

THE THERAVĀDA BUDDHIST
CONCEPTUAL MAP
OF BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an examination of the Theravāda Buddhist conceptual map of bondage and freedom. It analyzes in detail the conditions which cause the occurrence of bondage and the conditions necessary to cause its nonoccurrence and the occurrence of freedom.

Religious traditions view the human condition as a serious problem and firmly believe it can be resolved. They function in part by drawing conceptual maps which explain "where" man is and "where" he should be heading, i.e., they provide their adherents conceptual schemes or doctrinal patterns which explain the dichotomy of problem and resolution. According to Theravāda Buddhist doctrine, this dichotomy is spoken of as "bondage" and "freedom," technically termed samsāra- and nibbāna- (Sanskrit nirvāṇa-).

Bondage results from two interrelated conditions: (1) ignorance, i.e., inaccurate knowledge of one's capabilities in a situation or the lack of self-knowledge, and inadequate awareness of the full nature of the situation, and (2) the lack of self-control. Because of ignorance man sees the world as substantial, eternal, and capable of providing lasting satisfaction. Man believes this subjective vision is objectively true and thus establishes himself in disharmony to reality. In Buddhism, nothing is substantial, eternal, or satisfactory. The lack of self-control is the inability to control one's own actions. It refers to one at the mercy of his own habits.

Freedom results from two interrelated conditions: insight and self-control. Insight is the objective, clear, direct, penetrative knowledge of oneself and the world. Self-control is complete mastery over one's

actions, bodily, vocal, and mental.

The heart of the paper is the chapter titled The Epistemological and Psychological Evaluation of Bondage and Freedom because bondage and freedom are explained in those terms. Its body is the introductory chapters which discuss the Theravādin conception of reality and causation, conceptual mapping, and habitual behavior and its antithesis renunciation.

This paper was written as if it were to be read by a student of religious studies. The topic is at all times established within the confines of that field. The method of research consisted in the study of original Buddhist works, at times translating myself, and in the study of books and articles published by contemporary experts in Buddhism.

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ABBREVIATIONS

D . . . Dīgha-nikāya

M . . . Majjhima-nikāya

S . . . Samyutta-nikāya

A . . . Aṅguttara-nikāya

Abhs . . . Abhidhammasaṅgaha

Atthas . . . Atthasālinī

Dhs . . . Dhammasaṅgani

Vis . . . Visuddhimagga

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Presuppositions^o . . . Karl Potter, Presuppositions of India's Philosophies, Westport, 1975.

BPT . . . James A. Santucci, A Dictionary of Buddhist Pāli Terms, Fullerton, 1971.

IPTB . . . --, The Importance of Psychology in Theravāda Buddhism, Fullerton, 1974.

Emptiness^o . . . Frederick Streng, Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning, New York, 1967.

INTRODUCTION

To begin, let's establish the topic within the confines of religious studies. Religious man may be regarded as one who sees the human condition or existential situation as a serious problem, firmly believes that this condition can be overcome, and regards its resolution as his highest aspiration.¹ Religion provides a means for overcoming the human condition in two senses: ". . . 1) it is the power for achieving the transformation, i.e., it is not only an idea or hope, but claims to be expressive of the very nature of reality; and 2) it is a practical technique for achieving the transformation."² To facilitate the transformation from problem to resolution, religious traditions draw conceptual maps to explain "where" man is, "where" he should be heading, and "how" he is to get there. For our purpose, the dichotomy of problem and resolution, or "where" man is and "where" he should be heading, is spoken of in Theravāda Buddhist³ tradition in terms of "bondage" and "freedom,"⁴ technically termed samsāra- and nibbāna-.

Bondage (bandha-) refers to inadequacies in man's responses to challenges which continually confront him, inadequacies which reflect his dilemma. "A challenge is a felt tension in a situation,"⁵ i.e., the mere awareness ("felt") of the disparity ("tension") between one's capacities and his performance or expected performance in a real context ("in a situation").

(Tension) implies one's failure to control what he has the capacity to control, though one is not usually clear about one's capacities when one feels a tension. The disparity between possible and actual is the source of discomfort, frustration, and dissatisfaction--to greater or lesser degree depending on one's sensitivity, i.e., his awareness and involvement.⁶

This disparity, dissatisfaction, distress, or dis-ease is what Buddhism calls dukkha-. It points not only to the fact of bondage, but expresses

its felt-experience as well.

Inadequacies occur as a result of two interrelated conditions: (1) the lack of self-control and (2) ignorance, i.e., both inaccurate knowledge of one's capabilities in a situation or the lack of self-knowledge, and inadequate awareness of the full nature of the situation.

To succeed in the affairs of the world requires the building of habits on man's part, habits which enable him to overcome the obstacles which lie in the way of material success These habits . . . constitute a source of bondage. For as one becomes more and more successful through the development of these habitual responses, he tends to become less and less capable of adjusting to fresh or unusual contingencies. Insofar as this hardening of habits does take place, one comes to be at the mercy of his habits, as he will find out to his dismay when a fresh or unusual situation does occur. And to be at the mercy of one's habits is to be out of control, that is to say, in bondage.⁷

Habits inhibit man's ability to respond successfully to all types of challenges because they compel man to act by habit in particular patterns which may or may not be appropriate to the challenge at hand. "In each case, a man of perfectly good will seeks success with respect to a challenge, and in each case fails despite his best effort--even though he appears to have achieved his goal--because habits of mind and action are set up within him through his apparent success which, as it develops, he is unable to control."⁸

Habits or habitual behavior, known in Indian thought as karman- (Pāli kamma-), continue after the conditions that engendered them have disappeared, in turn to engender new habits. This round of habits breeding new habits is the continuum called samsāra-, the "Wheel of Rebirth" governed by kamma-. Man lacks the flexibility to act appropriately and incisively when continually conditioned by habits which pattern his behavior. His capacity to discriminate what he is capable or incapable of performing and his power of awareness to adequately assess the situation have become polluted by kamma-. This want of self-knowledge and awareness (avijjā-, "ignorance") is iden-

tified with kamma- as the cause of bondage.

Complete freedom (vimutti-) is the extinction (nibbāna-) or nonoccurrence of avijjā- and kamma- and the occurrence of insight and self-control. It is "freedom-from" the restrictions of ignorance and habitual behavior and "freedom-to" anticipate and control any event to which one directs his efforts. These two aspects are interrelated because in order to master everything pertaining to oneself (i.e., freedom-to), which includes one's relations with nature, with other people, and with himself, one must be in complete control of one's faculties, not at the mercy of forces beyond one's control (i.e., freedom-from).

