching phenomena, and, to some extent, a detached and unbiased attitude toward sense-experience.

In the following formula (concise and recurrent), *jāgariyā* is related to the protection of the senses and to moderation in eating:

*bhikkhu indriyesu guttadvāro bhojane mattaññū jāgariyaṃ anuyutto.* (e.g. *Apaṇṇakasutta*, A III.16, PTS I.113-114)

The monk looks after his sense-faculties, is temperate (knows the right measure) in eating and is devoted to wakefulness.

A longer description of the combination of *jāgariyā* with other elements is found in the *Sekhasutta*, the fifty-third discourse in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This sutta illustrates a teaching given by

<sup>6</sup> *Jāgariyānuyogaṃ ti jāgariyassa asupanabhāvassa anuyogaṃ.* Sv 1700, PTS 345.

Ānanda, in the presence of the Buddha, during the inauguration of a recently built hall. The episode occurs in the city of Kapilavatthu, in the park donated to the monastic saṅgha by Nigrodha after the Buddha performed a marvellous miracle, the *yamakapāṭihāriya*.<sup>7</sup> In the *Sekhasutta*, the Sakyans invite the Buddha to be the first human being to use the new council hall; they carefully arrange the place for him, by disposing seats, turning on an oil-lamp and laying a jar full of water. After due rituals, the Buddha offers a long Dhamma talk (whose contents are not mentioned) to please and inspire the Sakyans.

At a certain point, the Buddha says that he has a back-ache and wants to rest, and asks his attendant Ānanda to give a speech and to describe a practitioner devoted to higher practices<sup>8</sup>. The

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<sup>7</sup> A graphic detailed depiction of the *yamakapāṭihāriya* is given in the chapter 70 of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*: “What is the Perfect One’s knowledge of the Twin Metamorphosis (Marvel)? Here the Perfect One performs the Twin Metamorphosis (Marvel), which is not shared by disciples. He produces a mass of fire from the upper part of his body and a shower of water from the lower part of his body: he produces a mass of fire from the lower part of his body and a shower of water from the upper part of his body. He produces a mass of fire from the east side of his body and a shower of water from the west side of his body: he produces a mass of fire from the west side of this body and a shower of water from the east side of his body ... from the right eye ... left eye ... from the left eye ... right eye ... from the right ear ... left ear ... from the right nostril ... left nostril ... from the right shoulder ... left shoulder ... from the right hand ... left hand ... from the right flank ... left flank ... from the right foot ... left foot ... from each finger and toe ... each space between the fingers and toes ... . He produces a mass of fire from each hair and a shower of water from each hair: he produces a mass of fire from each hair’s pore and a shower of water from each hair’s pore. Amid the six colors of blue and yellow and red and white and pink and transparent the Blessed one walks while his created image stands or sits or lies down, the Blessed one stands while his created image walks or sits or lies down, the Blessed one sits while his created image walks or stands or lies down, the Blessed one lies down while his created image walks stands or sits. This is the Perfect One’s knowledge of the Twin Metamorphosis (Marvel).” *Paṭism* I.592-595, *PTS* I.125-126 (trans. Ñāṇamoli 1982: 126-127). Cf. *Anālayo* 2009: 776-777; *McClintock* 2011: 90-112. As reported in the *Vinaya* and in the *Jātakas*, the same wonder, in the same location, was the occasion for the Buddha to utter the *Vessantarajātaka* (*Malalasekera* 1974: II.70).

<sup>8</sup> Here the Pāli locution is *sekho paṭipādo*, that indicates someone that has reached the superior levels of the path, i.e. stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, but he is not yet an arahant, one who has transcended any form of training (*asekha*). See Ñāṇamoli, B. and Bodhi, B. (tr.) 2001: 1166, n. 21.

scenario is suggestive: the Buddha needs a rest, he has already spoken for a long portion of the night and could probably dismiss the audience, but instead he urges Ānanda to give another teaching, a circumstance that seems to underline the relevance of this teaching. Also, the Buddha remains there to listen to Ānanda's talk (addressed to Mahānāma of the Sakyans) and eventually praises him.

In Ānanda's exposition *jāgariyā* is one of the characteristics of a noble disciple:

*ariyasāvako sīlasampanno hoti, indriyesu guttadvāro hoti, bhojane mattaññū hoti, jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti, sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato hoti, catunnaṃ jhānaṃ abhicetasikānaṃ, ditthadhammasukha-vihārānaṃ nikāmalābhī hoti akicchālābhī akasiralābhī.* M II.23-29, PTS I.354

The noble disciple is perfected in ethics, looks after his sense-faculties, is temperate in eating, devoted to wakefulness, he is endowed with the seven good qualities, obtains at will, easily, comfortably, the four meditative absorptions dwelling with immediate happiness and related with the higher consciousness.

We may here notice some features common to *sati*, and a clear reference to the function of *saṃvara* (restraint). This may shed some light on the complex issue of the contemplative approach to sense-experience as found in the Nikāyas. A first examination reveals some common characteristics with *sati* and a clear reference to the function of *saṃvara* (restraint), thus shedding a light on the complex issue of the contemplative approach to sense-experience. Attention can be developed on the basis of a preliminary dam, capable of counteracting the waves of attachment and aversion. This dam is made of *sīla* and *saṃvara*. The Sekhasutta applies the threefold dynamic of *sīla*, *saṃvara*, and

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A traditional definition of *sekha* is given in the *Sekhasutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*: “*sikkhatīti kho bhikkhu tasmā sekho ti vuccati. Kiñ ca sikkhati? Adhisīlam pi sikkhati adhiccittam pi sikkhati adhipaññaṃ pi sikkhatīti, so kho bhikkhu tasmā sekho ti vuccatīti*”; “a monk practices, this is why he is said a practitioner. And what does he practice? He practices higher virtue, he practices higher mind, he practices higher wisdom, and this is why he is called a practitioner”. A III.84, PTS I.231; quoted in Iti-a I.2.6, PTS I.61 (comm. to the *Sekhasutta* of the *Itivuttaka*).