"Complete freedom (mokṣa) may now be explained as the stage where one is free to and free from with respect to every event that occurs in his subsequent history, i.e., every possible occurrence and nonoccurrence that concerns him."⁹ In this way, the man who is completely free is no longer distressed (in dukkha-) when confronted by a challenge because ultimately all challenges have become inappropriate or irrelevant to him. He is without challenges and feels no tensions. Such a state coincides with spontaneity, since he is free from the limitations or restrictions previously self-imposed and free to act successfully or at ease (sukha-), because he has become self-controlled and insightful. No longer does he aimlessly wander (samsāra-) through a world where his awareness is inadequate, and he lacks self-knowledge and full control.

Notes

¹Non-religious man may be regarded as one who (1) sees no dilemma or considers it as inconsequential, or (2) who sees the dilemma and regards it as serious, but is skeptical that there is a solution or that he can achieve certain hoped-for results, or (3) one who no longer needs religion because he has transcended the situation.

²Emptiness^o, p. 156.

³Theravāda Buddhism, the "School of the Elders," i.e., orthodox Buddhism, is a living tradition present today in Sri Lāṅka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Chittagong in Bangal Desh. Its written authority is the Pali Canon or Tipitaka ("Three Baskets"), viz., the Vinaya-Pitaka, Sutta-Pitaka, and Abhidhamma-Pitaka, plus several principal noncanonical works, e.g., the Malindapañña, Visuddhimagga, Atthasālinī, and Abhidhamma-saṅgaha.

⁴In his book Presuppositions^o, Karl Potter discusses at length the notions of bondage and freedom as developed by the various schools of Indian philosophy. The following discussion on bondage and freedom closely follows Potter's analysis (see pp. 1-55 and 93-79), an analysis I feel is extremely helpful in grasping these two central conceptions.

⁵Ibid., p. 26.

⁶Ibid., p. 27.

⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁸Ibid., p. 12.

⁹Ibid., p. 49.

CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Buddhism draws conceptual maps regarding the nature of reality and the route conducive to complete freedom, because (1) they serve as convenient aids which assess the situation, i.e., project judgments about the conditions which cause the dilemma and the conditions necessary to overcome it, and (2) they provide guidance, i.e., outline a course of action or discipline which serves as a means to achieve certain hoped-for results.

Buddhism draws a distinction between "noble" and "normal" somewhat similar to Eliade's paradigm of "sacred" and "profane."¹ What is normal or ordinary is associated with the human condition of incompleteness and frustration (i.e., samsāra-). The arahant- ("noble one") denotes one who has transcended his self-imposed limitations and who has fully realized his potentialities (i.e., nibbāna-).

The purpose of Buddhism, for that matter all religious traditions, is "to provide a means to correct an experienced deficiency in human existence, a radically salutary power by which man is saved from himself."² To facilitate the transformation from normality to nobility, Buddhism provides its adherents with a conceptual map or scheme, i.e., doctrinal patterns, to clarify the basis of man's felt-experience of disparity, whereby he can begin to rectify his situation through reconsidered views, a commitment to purpose, and appropriate actions.

The construction of a conceptual map or scheme, one which clarifies the nature of reality and man's position in it so that he may plot a route to complete freedom, is analogous to a geographer projecting a round world onto a flat map.³ Under these circumstances, there is no single projection which would not be distorted, i.e., which does not neglect some feature

which may be reflected in another projection. However, to get on with the task of map-making, the geographer has to make do with his projection for whatever purpose the map is intended. It is the purpose that provides the criterion of relevance for mapping. It endows with value certain distinctions and renders others negligible as long as that purpose is paramount. One of the reasons why the Buddha was not interested in discussing metaphysical questions, for instance, was because "it was not useful, not related to the fundamentals of religion, and not conducive to revulsion, dispassion, cessation, peace, higher knowledge, realization and Nirvāṇa."⁴

Similarly, just as the geographer's flat map is a distorted projection of a round world, so too is the character of any conceptual map or scheme which attempts to express absolute truth into a relative criterion of judgments. The disciple should recognize three things regarding the nature of conceptual schemes or doctrinal patterns: (1) they translate reality into conventional modes of expression which can be apprehended by the "normal" person; (2) they are symbolic structures which facilitate transcendence.

. . . the symbol not only makes the world "open" but also helps religious man to attain to the universal. For it is through symbols that man finds his way out of his particular situation and "opens himself" to the general and the universal. Symbols awaken individual experience and transmute it into spiritual act, into . . . comprehension of the world.⁵

And (3), since they are distorted reflections of reality, one should never cling to them as if they truly reflected reality. "I preach you a dhamma comparable to a raft for the sake of crossing over and not for the sake of clinging to it"⁶

The awareness of this inherent insufficiency coupled with the necessity for mapping is integral to symbolic knowledge. Buddhist dhamma-⁷ ("doctrine") should be understood as a convenient means to apprehend and organize

the stream of human existence into meaningful symbolic structures; structures which facilitate the transformation from normality to nobility.

In summary, conceptual maps of reality and man's position in it are necessary to Buddhism as a religion, because (1) they adequately assess the situation in terms that can be understood; (2) they provide an accessible route to overcome the human condition of bondage, in this case, a provision which dissipates the doubts and fears of skepticism and fatalism, i.e., ". . . on the one hand, the fear that nothing one can do can bring about hoped-for results, and on the other, the fear that nothing one can do can alter what is bound to occur."⁸; and (3) they epitomize an ideal for man to concern and commit himself to. The ideal or ultimate concern in Buddhism is complete freedom (vimutti- or vimokkha-) equal to nibbāna-

The Buddhist, as with all religious men, must recognize the inherent problems of expressing ultimate truth in conventional-relational terms.⁹ It is the essential recognition that all conceptual maps or schemes are necessary for the sake of transformation, yet are only limited expressions of reality and man's position in it; limited, but adequate for mapping purposes. In this way, Buddhist dhamma-, as symbolic conceptual structures, beckons its adherents to gain that knowledge which exceeds all limitations, which can never be reduced to human thought structures, and which is equal to ultimate truth

Notes

¹See Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, New York, 1959. Theravāda Buddhism wouldn't, however, concern itself with any metaphysical considerations which the terms "sacred" and "profane" might imply.

²Emptiness⁰, p. 173.

³The analogy and analysis follow's Presuppositions⁰, pp. 29-30.

⁴M.1:431., trans. by Jayatilleke, Early Buddhist^o, p. 357. Ten theses were in circulation at the time of the Buddha. Regarding these ten the Buddha refused to express an opinion, viz.: 1) the world is eternal, 2) the world is not eternal, 3) the world is finite, 4) the world is infinite; 5) the soul is identical with the body, 6) the soul is different from the body, 7) the Tathagāta ("Thus-gone") exists after death, 8) the Tathāgata does not exist after death, 9) the Tathāgata does and does not exist after death, and 10) the Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death. These ten theses were not regarded as pragmatic or "goal" oriented by the Buddha. E.g., "the parable of the arrow occurs in reference to the avyākata-theses and the gist of it is that a man struck with a poisoned arrow should be concerned with removing the arrow and getting well rather than be interested in purely theoretical questions (about the nature of the arrow, who shot it, etc.), which have no practical utility. The moral is that man should only be interested in truths which have a practical bearing on his life." From Early Buddhist^o, p. 357.

⁵Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 211.

⁶M.1:134, trans. by Jayatilleke, Early Buddhist^o, p. 357.

⁷For the manifold meanings of the term dhamma- see Magdalene and Wilhelm Geiger, Pāli Dhamma, Vernehmlich in der Kanonischen Literatur, Munich, 1920.

⁸Presuppositions^o, p. 23.

⁹See Frederick Streng, "The Problem of Symbolic Structures in Religious Apprehension," History of Religions, IV, No.1 (Summer, 1964), pp. 126-53.

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPTION OF REALITY

Buddhism draws a conceptual map of reality to explain the conditions which cause bondage (bandha-) and the conditions necessary to achieve freedom (vimutti-). This map projects three judgments regarding the character of the world:

All conditioned things are anicca-
 All conditioned things are dukkha-.
 All phenomena (both mental and physical) are anattan-.¹

Impermanence (anicca-) is the nonenduring characteristic of all causally conditioned things (samkhārā).

Herein, the five aggregates² are impermanent. Why? Because they rise and fall and change, or because of their non-existence after having been. Rise and fall and change are the characteristic of impermanence; or mode alteration, in other words non-existence after having been (is the characteristic of impermanence).³

Impermanent indeed are conditioned things,
 Arising and passing away, that is their nature;
 Having come into being they cease to exist,
 Their pacification is bliss.⁴

Impermanence is a synonym for "arising and passing away," "birth and destruction," to which all conditioned things are subject.

If all things are impermanent, then it stands to reason that there is no "thing" which is substantial. Unsubstantiality (anattan-, literally "no-self or soul") means that a thing cannot exist-in-itself (sabhāva-), i.e., as an independent, enduring entity. "In essence, anattan refers to the negation of a staticized or permanent underlying substance that makes a thing what it is. In other words, there is no 'thing' that completes the sum of its parts, no lasting substance that can be pointed to as being identified with the name it is called."⁵

If the nature of all causally conditioned things is both impermanence and unsubstantiality, it would follow that the man who craves for eternal

or permanent (nicca-) happiness and hopes to derive such happiness from things which are themselves impermanent as well as unsubstantial will in due course fall short of his expectation of lasting happiness, because the satisfaction derived from things impermanent and unsubstantial would surely be of a temporary nature. The consequence of an unsatisfied expectation is suffering (dukkha-). The things from which he endeavors to derive satisfaction (sukha-, "ease") are ultimately unsatisfactory (dukkha-, "dis-ease"). Suffering is partly due to one's attachment to things that are themselves unsatisfactory, or, to crave for "ease" from things that are in reality "dis-ease" breeds only "dis-ease" in return.

The nature of the human condition is such that our subjective understanding of reality doesn't correspond objectively (tathatā-) to the way things are, though we cling in thought and action as if it does. Thus man psychologically sets himself in disharmony (dukkha-) to reality "as it really is" (yathābhūta). Disharmony reflects the inadequacies (p. 1) which represent the human condition of bondage. Because of these, man is unable to anticipate and control events which concern him. The disparity or tension which occurs when one fails to control what he has the capacity to control is also dukkha-. Dukkha- not only refers to the human condition of disharmony, disjointedness, or disequilibrium to reality "as it really is" and incompleteness when one's potentials are unrealized, but expresses the felt-experience of those existential situations as well.

According to Buddhist analysis, what we conventionally term "human being" is a conditioned phenomenon, a compounded unit composed of five aggregates. He is impermanent, unsubstantial, and as such unsatisfactory, liable to dis-ease. He is conditioned by attachment (upādāna-) and ignorance (avijjā-) which continually generates compulsive behavior (kamma-) and which,

in turn, regenerates attachment and ignorance anew. This cycles of conditional regeneration is equal to samsāra-, the "Wheel of Rebirth," governed by one's kamma-, experienced as dukkha-, and which binds us to the continuum of "rebirth, ageing, dying, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pain, mental grief, and despair." That too is dukkha-.

A what, brothers, is the Noble Truth Concerning Dukkha? Birth is dukkha-, also ageing and dying, also sorrow, lamentation, bodily pain, mental grief, and despair are dukkha-. Also, what one desires, but does not obtain, that too is dukkha-. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha-.

Notes

¹Dhammapada XX, 5-7. In this passage, I translated dhamma- as "phenomena." The term defined in this way is discussed by David Kalupahana, Causality⁰, pp. 67-88. On pp. 84 & 85 he discusses dhamma- in relation with samkhāra's.

²The five aggregates (khandha-) consisting of aggregates of materiality and mentality (nāmarūpa-) compose what we know as the human personality. Everything is composed of either elements or materiality or mentality or both in various combinations.

³Vis.21:6, trans. by ^uNyānamoli. Also see Vis.8:234.

⁴D.2:157.

⁵BPT, pp. 6-7.

⁶M.3:249. According to Vis.(PTS), p. 499, the conception of dukkha- may be conceived of as threefold: (1) dukkha- as ordinary suffering (dukkha-dukkha-), i.e., "birth ageing, dying, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pain, mental grief, and despair;" (2) dukkha- as a consequence of change or transformation (viparināma-dukkha-), i.e., "what one desires but does not obtain;" and (3) dukkha- as conditioned phenomena (samkhara-dukkha-), i.e., "the five aggregates of clinging." For an analysis of these see Sacca-vibhaṅga-sutta or Vis.16:32-60.