*jāgariyā* to the six sense-spheres, mostly following the pattern of contemplation of the *saḷāyatana*s as illustrated in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* (D 22). The difference between the *dhammānupassanā* of the D 22 and the approach found in M 53 is represented by the explicit emphasis on protective factors. The first quality mentioned in the *Sekhasutta* is the protection of the sense-doors:

*Kathaṅ ca, Mahānāma, ariyasāvako indriyesu guttadvāro hoti: Idha, Mahānāma, ariyasāvako cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimittaggāhī hoti nānubyañjanaggāhī, yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhādomanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṃvaram āpajjati. Sotena saddaṃ sutvā – pe – ghānena gandhaṃ ghāyitvā – jivhāya rasaṃ sāyitvā – kāyena phoṭṭhabbaṃ phusitvā – manasā dhammaṃ viññāya na nimittaggāhī hoti nānubyañjanaggāhī, yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ manindriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhādomanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati manindriyaṃ, manindriye saṃvaram āpajjati. Evaṃ kho Mahānāma ariyasāvako indriyesu guttadvāro hoti. M II.24, PTS I.355.*

And how does a noble disciple guard the doors of his sense faculties? On seeing a form with the eye, a noble disciple does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear ... . On smelling an odour with the nose ... . On tasting a flavour with the tongue ... . On touching a tangible with the body ... . on cognizing a mind-object with the mind, a noble disciple does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. That is how a noble disciple guards the doors of his sense faculties. (Ñāṇamoli-Bodhi 2001: 461-462)

In this passage the protection of the mind from sense-experience is epitomized by the verb *rakkhati* and by the noun *saṃvara*; these two factors are strictly associated to the very

quality of wakefulness conveyed by the term *jāgariyā* itself. The emphasis laid on protection implies that the mind is exposed to danger through sense-experience. In fact, although sense-experience is not a danger in itself, it is a circumstance (or better, the ordinary condition) wherein the mind is particularly vulnerable and may be affected by defilements. The mind can be easily dazzled by intense pleasure or annihilated by shocking pain, and it can also become dumb in the presence of neutral sense-stimulation. Therefore, part of the Buddhist training consists in protecting (*rakkhati*) the mind by filtering sense-experience through an efficient restraint (*saṃvara*), since “men and gods are fond (*gedha*) of sense-pleasures” (M II.218, PTS III.134).

One type of restraint is moderation in eating (*bhojane mattaññū*), which counteracts the tendency of the mind to transform physical nutrition into a sensual gratification. The latter is a snare, wherein attention is wasted and weakened: sense-gratification (*kāma*), through food or other sense-objects, is an impediment to concentration, and as such it constitutes the first of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). In this light, the locution *indriyesu guttadvāra* (having the doors guarded regarding sense-faculties) indicates at the same time the purpose of *saṃvara* and the ground for concentrative techniques. Albeit seemingly paradoxical, the contrived mind is the mind that is not restrained, because the very lack of restraint confines the mind into the boundaries of sense-gratification. *Saṃvara*, on the contrary, allows space for a wider exploration, i.e. the contemplation that leads to ultimate freedom from suffering.

The metaphor of *saṃvara* as a dam needs to be framed within a specific contemplative perspective. The *Dukkhadhammasutta* (S IV.244, PTS IV.188-191), the *Saṃvarasutta* (S IV.98, PTS IV.79-80) and the *Chappāṇakopamasutta* (S IV.247, PTS IV.199-200) describe *saṃvara* as strictly related to mindfulness applied to the body (*kāyagatāsati*); it is conducive to a boundless mind (*appamāṇacetaso*) and, eventually, to release (*vimutti*). Although *saṃvara* may contain an aspect of conscious effort, and hence contrition, its intended function is to prevent the obstruction of the mind on the part of defilements, by supporting the activity of mindfulness. In this sense, *saṃvara* resembles its ultimate result – which is a condition without boundaries or limitations. In the *Saṃvarasutta*, the role of *saṃvara* is presented as a process of

knowledge of sense-experience and of the dangers deriving from being fascinated by sense-objects:

*Kathañca, bhikkhave, saṃvaro hoti /*

*Santi bhikkhave cakkhaviññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasamhitā rajanīyā / Taṃ ce bhikkhu nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati / veditabbametam etam bhikkhave bhikkhunā na parihāyāmi kusalehi dhammehi / aparihānam hetam vuttam Bhagavatāti /*

*Santi bhikkhave jivhāviññeyyā rasā // 1a //*

*Santi bhikkhave manoviññeyyā dhammā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasamhitā rajanīyā / Taṃ ce bhikkhu nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati / veditabbametam bhikkhunā na parihāyāmi kusalehi dhammehi / aparihānañhetam vuttam bhagavatāti /*

*Evam kho, bhikkhave, saṃvaro hotīti /* (S IV.98, PTS IV.79-80)

And how, bhikkhus, is there restraint? There are, bhikkhus, forms cognizable by the eye that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tantalizing. If a bhikkhu does not seek delight in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, he should understand this thus: ‘I am not declining away from wholesome states. For this has been called nondecline by the Blessed One.’