CAUSALITY (PATICCASAMUPPĀDA-)

The concern to understand the nature of causality is the concern to understand the conditions which cause the occurrence of bondage and the conditions necessary to cause its nonoccurrence and the occurrence of freedom. A man is "free" if he is able to bring about the occurrence and nonoccurrence of any event about which he is concerned; and by the natural extension of the term, the occurrence or nonoccurrence is "free" because its causal agent is free with respect to that occurrence or nonoccurrence. The requirements of this scheme are determined by the nature of freedom-to and freedom-from, i.e., by the conditions which cause the occurrence of free events.

First, there is the requirement that in order for the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an event to be called "free," it must have at least one necessary or one sufficient condition.

This requirement I call the requirement of "freedom-to." If an occurrence does not have a necessary condition then there is no way for anyone to avoid it, for to avoid an occurrence one must see to it that a necessary condition for the occurrence does not occur. And if an occurrence does not have any sufficient condition, there is no way for us to effect it, i.e., to see to it that it occurs, for to be able to see to it that an event occurs presupposes that there is a sufficient condition for that event the occurrence of which will bring about the event in question.¹

Secondly, there is the requirement that in order for an event to be called "free," the necessary or sufficient condition of that occurrence or nonoccurrence must be in the agent's control as well.

I call this requirement the requirement of "freedom-from." It is not merely another way of describing freedom-to; rather it presupposes freedom-to but exceeds the former requirement Freedom-from says "providing there is freedom-to, then at least one necessary or one sufficient condition of a free event must be in someone's control, i.e., such that he could have done otherwise."²

Therefore, for the Buddhist to understand the conditions which cause

the occurrence of bondage and the conditions which bring about its nonoccurrence and the occurrence of freedom, presupposes an understanding of the nature of causal patterns, especially those which make up the sequence of events which pertain to his ultimate concern for complete freedom. The map which projects the nature of causality must allow for the possibility of self-control and insight, and must steer a course clear of skepticism and fatalism.

. . . (It must) on the one hand be loose enough to allow for freedom from, to allow us to enter into events as causal agents, and thus to insure that we are not at the mercy of forces beyond our control; nevertheless, it must not be so loose that the events we care about, those events which enter into the types of sequence through which we may hope to move toward freedom, are irregularly related, unpredictable, and chaotic in their pattern. We must be able to count on the recurrence of certain sequences, but at the same time we must have confidence that our decisions and deliberate actions influence events significantly.³

To satisfy the above requirements and the judgments projected regarding the nature of things (dhammatā-), the Buddha in his "Discourse on Causal Relations"⁴ mentions four characteristics of causation: (1) objectivity (ta-thatā-), (2) necessity (avitathatā-), (3) invariability (anāññathatā-), and (4) conditionality (idappaccayatā-).

The first emphasizes the objectivity of the causal relation. It was, in fact, intended to refute the claim of some idealist philosophers who belonged to the Upaniṣadic tradition and who maintained that change, and therefore causation, are mere matters of words, nothing but names . . . they are mental fabrications having no objective reality. For the Buddha causation was as real as anything else

The second and third characteristics, "necessity" (avitathatā) and "invariability" (anāññathatā), stress the lack of exception or the existence of regularity. The fact that a certain set of conditions gives rise to a certain effect and not to something completely different, is one of the basic assumptions of the causal principle. If this feature is not recognized, the basic pattern of events perceived in the phenomenal world cannot be explained

The fourth characteristic of causation, "conditionality" (idappaccayatā), is by far the most significant in that it steers clear of the two extremes--the unconditional necessity implied in strict determinism and the unconditional arbitrariness assumed by accidentalism. Hence it was

used as a synonym for causation.⁵

The expression for causation is paticcasamuppāda- ("dependent origination," literally "dependent co-up-rising"). Buddhaghosa comments that the word denotes the presence of a plurality of conditions and their occurrence together brings about a result: "And it is called a 'co-arising' (samuppādo) since it causes states that occur in unresolved mutual interdependence to arise associatedly."⁶ He also says that the plurality of conditions which cause the occurrence of an event or things "arises as a togetherness (saha), thus it is a co-arising (samuppāda); but it does so having depended (paticca--ger.) in combination with conditions, not regardless of them. Consequently: it having depended (paticca), is a co-arising (samuppāda), thus in this way also it is dependent origination (paticca-samuppāda)."⁷

For a seed to sprout, grow up, and attain maturity, in turn, to reproduce new seeds, three conditions must be present: (1) a seed which will germinate provided (2) it is planted properly, and (3) that it has the benefit of good soil, ample water, and plenty of sunshine. The cause of change from seed to sprout is dependent upon these conditions being present together. The totality of conditions as "cause" consists of several relationships between the specific conditions and the effect. There are 24 causal relations (paccayā) outlined in the Paṭṭhāna. For our purpose we need not examine them.⁸

The example⁹ establishes several empirical facts: (1) causation requires that certain conditions be satisfied before an event or thing occurs (i.e., conditionality). A seed will not become a mature plant if planted in poor soil, nor will it sprout if it is broken or rotten; (2) because of these facts (i.e., objectivity), the farmer is able to predict what auspi-

cious conditions are needed for successful cultivation (i.e., necessity). He is also aware that all seeds do not produce the same results, e.g., wheat seeds will not produce rice plants (i.e., invariability); (3) the process of causation is a continual process of becoming to which all things are subject (i.e., samsāra-). The sprout will become a plant, therefore, the sprout is a necessary condition for the plant's becoming. The plant will become a condition for the production of new seeds, and so on. It is a continual cycle. The sprout does not endure, it changes (i.e., impermanence); (4) the sprout is dependent on a plurality of conditions for its becoming, as such, it does not exist independent of them (i.e., unsubstantiality). Further, there must be a mutual interdependence of conditions to produce an effect, and that effect will then become a condition, together with others, which will produce further effects and further dependence and interdependence; and (5) there is uniformity to all causal relations (dhammatthitatā-, dhammaniyamatā-, and dhammatā-) which conforms to the four characteristics of causation and the three characteristics (tilakkhanāni), anicca-, anattan-, and dukkha-, of existence

The general formula for the occurrence and nonoccurrence of an event is:

When this is present, that becomes;
 from the arising of this, that arises.
 When this is absent, that does not become;
 from the cessation of this, that ceases.¹⁰

This formula is universally applicable as the causal principle which accounts for the occurrence and nonoccurrence of all phenomena.¹¹ This explains the Buddha's statement, "He who perceives the dependent co-origination (paticcasamuppāda-) perceives the dhamma- (dhamma- here taken in the sense of truth, the truth regarding the nature of reality)."¹² Insight into

causality, then, reveals the nature of reality (dhammatā-), especially an understanding of what causes the occurrence of bondage and how one can bring about its nonoccurrence and the occurrence of freedom, i.e., the Buddhist chief religious concern.