There are, bhikkhus, sounds cognizable by the ear, mental phenomena cognizable by the mind that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tantalizing. If a bhikkhu does not seek delight in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, he should understand this thus: ‘I am not declining way from wholesome states. For this has been called nondecline by the Blessed One.’

Such, bhikkhus, is restraint. (Bodhi 2000: 1180-1181)

When sense-experience is perceived as a source of delight and ultimate happiness, the mind is likely to slip from wholesome states into unwholesome ones. The search of delight in the sense-realm is a dreamlike existence, an illusory and eventually disappointing hunt, and the only final remedy to this endless disappointment is a complete, uncompromised awakening. The path to ultimate awakening requires, amongst other factors, restraint with regard to the object of craving, and an ordinary wakefulness which needs to be fostered through conscious

intention. One may say that to become truly *awake* the meditator must counteract one's indulgence in the sleep of ignorance by working on the coarser forms of sleep. This means that he needs to apply the most basic available instruments, and then use increasingly refined ones. Restraint and wakefulness are relatively accessible, as they do not involve sophisticated analytical skills or familiarity with special meditative states; yet, they operate towards that 'dissolution of the sleep' (*niddakkhaya*), which is none other than ultimate awakening (*bodhi*).

The conclusive stanza of the Attarakkhitasutta of the Kosalasaṃyutta concisely describes protection as the wholesome restraint of body, speech and mind:

*Kāyena saṃvaro sādhu / sādhu vācāya saṃvaro /  
manasā saṃvaro sādhu / sādhu sabbattha saṃvaro /  
sabbattha saṃvuto lajjī / rakkhitoti pavuccati /* (S I.116, PTS I.73)

Good is restraint with the body, restraint by speech is also good; good is restraint with the mind, restraint everywhere is good. Conscientious, everywhere restrained, one is said to be protected. (Bodhi 2000: 169)

These passages may in turn help us understand the following sequence of qualities, listed in the *Mahāssapurasutta* (M 39), and the role played by *jāgariyā* in such list:

morality ( <i>sīla</i> )	based on qualm and scruple ( <i>hīri-ottappa</i> ), aimed at purification of mind
protection of the senses ( <i>indriyesu guttadvāra</i> )	application of restraint ( <i>saṃvara</i> ) to each sense-faculty
attentive moderation in eating ( <i>bhojane mattaññu</i> )	use of food ( <i>āhāra</i> ) not for gratification but for the sake of liberation
wakefulness ( <i>jāgariyā</i> )	night and day wakeful attention to the purification of the mind
mindfulness ( <i>sati</i> ) and clear comprehension	constant exertion of mindfulness and clear comprehension in every

( <i>sampajañña</i> )	activity
letting go of the five hindrances ( <i>pañca-nivāraṇa-pahāna</i> )	intensive practice of mindfulness directed to let go of the five hindrances, i.e. the five unwholesome states that prevent the access to the meditative states
the four meditative states ( <i>jhāna</i> )	cultivation of intense meditative states through dwelling in specific factors like <i>vitakka</i> , <i>vicāra</i> , <i>pīti</i> , etc.
the three knowledges ( <i>tevijjā</i> )	
Arahantship	

The above sequence is worthy of some consideration. Alike the *Sekhasutta*, the *Mahāssapurasutta* assigns *jāgariyā* to the role of linking what is a somewhat external behaviour to an inner attitude wherein meditative qualities are developed. Placing this list in some perspective, *jāgariyā* seems to be both a factor of restraint and a contemplative quality. It bridges the gap between external change and inner transformation of consciousness. It is not by mere chance that in the *Mahāniddeśa jāgariyā* is listed as a form of restraint, or wholesome restriction, together with restraint through conduct, restraint of the sense-faculties, and restraint through moderation in eating (Mnid 199, PTS II.482).

The whole process can be summarized into three fundamental steps:

- a. The factors that precede *jāgariyā* – and *jāgariyā* itself – counteract the toxic effects of sense-impingement.
- b. Through *jāgariyā*, the meditator protects this less obstructed state of mind and conveys it to the contemplative job.
- c. Contemplation develops wisdom regarding to the reality of phenomena, and wisdom liberates the mind.

Each step contains elements that belong to the other two, and this interrelation explains how *jāgariyā* is able to play its own

role. The sequence also suggests that profound mental qualities, like *sati*, as well as intense meditative states (*jhāna*) are favoured by physical conditions that reduce the power of defilements by depriving them of their habitual nourishment.

The *Nidāna Samyutta* depicts these dynamics graphically, by employing the allegory of a tree. The whole conditioning process that produces suffering thrives because it is continuously alimanted; and just like a tree, when the process is not nourished it eventually wanes – and suffering ends (S II.57, PTS II.80-84; cf. *Nidāna Samyukta* 1 ff., Triparthī 1962: 83 ff.). This metaphor of the tree may turn more efficient than the simile of the dam used earlier in this article. The purpose is here to eradicate the deepest root of suffering, namely *avijjā* (ignorance), and to cut the chain of dependent origination. In order to apply the simile of the tree to the sequence illustrated in the *Mahāssapurasutta*, we may thus expand it: bushes and weeds cover the roots that we are trying to cut, and as we try to approach these roots, we become entangled in the obstructing shrubs. To use the language of our simile, we first need to take care of the shrubs in order to eventually access the roots. Shrubs correspond to sense-pleasures through which defilements proliferate. Alertness and restraint with regard to sense-realm decrease the power of defilements and allow for their eradication.

There are thus significant analogies between the kind of attention/vigilance (*jāgariyā*) that ‘filters’ sense impingements and protects the mind, and that attention/mindfulness (*sati-sampajañña*, *paññā*, *tevijjā*, etc.) that reveals ‘the way things are’. Differences in cognitive faculties may well be detected, but they appear like differences in grade and not in nature.

A stanza of the *Dhammapada* (29) stresses the relation between *jāgariyā* and *appamāda* (attention, diligence, heedfulness, carefulness):

*appamatto pamattesu suttesu bahujāgaro /  
abalassaṃ va sīghasso hitvā yāti sumedhaso //*

Careful among the careless, wide awake among those asleep, the wise man goes leaving (them) behind, as a swift horse leaves behind a weak one. (Norman 1997: 4)

The *Aṭṭhakathā* on the same passage goes on to equate *jāgariyā* to *sati*.<sup>9</sup>

We may find another link between *jāgariyā* and *appamāda* in the exhortation *jāgaratha māpamajjatha*, “stay awake, do not be negligent” (Peta 800, PTS 92). By setting *pamāda* in contraposition to *jāgariyā*, this admonishment represents the latter as analogous to, if not perfectly synonymous with, *appamāda* (diligence, attention – the opposite of *pamāda*). This admonishment outlines a contraposition between *pamāda* and *jāgariyā*, thus representing the latter as affine, if not synonymous, with *appamāda* (diligence, attention). From a certain perspective, the definitions of *appamāda* found in the *Dhammapada* (21ff.) could well apply to *jāgariyā* as well. *Appamāda* is furthermore very similar to *sati*; although perhaps its primary context is one of effort and discipline, rather than the meditative process *per se*. We also find here a close connection between *appamāda* and *nibbāna* (*amata*, ‘the deathless’: see Dh 21-22). This is perhaps parallel to the progression from *jāgariyā* to *bodhi* that is of primary interest to the present article.<sup>10</sup>

### Instructions on *jāgariyā*:

Texts describing *jāgariyā* show it to be a quality that may be developed and refined. Consequently, likewise to other wholesome factors, the practice of wakefulness (*jāgariyānuyoga*) would require a set of specific instructions, and a rather detailed system is delineated in the following section of the *Sekhasutta*:

*Kathaṅca, Mahānāma, ariyasāvako jāgariyaṃ amuyutto hoti: idha, Mahānāma, ariyasāvako divasaṃ caṅkamaṇa nisajjāya āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti, rattiyaṃ paṭhamaṃ yāmaṃ caṅkamaṇa nisajjāya āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti, rattiyaṃ majjhimaṃ yāmaṃ dakkhiṇeṇa passena sīhaseyyaṃ kappeti, pāde pādaṃ accādhāya, sato sampajāno, utthānasaññaṃ manasi karitvā, rattiyaṃ pacchimaṃ*

<sup>9</sup> *Bahujāgaroti mahante sativepulle jāgariye thito*. “Wide awake means: established in wakefulness, in great abundance of mindfulness”. Dh-a 29, PTS I.261.

<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the locution *jāgaratha māpamajjatha* evokes the standard formula *jhāyatha [...] mā pamādattha*, “meditate, do not be negligent” (e.g. MI.88, PTS I.46). A similar exhortation appears in *Saund* 14.29-30.

*yāmaṃ paccuṭṭhāya caṅkamaṇa nisajjāya āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti. Evaṃ kho, Mahānāma, ariyasāvako jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti/* (M II.24, PTS I.355).<sup>11</sup>

And how, Mahānāma, is a noble disciple devoted to wakefulness? Here, Mahānāma, a noble disciple purifies his own mind from hindering elements all day long, walking and sitting; he purifies his own mind from hindering elements in the first watch of the night, walking and sitting; he purifies his own mind from hindering elements during the middle watch of the night, lying down in the posture of the lion, on the right side, one foot on the other, mindful and comprehensive, fixing his mind on the idea of rising; he purifies his own mind from hindering elements in the last watch of the night, after rising up, walking and sitting. This is how, Mahānāma, a noble disciple is devoted to wakefulness.

According to the *Sammohavinodanī*, “walking and sitting” indicates the only two appropriate postures during the three portions of the day (morning, noon and evening), but implicitly includes standing (Sv 1701, PTS 345).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, a monk has to

<sup>11</sup> The same passage is found also in the *Mahāssapurasutta* (M I.423, PTS I.273), in the *Sāriputtasaddhivihārikasutta* (S IV.120, PTS IV.103) and in the *Rathopamasutta* (S IV.239, PTS IV.220) of the *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*, in the *Apaṇṇakasutta* (A III.16, PTS I.113), and in the *Aparihāṇīyasutta* (A IV.37, PTS II.39-40) of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. In all these cases the passage occurs after the descriptions of *sīla*, *indriyesu guttadvāra* and *bhojane mattaññu*. Being the standard explanation of the locution *jāgariyānuyogaṃ anuyutto*, it is also found in Abhidhamma literature (Vibh 519, PTS 249, thoroughly commented in the *Sammohavinodanī*) and in the commentary to the *Jāgariyasutta* of the *Itivuttaka*, that will be treated later. This passage clearly inspired the following concise definition of the practice of wakefulness in the commentary to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and in the sub-commentary of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*: *Jāgariyānuyoganti divasassa tīsu koṭṭhāsesu rattiyā paṭhamamajjhimakotṭhāsesu ca jāgarati na niddāyati, samaṇadhammameva karotīti jāgaro, jāgarassa bhāvo, kammaṃ vā jāgariyaṃ, jāgariyassa anuyogo jāgariyānuyogo, taṃ jāgariyānuyogaṃ*, “with the compound devotion to wakefulness it is intended that in the three portions of the day and in the first and in the middle portions of the night, one who is devoted to wakefulness stays awake, he does not sleep, he performs the practice of the wanderers, that is to say he is wakeful, having wakefulness, the nature or the kamma of being wakeful, devoted to wakefulness; such is wakefulness”, A-ṭ I.584; Paṭism-a III.6, PTS III.651.