The formula which satisfies that concern is the twelvefold causal account of the disharmonious and unsatisfactory nature (dukkhatā-) of the human condition, namely:

Because of ignorance, volitional formations (occur); because of volitional formations, consciousness or discriminative knowledge (occurs); because of consciousness, mentality and materiality (occur); because of mentality and materiality, the six sense spheres (occur); because of the six sense spheres, contact (occurs); because of contact, sensation (occurs); because of sensation, thirst or craving (occurs); because of thirst, becoming (occurs); because of becoming, rebirth (occurs); because of rebirth, ageing, dying, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pain, mental grief, and despair occur. In this way does this entire pervading aggregate of dukkha- arise.¹³

This twelvefold chain of causation is a chain of necessary conditions, whereby the opposite of each member in the chain is a sufficient condition for the cessation of the next. There are two places where one can successfully enter and break the chain, either at ignorance (avijjā-) or thirst (tanhā-), both regarded as the essential or "most striking"¹⁴ conditions of the disharmonious and unsatisfactory nature which characterizes the human condition. Insight or penetrative knowledge (paññā-) replaces ignorance and nonattachment (virāga-) or self-control replaces thirst. The presence of insight and self-control causes the cessation of dukkha- and also satisfies the conditions necessary for freedom-from and freedom-to.¹⁵

In summary, first, an insight into paticcasamuppāda- gives one an understanding of the nature of dukkha- (dukkhatā-). Second, because all causally conditioned phenomena are impermanent, unsubstantial, and unsatisfactory, the Buddhist doctrine of paticcasamuppāda-, then, substantiates

their judgments regarding the nature of existence. It demonstrates that all things are impermanent (anicca-) because they arise and de cease. It demonstrates further that all things are dependent upon a mutual interrelatedness of conditions for their temporary existence. Their becoming (bhava-), in turn, become conditions correlated with others which cause the occurrence of new events or things. Because all things are impermanent and interdependent or interrelated, no "thing" can exist-in-itself (sabhāva-) as an enduring, independent entity. Everything is unsubstantial (anattā-). Finally, whatever is impermanent is unsatisfactory (dukkha-) because whatever satisfaction occurs is only short lived.

In short, paṭiccasamuppāda- = dhammatā- ("the nature of things").

Notes

¹Presuppositions^o, pp. 48-49.

²Ibid., p. 49.

³Ibid., p. 93. The proceeding remarks were extracted from Presuppositions^o, pp. 47-52 and 93-97, and adopted to fit the necessities of this discussion.

⁴Paccaya-sutta^o, S.2:25f. Cited in BP, p. 27.

⁵BP, pp. 27-28. Tathatā-, "objectivity, ontologicality," literally "correspondence," means that causation is not merely an idea without objectivity, but corresponds to what is occurring in nature. Avitathatā-, "necessity," literally "no-non-objectivity," means that no exception is allowed in causation. It always takes place, without failure. There is no breakdown between the cause-effect relation. It does not divert from objectivity. Ananⁿⁿtathatā-, "invariability, unalterability," literally "not-other-ness," means that there is a consistency between cause and effect, i.e., there is a relationship between cause and effect that remains constant (but this does not imply identity between cause and effect). Idappaccayatā-, "conditionality, dependence," means that there is a necessary condition or group of conditions for an event to occur. "The commentary explains these terms as follows: "Objectivity," etc. are synonyms of what is characteristic of causation. As those alone neither more or less, bring about this or that event, there is said to be "objectivity"; since there is no failure even for a moment to produce the events which arise when the conditions come together, there is said to be "necessity"; since no event different from (the

effect) arises with (the help of) other events or conditions there is said to be "invariability"; from the condition or group of conditions which give rise to such states as decay, etc., as stated, there is said to be "conditionality".¹¹ S.2:41, trans. and citation from Early Buddhist^o, pp. 447-48. For additional analysis see Causality^o, pp. 91-95.

⁶Vis.17:18, trans. by Nyānamoli.

⁷Ibid., 17:16.

⁸For additional analysis see Vis.17:66-100; Nārada, A Manual of Abhidhamma, Ceylon, 1968, pp. 372-78; Nyanatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary, Ceylon, 1972, pp. 114-19; or BPT, pp. 44-49.

⁹Example taken from S.3:54. ¹⁰M.2:32 and S.2:28.

¹¹Causality operates in five spheres: (1) physical (inorganic) order (utaniyāma-), (2) physical (organic) order (bījaniyāma-), (3) psychological order (cittaniyāma-), (4) moral order (kammaniyāma-), and (5) ideal spiritual order (dhammaniyāma-). These five groups are all-inclusive so that nothing in experience is excluded. In short, everything in this universe comes within the operation of causality. For additional analysis see Causality^o, pp. 110-46.

¹²M.1:190-91.

¹³This full formula appears in works like S.2:1f., 26f., 42f., and 94; M.1:261f; A.1:177; Dhs.1336; Vis.17:2; Atthas.395; Abhs.8:2. For a detailed exposition of the 12 links and their interrelationships see Vis.17:58-272.

¹⁴See Aung's discussion on paccaya-, Compendium^o, pp. 261-62.

¹⁵Presuppositions^o, pp. 102 and 129-20, here Potter discusses the necessary and sufficient conditions of the Buddhist causal chain. The preceding analysis follows Potter's.

UNSUBSTANTIALITY (ANATTAN-)

What we conventionally designate as "human being" is in reality a compounded unit composed of several indiscrete and discontinuous factors which are connected and continuous by way of causality. That which we term as "individual personality" (pudgala-), "self" or "soul" (attan-¹) is actually this group of factors or part of this group, which through their mutual interaction, together with other causal conditions, co-originate and become actual, but there exists no enduring, self-sufficient, independent entity or substance underlying change. In this way, the paṭiccasamuppāda- may be viewed as a theory of dynamic "becoming," opposed to those theories which try to establish a static "being" as the grounds underlying change.