<sup>12</sup> The *Visuddhimagga* (II.73, PTS 78), illustrating the contemplations in the charnel grounds practised through the three watches of the night, says that



counteract sleep and torpor all day long by being alert and not lying down. Practicing *jāgariyā* during the night time seems to be more demanding, since it entails a drastic reduction of sleep: out of the three portions of the night, only the middle one is for lying down and actual sleep. During the first and the last portions of the night, on the other hand, a monk must devote himself to the purification of the mind from hindrances (presumably by means of *satipaṭṭhāna* techniques), while sitting or walking. Furthermore, sleep is only allowed under certain conditions: before sleeping, a monk should assume the lion posture (on the right side, with the left leg over the right one); he should be mindful and comprehensive, and fix the mind on the idea of the time of rising up. The *Sammohavinodanī* explains that in the lion posture neither the ankle presses on the ankle, nor does the knee press on the knee; this comfortable position allows both sleep and one-pointedness of the mind (Sv 1708, PTS 346). The terminology of *sati-sampajañña*, an indissoluble dyad, is a clear echo of the *satipaṭṭhānas*, and suggests that one who is mindful and comprehending before falling asleep may also maintain this state while asleep. In all the three portions of the night, including the one for sleep, a monk has to purify his mind from hindering elements. Establishing the idea/cognition of the time of arising means that one has to set one's 'inner alarm-clock' to a decided time (Sv 1709, PTS 346).

One more outline for the application of *jāgariyā* is found in the *Nandasutta* of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (A VIII.9, PTS IV.168). There, the Buddha extols Nanda due to the following good qualities: he guards his sense-faculties (*indriyesu guttadvāra*), he knows the right measure about food (*bhojane mattaññu*), is devoted to wakefulness (*jāgariyaṃ anuyutta*), and has mindfulness and comprehension (*sati* and *sampajañña*). The cultivation of *sati* and *sampajañña* is pursued through recognizing the arising, the temporary persisting and the cessation of feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), and thoughts (*vitakka*).

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lying down is the only posture that is not allowed. In the same chapter, Buddhaghosa asserts that according to the *Āṅguttarabhāṅakas* a bhikkhu, after being awake in the central watch of the night practising in the charnel ground, can leave in the third watch (Vism II.65, PTS 77; see Endo 2003: 14).

feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), and thoughts (*vitakka*), and this completes the explanation of how to be devoted to wakefulness. In other instances, we may have to rely on *sati* and *sampajañña* as explained elsewhere (i.e. in the context of the *satipaṭṭhana*); in the *Nandasutta*, on the other hand, we find an instruction on mindfulness and comprehension geared specifically towards *jāgariyā*. A stanza of the *Dhammapada* (157), referring to the practice of the three watches, underlines the protecting function of wakefulness, implicitly confirming the relation between restraint, guarding of the sense-doors and wakefulness itself:

*attānaṃ ce piyaṃ jaññā rakkheyya naṃ surakkhitaṃ /  
tiṇṇaṃ aññataraṃ yāmaṃ paṭijaggeyya paṇḍito //*

If one knew the self to be dear, one would guard it well. A learned man would stay awake for one of the three watches. (Norman 1997: 24)

*Paṭijaggati* means to be awake, to watch over, to take care of; this may help in understanding some significations of its cognate *rakkhati*, by offering an apt etymological bridge between the semantic range of ‘guarding’ and that of ‘being wakeful’.<sup>13</sup> According to the commentary, the three watches (*yāma*) symbolize the three ages (*vaya*) of life (Dh-a 157, PTS III.138), a simile that seems designed to inspire a sense of urgency.

The depiction of the practice of wakefulness we just discussed is in some sense standard, and is also found (with some differences) in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*. In Asaṅga’s text we have the additional compound *ālokaśaṃjñā* (the ‘notion of light’).<sup>14</sup> Its

<sup>13</sup> In the well-known *Sedakasutta*, the function of *rakkhati* consists in the amalgamation of the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice with patience (*khanti*), non-violence (*avihiṃsā*), benevolence (*mettacittatā*), and mercy (*anudayatā*); S V.385, PTS V.168.

<sup>14</sup> *pūrvarātrāpararātraṃ jāgarikānuyogaḥ katamaḥ / sa tathā bhojane mātrajño divā caṅkramaṇiṣadyābhyāṃ āvaraṇīyebhyo dharmebhyaś cittaṃ pariśodhayati / sa rātryāḥ prathame yāme caṅkramaṇiṣadyābhyāṃ āvaraṇīyebhyo dharmebhyaś cittaṃ pariśodhya, tato viharān nirgamya bahir viharasya pādau prakṣālya, dakṣiṇena pārśvena śiṃhaśayyāṃ kalpayaty pāde pādau ādhāya, ālokaśaṃjñī smṛtaḥ samprajānann utthānaśaṃjñāṃ eva manasikurvan, sa rātryāḥ paścime yāme laghu laghu eva pratīvibudhya, caṅkramaṇiṣadyābhyāṃ āvaraṇīyebhyo dharmebhyaś cittaṃ pariśodhayati / iyaṃ ucyate pūrvarātrāpararātraṃ jāgarikānuyuktatā// Śbh I.19-20.*

correspondent Pāli form *ālokasaññā*, although not very common in the *Suttas*, plays an important role in the instructions on concentration (*samādhi*) found in the *Saṅgītisutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* and in the *Samādhībhāvanāsutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. There, *ālokasaññā* comes second in a list of four techniques for the cultivation of *samādhi*; more specifically, it is aimed at the attainment of knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana*):

*Katamā cāvuso, samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā ñāṇadassanapaṭilābhāya samvattati? Idhāvuso, bhikkhu ālokasaññaṃ manasi karoti, divāsaññaṃ adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā rattiṃ, yathā rattiṃ tathā divā. Iti vivaṭena cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti / Ayam, āvuso samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā ñāṇadassanapaṭilābhāya samvattati / (D I.307, PTS III. 222).<sup>15</sup>*

And how, venerable, the practice of concentration, cultivated and frequently exerted, leads to the attainment of knowledge and insight? Here, friend, a monk pays attention to perception of light, concentrates on perception of daylight,<sup>16</sup> by day as well as by night, by night as well as by day. So, by means of an unveiled, disentangled mind, he cultivates a fully luminous mind. Venerable, this practice of concentration, cultivated and frequently exerted, leads to the attainment of knowledge and insight.

In the *Saundarananda* of Aśvaghoṣa *ālokasaññā* is one of the devices used to counteract sleep and torpor; its use is recommended even during the watch of the night for rest, when it is accompanied with *prabodha* (awareness, awakening):

*dakṣiṇena tu pārśvena sthitayālokasaññāyā /  
prabodham hr̥daye kṛtvā śayīthāḥ śāntamānasah // Saund 14.33*

Lie down on your right side, remaining conscious of the idea of light, maintaining awareness in your heart and with your mind at peace. (Covill 2007: 261)<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See also A IV.41, PTS II.45; A VI.29, PTS III.323; A VII.61, PTS IV.86. For the locution *sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ* cf. S V.823, PTS V.263; S V.843-4, PTS V.287-8; cf. also A I.49-52, PTS I.9-10 (*pabhassaramidaṃ ... cittaṃ*).

<sup>16</sup> PED translation of *divāsaññā* as “consciousness by day, daily consciousness” has to be considered incorrect.

<sup>17</sup> In the *Saundarananda*, instructions on *jāgariyā* include focusing on three particular mental states (*bhaya*, fear, *prīti*, bliss, and *śoka*, sorrow) in order to prevent the mind to be overwhelmed by sleep (Saund 14.29-34).

In the *Pacalāyamānasutta* of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (A VII.61, PTS IV.86) the Buddha recommends the practice of *ālokaśāññā* to Mogallana in order to neutralize torpor (*middha*).<sup>18</sup> This offers a clear analogy with *jāgariyā*, which is by definition a remedy for *middha*: in three consecutive *suttas* of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, the *Sutadharasutta*, the *Kathāsutta* and the *Āraññakasutta*, we find the formula *appamiddho hoti jāgariyaṃ anuyutto*, “one who is devoted to wakefulness has little torpor” (A V.96-98, PTS III.120-121). Being a remedy for hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), directly and indirectly associated to *sati-sampajañña*, *jāgariyā* is deeply involved in the development of *samādhi* and the *jhānas*:

*Okkhittacakkhu na ca pādalo*  
*jhānānuyutto bahujāgarassa /*  
*upekhamārabba samāhitatto*  
*takkā sayam kukkucañcupachinde/ Snp 972, PTS 188*

With downcast eyes and not footloose,  
 devoted to meditation, he should be wide awake,  
 fostering equanimity, self-centered,  
 he should cut off any penchant to doubt and worry.

*Jāgariyā*, *jhāna*, *appamāda*, and *sati* are blended in a way that cannot be reduced to plain consequentiality. Despite the close interrelation, though, instructions on *jāgariyā* are substantially different from the instructions for the development of *sati*, *sampajañña*, and cognate qualities; hence, the presence of wakefulness in these lists of contemplative factors cannot be taken as merely redundant.

### Effects of *jāgariyā*

A whole text of the Itivuttaka, the *Jāgariyasutta*, is specifically devoted to the faculty of wakefulness. The relevance of

<sup>18</sup> *Thinamiddham pahāya vigatathinamiddho viharati ālokaśāññī sato sampajāno, thinamiddhā cittaṃ parisodheti*. Also in D I.217, PTS I.71; D I.458, PTS I.207; D III.70, PTS III.49; M i.296, PTS I.181; M III.16, PTS II.226; A IV.198, PTS II.210; A V.75 PTS III.93. In Abhidhamma literature, this formula is found in the *Jhānavibhaṅga* (Vibh 508, PTS 244), and in the *Puggalapaññatti* (182, PTS 59).

wakefulness is highlighted by pointing out its possible results, namely attaining immediate knowledge (*ditṭheva dhamme aññā*) or the state of non-returner (*anāgāmitā*). These are indeed the possible outcomes of a combination of *jāgariyā* with other cognitive-contemplative factors; that is to say, the practitioner needs to be mindful (*sata*), fully aware (*sampajāna*), concentrated (*samāhita*), joyful (*pamudita*), serene and confident (*vippasanna*), and carefully contemplating the right moment (*kālavipassin*).