Becoming (bhava-) should be differentiated from the common notion of change. According to the paṭiccasamuppāda-, change is a continuous occurrence, but the common view of change regards it as pertaining only to the alteration of form of some more basic, unchanging substance. When a person passes through the stages of birth, ageing, and dying, the mistaken assumption is that there is some underlying reality, designated by name, which continues throughout the process of transformation.² "Or, empirical existence in general is considered to be real, while forms change. To the contrary, the traditional Buddhist view is that the world 'becomes' continually--it 'is' nothing."³

The individual personality, according to Buddhist doctrine, is a causally condition phenomenon (saṃkhāra-) composed of five aggregates, which continually become as a result of the presence of the samsāric forces of ignorance and thirst. These five aggregates, technically termed pañcupādānak-khandhā ("the five aggregates of clinging"), are materiality (rūpa-), sensa-

tion (vedanā-), perception (sannā-), dispositions (samkhārā), and consciousness (viññāna-). No ego, self, or soul (attan-), no person (pudgala-), or any static entity can be found under close inspection and introspection in either one or all of these aggregates.

. . . just as when the component parts such as axles, wheels, frame, poles, etc., are arranged in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage "chariot," yet in the ultimate sense when each part is examined, there is no chariot, and just when the component parts of a "house" (fist, lute, army, city, tree, or anything) . . . so too, when there are five aggregates of clinging, there comes to be the mere term of common usage "a being," "a person," yet in the ultimate sense, when each component is examined, there is no being as a basis for the assumption "I am" or "I"; in the ultimate sense there is only mentality-materiality. The vision of one who sees in this way is called correct vision.⁴

Nor should one mistakenly assume that these aggregates are substantial. They too are causally conditioned phenomena subject to rebirth, ageing, and dying, and dependent upon each other and upon other conditions for their temporary becoming.

Verbal designations all have a practical purpose in everyday life. Whether it be words used singly or arranged in a logical sequence to convey a concept, idea, judgment, name, etc.; or set of concepts, ideas, judgments, names, etc. They are subjective expressions used to relate the objective world into conventional modes of communication. This is done by dividing a dynamic world into static things in order to discriminate what is mine and what is yours, to distinguish or identify things as different from myself and different from each other, or to point out whatever similarities might exist between certain things and myself and things with each other, and so on. In every case, they are verbal signs which point to something outside of themselves.

It is ignorant from the Buddhist point of view to: (1) equate verbal designations with the things they point at, (2) to identify them as the

grounds underlying change, (3) to assume that verbal designations have an existence outside the mind, or (4) to assume that these designation are substantial entities, or that the things they point to are substantial.

To the contrary, no "thing" is substantial since all things are causally conditioned, including mental phenomena. All mental phenomena, whether it be a member in the conscious process or one of its cognitive products, are impermanent and unsubstantial. They arise and de cease faster than you are reading and comprehending the words on this page. In fact, the Buddhist would say that human existence lasts only as long as a thought moment, i.e., as fast as the mind turns.

The human dilemma arises through the conscious process when one mistakenly presupposes phenomena to be substantial, as well as mistakenly identifying the continuum of conscious states as an abiding ego underlying the process. "In Buddhism there is no actor apart from action, no percipient apart from perception. In other words, there is no conscious subject behind consciousness."⁵ Nor do things exist in reality as substantial entities, except when mistaken as such by a mind conditioned by delusion and attachment.

The correct position with regard to the question of Anattā is not to take hold of any opinions or views, but to try to see things objectively as they are without mental projections, to see that what we call "I," or "being," is only a combination of physical and mental aggregates, which are working together interdependently in a flux of momentary change with the law of cause and effect, and that there is nothing permanent, everlasting, unchanging, and eternal in the whole of existence.⁶

The term suñnatā- ("emptiness" or "voidness," literally "zero-ness") serves as a corollary to the doctrines of causality and unsubstantiality.

All causally conditioned phenomena are empty.⁷

This is empty of self or of what belongs to self.⁸

He (the adept) sees all causally conditioned phenomena as unsubstantial, because they are alien, empty, vain, void, ownerless, with no Overlord, and with none to exercise power over them, etc.⁹

Because of causality, everything is impermanent and interdependent, and, as a result, all things are empty (sunna-) of sabhāva- ("self-existence," i.e., substantiality) and empty of any quality that can provide lasting satisfaction. Whereas fire does not exist in fuel nor independent from it, neither fire or its fuel nor their relationship can exist as self-sufficient entities. In this same way, the twelvefold causal chain is empty of any self-existent entities, whether taken as a whole, singly, or in respect to the relations between members.

. . . ignorance--and likewise the factors consisting of formations, etc.--is neither self nor selves, nor in self, nor possessed of self. That is why this Wheel of Becoming should be understood thus "Void with the twelvefold voidness."¹⁰

Even verbal designations are empty of sabhāva- because they arise dependent upon a number of factors. Therefore, concepts like bandha- and samsāra-, vimutti- and nibbāna- are not different from each other, because ultimately all verbal designations are empty. Conventionally there is a difference, but from the standpoint of emptiness there is no difference. Their reality is relative no absolute. In this way, the four Noble Truths "in an absolute sense . . . should be understood as empty, because of the absence of any knower, actor, one who is extinguished, and goer. Thus it is said.

'For there is dukkha-, but no one in dukkha-;
acting exists, but no actor;
there is extinction, but no man is extinguished;
there is a path, yet no goer exists.

'Or, alternatively:

Empty of stability, beauty, pleasure, and substantiality is the first pair; empty of self is the deathless state; empty of stability, pleasure, and substantiality is the path; in these are emptiness."¹¹

Emptiness tells us that everything, whether physical or mental, cannot be self-existent or sufficient (sabhāva-) or substantial (attan-) because of paṭiccasamuppāda-. The human personality is not a static entity, but a sequence of events, free or not depending on whether the person is insightful and self-controlled or not. There is no self or soul that is in bondage or free, rather events that are free or not.

Notes

¹"In the texts and the commentaries the words attā and atta are used in several senses: (1) chiefly meaning 'one-self' or 'one's own,' e.g., attahitāya paṭipanno no parahitāya (acting in one's own interest, not in the interests of others) or attanā vā kaṭaṃ sādhu (what is done by one's own self is good); (2) meaning 'one's own person,' the personality, including both body and mind, e.g., in attabhāva (life), attapaṭilābha (birth in some form of life); (3) self, as a subtle metaphysical entity, 'soul,' e.g., atthi me attā (do I have a 'soul?'), suññaṃ idam attena vā attaniyena vā (this is void of a 'self' or anything to do with a 'self'), etc. It is with the third meaning that we are here concerned, the entity that is conceived and sought and made the subject of a certain class of views called in early Buddhist texts attadiṭṭhi, attanudiṭṭhi (self-views or heresy of self) and attagaha (misconception regarding self)." From BE, vol. I, p. 567. For their analysis on anattan- see pp. 567-76; for anicca- see pp. 657-63.

²See Emptiness^o, p. 36.

³Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁴Vis.18:28, trans. by Nyānamoli

⁵Compendium^o, p. 7.

⁶Walpola Rahula, What the Buddha Taught, New York, 1962, p. 66.

⁷S.3:167.

⁸M.2:263.

⁹Vis.21:48.

¹⁰Vis.17:283, trans. by Nyānamoli.

¹¹Vis.16:90.

THE CONCEPT OF THE "MIDDLE WAY"

The doctrines of causality and unsubstantiality are highly regarded as the central or chief "religious" doctrines of Buddhism, because: (1) they explain the nature of reality and account for the human condition of bondage and its cessation, (2) they steer clear of the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, and strict determinism and indeterminism or accidentalism, and (3) they satisfy certain key concerns that a "religion" must fulfill to be "religious."

(1) Because of causality, everything is said to be characterized by impermanence, unsubstantiality, and dis-ease (anicca-, anattan-, and dukkha-). Causality or dependent co-origination (paṭiccasamuppāda-) says, "Whenever A is present B will occur, and whenever A is absent B will not occur." This uniform causal law has four characteristics: (1) the causal process is as real as the occurrence and nonoccurrence of events, i.e., "objectivity;" (2) without failure B will become when A is present and will not become when A is absent, i.e., "necessity;" (3) A will not produce C or D, etc., only B, i.e., "invariability;" and (4) A as the antecedent of B represents the mutual interaction of conditions which cause B to become actual, i.e., "conditionality." B then becomes a condition, which through interaction with other conditions, causes C to become, and so on. In this way, ignorance is the necessary condition for volitional formations, etc., which through interaction with other conditions, causes C to become, and so on. In this way, ignorance is the necessary condition for volitional formations, etc., which through their mutual interdependence and co-origination are the conditions which cause the disharmonious and unsatisfactory nature (dukkhatā-) of the human condition. This causes the

regeneration of ignorance, etc., here equal to the "Wheel of Becoming," i.e., samsāra-. Bondage (bandha-) is the continual regeneration of dukkha-.

To end this cycle of rebecoming (panubbhava-) one must cause the non-occurrence of ignorance and thirst through the occurrence of insight and self-control. This will lead to the nonoccurrence of the other members of the twelvefold causal chain and the complete cessation (nirodha-) or non-rebecoming (apunabbhava-) of dukkha-.

Based on their theory of causality, the Buddhist maintains that the world is empty (suñña-) of self-existent (sabhāva-) or substantial (attan-) entities. What we call "thing" are actually mental fabrications whose reality are purely subjective, since the objective world is empty of things as substantial entities. For conventional and relational purposes, we divide a dynamic world into seemingly static categories for communication, yet in an absolute or ultimate sense, even these categories are impermanent and unsubstantial, i.e., empty, because they too are causally conditioned like the external world they represent.

(2) According to Buddhist doctrine, one should never slip into holding onto the extremes of eternalism (sassatavāda-) and annihilationism (ucchedavāda-), and strict determinism and indeterminism or accidentalism. Eternalism posits a self-substantiated entity as the grounds for continuity (or as causal agents), in the case of an individual, an unchanging, immutable "self" or "soul" (attan-); while annihilationism denies continuity altogether (this denial by extension leads to the denial of kamma- and samsāra-). Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent self or self-existent things as causal agents, yet it does not go to the other extreme and deny continuity altogether. On the contrary, the theories of causality and unsubstantiality oppose "being" and "non-being" with "becoming."¹

Strict determinism (niyativāda-) maintains that everything which occurs is rigidly determined by what one did in the past (S.4:230), or that the individual has no control over his destiny or nature (a denial of self-causation and free will). Buddhism differs in that it maintains that individual effort is sometimes a factor in causal relations, and this is not strictly determined. "The proof of this was the empirical fact that we feel free to act and exercise our effort, called our 'initiative' (ārabhādātu) in many situations (A.III,337,338)."²

Indeterminism, accidentalism, or nihilism maintains that all events are fortuitous (adhiccasamuppāda- or yadrccha-), and that the world is chaotic and unpredictable, denying any uniform causal process (ahetuvāda-). A theory which believes that moral degradation and purity are due to fortuitous circumstances (S.3:69). Buddhism maintains that nihilism doesn't exist, rather ignorance of causes does exist. It counters with the four characteristics of causation (objectivity, necessity, invariability, and conditionality).

The doubts and fears of strict determinism and indeterminism become manifested as fatalism and skepticism. The fear of fatalism is "the fear that in fact the necessary and sufficient conditions of events leading to freedom are not such that they can be within my control, so that I 'have a choice,' as we say."³ It is the fear that nothing one can do can alter what is bound to happen. This does not allow the possibility of freedom, since the person is at the mercy of forces out of his control.

Skepticism fears that "the occurrences and nonoccurrences that are involved in the attainment of complete freedom are not regularly connected to necessary and sufficient conditions."⁴ It is the fear that nothing one can do can bring about hoped-for results. This does not allow the possi-

bility of freedom-to, since the person cannot anticipate and control those events which concern him because those events are irregularly connected. To control events he must be able to count on the recurrence of certain sequences and be confident his decisions and actions will be successful.⁵

Causality and unsubstantiality are termed the "Middle Way" because they steer clear of the above extremes. I should add here that the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya-aṭṭaṅgika-magga-) or in general the 37 Constituents of Enlightenment (bodhi-pakkiyā-dhammā, literally "truths which are parts of enlightenment") are regarded as the "Middle Way" which steers clear of the extremes of self-mortification and addiction to sensual pleasures. If one slips into holding onto any of these extremes, he will continue to wander in samsāra- and not gain release.