That the sutta would be explicitly dedicated to *jāgariyā* is sufficient to consider the latter as the linchpin for the whole assemblage. Wakefulness being the first factor listed, we may assume that the other factors (their profundity notwithstanding) strongly depend on the exertion of wakefulness. The reason may have been shown in a similar discussion found in the *Mahāssapurasutta* (see above): wakefulness (or alertness) opens to a closely interrelated set of qualities that cooperate to reach liberating knowledge. Wakefulness may itself be taken to be but a coarser stage of this knowledge, and ultimately, of final awakening too. While other contemplative factors, such as *sati* and *samādhi*, require high capacity in the practitioner's understanding, wakefulness is relatively accessible, and may be illustrated through very simple instructions. While training in 'physical' wakefulness, the disciple sets the stage for deep awakening. The list of the *Jāgariyasutta* seems to depict the intermediate stages through a gradual process where every step directly affects the following one, till the reaching of the goals declared in this discourse (immediate knowledge and the stage of not-returner), and at the same time it directly impinges on the other ones. For instance, the factor immediately following *jāgariyā*, i.e. *sati*, is not the only one directly influenced by it, because the recommendation to be awake is valid during all the process and stressed by the stanzas concluding the sutta. This suggests that wakefulness may directly affect full awareness (or 'clear knowing', *sampajañña*), concentration, joy, serenity-confidence and timely insight. The reverse influence is not explicitly stated, but could be deduced by considering that alertness is not conceivable, or at least it would not be the same efficacious alertness, without mindfulness, concentration, and so on. Yet, this intermingling of qualities might merely suggest that *jāgariyā* continues to work through the higher phases in a more developed and refined form.

The first stanza uttered by the Buddha in the *Jāgariyasutta* provides further significant information about the effects of *jāgariyā*:

*Jāgarantā suṇathetaṃ, ye suttā te pabujjhatha /  
suttā jāgaritaṃ seyyo, natthi jāgarato bhayaṃ //* Iti I.10, PTS 41

Those who are awake, listen to me,  
those who are sleeping, awaken;  
wakefulness is better than sleep,  
for the wakeful there is no fear.

The last quarter corresponds *verbatim* to the fourth *pada* of Dhṛ 39 (PTS 11). In the Pāli canon the condition of fearlessness is often described as a quality of the Buddha, but many passages indicate that it is not exclusive to the state of final liberation: *abhaya* is indeed an important feature of other high levels such as the stream-entry condition (*sotāpatti*)<sup>19</sup>. This is coherent with the *Jāgariyasutta*, wherein the condition of non-returner is one the two possible outcomes of the set of practices that include *jāgariyā*, being *nibbāna* (here paraphrased as “immediate knowledge”) the other one.

Having ascertained the close relationship between wakefulness and final awakening, we should assess how direct, or even autonomous, such link may be; perhaps, secondary factors offer a support which is only marginal. The lists of qualities seen above usually locate *jāgariyā* at the very beginning; or at least, before specifically contemplative factors (such as *sati*). We may therefore ask whether these qualities are determined by *jāgariyā*, or independent; and to which extent *jāgariyā* affects the entirety of the meditative path. Examples from Buddhist texts in Sanskrit would suggest that *jāgariyā*, while resonating with *bodhi* and participating of the same nature, is not sufficient in order to pursue the latter. *Jāgariyā* (as it will become clear) is supportive of, and subordinate to, *smṛti*, *samprajanya* and their cognate factors.

In the *Mahāvastu* the practice of wakefulness (*jāgarikāyogam*), though described likewise in the Pāli sources, i.e. through the watches of the night, is said to be a ‘non-Buddhist’

<sup>19</sup> See the *Anāthapiṇḍikasutta* of the *Sotāpattisaṃyutta* (S V.55.27; PTS V.385 ff.). For *abhaya* as a feature of the Buddha, see the *Mahāsihanādasutta* (M I.150, PTS I.71-72).

practice (*bāhiraka mārga*) leading to meditative absorptions (*dhyānas / jhānas*).<sup>20</sup> It was one of the practices that the Buddha would have accomplished in his previous lives as a Bodhisattva, when he was Rakṣita, the son of the king Brahmadata, and had gone for seclusion to the Himalayas. Accounts of the past lives of the Buddha are often slightly altered stories of the last life of the Buddha. If this is the case, this practice would belong to the set of practices, meant to develop *samādhi*, that had been adopted by the Buddha and integrated into his teachings. Although this story is a parallel of the Pāli *Mahāmaṅgalajātaka* (Jā 453), in the latter there is no mention to *jāgariyā*.<sup>21</sup> The reference to *jāgarikāyoga* in the *Mahāvastu* and its absence in the Pāli version may indicate that the Lokottaravādins either added it to the account that they knew or that they were acquainted with a version that included *jāgariyā*. Other evidence of the importance of *jāgariyā* is found in the *Vinayavastvāgama* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin, wherein it is commonly practiced by the monks.<sup>22</sup>

*Jāgariyā* may thus lead to high states of *samādhi*, but is not enough to reach *nibbāna*. As noted earlier, *jāgariyā* share some features with final awakening; yet it remains unquestionably incomplete. *Sati* and *sampajañña*, on the other hand, are not mere effects of *jāgariyā*, but decisive factors in pursuing liberation.

In this light, the following stanza, rather than indicating a direct relation between *jāgariyā* and *nibbāna*, suggests the presence of other instruments (which are “practised night and day”) that bring *jāgariyā* to the maturation of final awakening:

*sadā jāgaramānānaṃ arohattānusikkhinaṃ /  
nibbānaṃ adhimuttānaṃ atthaṃ gacchanti āsavā // Dhp 226*

<sup>20</sup> Mv i.284.2. Cf. Jones 1949: I.236.

<sup>21</sup> An explicit mention to *jāgariyā* is instead found in another *Jātaka*, the *Jāgariyājātaka*, but here the only noteworthy analogy with the contents of Mv I.284 consists in indicating the Himalayas as the location for meditative seclusion. Traditionally, the reference to the Himalayas implies a significant symbolism. A passage of the *Buddhapādamāṅgala* reads: *himavā ti idaṃ bhagavato rūpakāyaṃ nāma suvaṇṇaṃ viya suvirocamānaṃ devamanussānaṃ rūpakāyehi ativirocamānaṃ hoti / tasmā taṃ himavā buddharatanan ti vuccati*, “Himālaya is a name for the physical body (*rūpakāya*) of the Blessed One; it is as bright as gold and it shines much more than the physical bodies of *devas* and human beings. Therefore the Himālaya is called the Buddha-jewel”, Cicuzza 2011: 49, 150.

<sup>22</sup> *Bhikṣavaḥ pūrvāpararātraṃ jāgarikāyogam anuyuktā viharanti*, MSV I.54.

For those who are constantly wakeful, who practice day and night, who are intent upon nibbāna, taints come to the end.

I would therefore exclude the idea that *jāgariyā* may be here portrayed as a sufficient cause for final liberation (although it may surely enhance the factors necessary to obtain the latter).

### Conclusion

*Jāgariyā* is alertness, a condition of wakefulness intended in a literal sense and aimed at the final awakening from the dream of *samsāra*: the texts I discussed stress its relevance in the pursuit of *nibbāna*. The same can be evinced from some recurring features in the traditional accounts of the Buddha's life: he obtains awakening after meditating through the three portions of the night. During that time, he vividly recollects his own past lives (first watch), cognizes the cycle of births and deaths of all sentient beings according to their own *kamma* (second watch), understands the four *saccas*, and becomes completely free from taints (third watch). Each watch is characterized by the dispelling of ignorance and darkness, and by an unshakeable equanimity in respect to the consequent pleasant feelings (M 36, I.364-389, PTS I.237-251).

In another episode, the Buddha is portrayed as reflecting upon dependent arising, one week after his awakening (Ud I.1-3, PTS 1-3). His reflections on the chain of dependent arising regard first its reverse order, then the direct order, and then again the reverse order; in the first, middle and last watches of the night, respectively. Although the term *jāgariyā* is not used, the episode shows that devoting oneself to wakefulness and not indulging in sleep is what the Buddha does even after his final liberation as a basis for further insights.

We can therefore see that *jāgariyā* resonates well with the depictions of final awakening, offering a path and some of the features of its result at the same time. As we have seen, Pāli etymologists gloss *jāgariyā* with the same terms used for *bodhi*, 'the dissolution of sleep' (*niddakkhaya*). The analogy between *jāgariyā* and *bodhi* calls for a comparison between the lexicons used to define them. If *jāgariyā* is a primordial form of awakening, we can deduce that its opposition to sense-gratification, suggested by its cooperation with *saṃvara*, tells us what *sleeping* is in the



metaphor of awakening. In other words, craving for sense-gratification is the obvious manifestation of (the sleep of) *avijjā* just like *jāgariyā* is the accessible form of *bodhi*.<sup>23</sup>

*Jāgariyā* assists the protecting function of *saṃvara*; this shows how the initial application of alertness is to sense-restraint. From this perspective, *jāgariyā* functions as a necessary link between restraint and more specifically meditative factors - such as mindfulness, comprehension, concentration, and wisdom.

### Abbreviations

References are both to the location of the passages in the Pāli texts wherein they appear and to their place in the PTS edition; for instance, A VIII.9, PTS IV.168 is a reference to the VIII book of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and to the IV volume of the PTS edition.

A	= <i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
A-ṭ	= <i>Aṅguttara Nikāya-Ṭikā</i>
Abhis	= <i>Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha</i>
Cone	= <i>A Dictionary of Pāli</i> , vol. II
CSCD	= <i>Chaṭṭha Saṅgayana CD</i>
D	= <i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Dhp	= <i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	= <i>Dhammapada-Atṭhakathā</i>
Edgerton	= <i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary</i>
Iti	= <i>Itivuttaka</i>
Iti-a	= <i>Itivuttaka-Atṭhakathā</i>
Jā	= <i>Jātaka</i>
Jā-a	= <i>Jātaka-Atṭhakathā</i>
M	= <i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
Mil	= <i>Milindapañha</i>

<sup>23</sup> Being an accessible form of *bodhi*, *jāgariyā* seems to be a valid support for *saddhā*, which is traditionally inspired by extolling the qualities of the Buddha.

Mnidd	= <i>Mahāniddeśa</i>
Monier-Williams	= <i>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i>
MSV	= <i>Vinayavastvāgama</i> of the Mūla-sarvāstivādin
Mv	= <i>Mahāvastu</i>
Paṭism	= <i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
Paṭism-a	= <i>Paṭisambhidāmagga-Aṭṭhakathā</i>
Pd	= <i>Paramatthadīpanī</i> (Theragāthā- aṭṭhakathā)
PED	= <i>Pali-English Dictionary</i>
Peṭ	= <i>Peṭakopadesa</i>
Peta	= Petavatthu
PTS	=Pali Text Society
S	= <i>Samyutta Nikāya</i>
Saund	= <i>Saundarananda</i>
Sd	= <i>Saddanīti</i>
Skt	=Sanskrit
Sv	= <i>Sammohavinodanī</i> ( <i>Vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā</i> )
Th	= <i>Theragāthā</i>
Vibh	= <i>Vibhaṅga</i>
Vism	= <i>Visuddhimagga</i>
Śbh	= <i>Śrāvakabhūmi</i>
Snp	= <i>Suttanipāta</i>
Ud	= <i>Udāna</i>

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