(3) In the Introduction I said that: "Religious man may be regarded as one who sees the human condition or existential situation as a serious problem, firmly believes that this condition can be overcome, and regards its resolution as his highest aspiration." (p. 1) Religious traditions provide its adherents with conceptual maps or schemes that project the nature of reality and man's position in it to explain "where" man is, "where" he should be heading, and "how" he is to get there, i.e., they explain the conditions which cause the human dilemma and the conditions necessary to overcome it, and provide guidance as to achieve certain hoped-for results. On the contrary, a "non-religious man may be regarded as one who (1) sees no dilemma or considers it as inconsequential, or (2) who sees the dilemma and regards it as serious, but is skeptical that there is a solution or that he can achieve certain hoped-for results" (foot-note #1, p. 3)

The chief doctrines of Buddhism, paṭiccasamuppāda- and anattan-, are

"religious" because they satisfy the concerns of "religious man," and because they avoid the characteristics, doubts and fears of "non-religious man." They establish bondage as a serious dilemma and insist that man has the capacities to gain freedom-from (i.e., self-control) and freedom-to (i.e., insight), i.e., complete freedom. The fact that Gotama Buddha had attained freedom makes freedom not only possible, but actual. In this way, the central doctrines of Buddhism become buttresses of faith because (1) they attempt to resolve the doubts and fears of fatalism and skepticism, and (2) they generate a deep conviction to purpose.

Since everything is impermanent, unsubstantial, and unsatisfactory, even these doctrine should be understood as empty of permanence, substantiality, and lasting satisfaction. One should never grasp onto them as absolute truths, but rather recognizes that they are but relative truths employed to guide the person from normality to nobility. In the same way as one having used a map to reach a desired destination no longer needs that map for further direction, or, just as a person who builds a temporary raft to cross a torrent river never carries that raft with him afterwards, so too, once a person has gained absolute understanding of reality as it really is, he no longer needs to rely on those relative truths to direct his thoughts and actions. Thus, the central doctrines beckon the Buddhist to gain that knowledge which transcends the normal realms of knowledge (see the chapter on conceptual mapping and on two truths in Buddhism).

Notes

¹Buddhiaghosa comments on the contemporary theories of his time which did not correspond to fact: "The first component will deny the false view of eternity and so on, and the second will prevent the nihilistic type of view and others like it, while the two together show the true way that is meant.

"The first: the word 'dependent (paṭicca)' indicates the combination of conditions since states in the process of occurring exist in dependence of the combining of their conditions; and it shows that they are not eternal, etc., thus denying the various doctrines of Eternalism, No-cause, Fictitious-cause, and Power-wielder (see Nyānamoli's footnote). What purpose indeed would the combining of conditions serve, if things were eternal, or if they occurred without a cause, and so on?

"The second: the word 'origination (samuppāda)' indicates the arising of states, since these occur when their conditions combine, and it shows how to prevent annihilationism, etc., thus preventing the various doctrines of Annihilation (of a Soul), Nihilism, ('there is no use in giving,' etc.,) and for when states (are seen to) arise again and again, each conditioned by its predecessor, how can the doctrines of Annihilationism, Nihilism, and Moral-inefficacy-of-action be maintained?

"The two taken together: since any given states are produced without interrupting the (cause-fruit) continuity of any given combination of conditions, the whole expression 'dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda)', represents the middle way, which rejects the doctrines 'He who acts is he who reaps' and 'One acts while another reaps' (S.ii,20), and which is the proper way described thus 'Not insisting on local language and not overriding normal usage' (M.iii,234)." Vis.17-21-24, trans. by Nyānamoli. Also for a discussion on the doctrines of eternalism and annihilationism see BE, vol. I, pp. 567-76.

²Early Buddhist⁰, p. 445. For a discussion on the notion of "free will" see Causality⁰, pp. 123-24.

³Presuppositions⁰, p. 50.

⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁵The analysis follows Potter's, Ibid., pp. 49-50.

HABITUAL BEHAVIOR (KAMMA-) AND RENUNCIATION (NEKKHAMMA-)

According to Buddhism, human behavior is determined by one of three factors: (1) external stimuli, (2) conscious motives, or (3) unconscious motives. The first is a reflex response caused by sensual contact with an external stimulus, e.g., "an innocent little baby lying on its back quickly draws back its hand or foot if it happens to touch a live ember."¹ Because such behavior is unmotivated (asañcetanika- or acetanika-), caused entirely by physical stimulation, the responsibility for it is not laid on the person himself.

Second, there is that activity which is volitional (cetanika-) in nature, determined by either conscious motives, such as attachment or greed (rāga-), aversion or hatred (dosa-), and delusion (moha-), or their absence (alobha-, adosa-, and amoha-); or, third, by unconscious motives such as the desire to perpetuate life (jīvitukāma-) and the desire to avoid death (amaritukāma-) (both related to what Freud called the "life instinct"), and the desire for pleasure (sukhakāma-) and aversion to pain (dukkhapatikkūla-) (both related to what Freud called the "pleasure principle"). These motives result from a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of existence and of the human personality complex. Since the later types of behavior are purely motivational or volitional, the individual may be held responsible for his behavior. It is this volitional type of activity to which we will be addressing ourselves.

"While human behavior is itself conditioned by cause, it is followed by correlated consequences. This correlation between action (karma) and consequence (vipaka or phala) constitutes the doctrine of karma in Buddhism."² Depending on the nature of kamma- and the circumstances in which it is com-

mitted, there will be appropriate consequences. The determinism between kamma- and phala- is conditional upon the circumstances in which the action is done. In this way, kamma- is individualistic, because it is dependent upon the particular personality of the individual at that moment and the circumstances in which the individual is personally involved.³

Kamma- may be defined as "intentional or willful activity with resultant effects." It is activity motivated by conscious and unconscious motives that desire to achieve desired results. Volition or conation (cetanā-) arises from the mental concomitants, co-operatives, or activators (saṃkhārā, "dispositions or attitudes," "volitional formations") and acts in attempting to obtain desired results or accomplishing tasks, i.e., cetanā- determines the action and the aim of action. Cetanā- functions as the determination of what is determined (i.e., desired).⁴ According to H.V. Guenther:

That which arouses and sustains activity on the part of the human psyche is called cetanā. Broadly speaking, it is a stimulus, and in a sense, may be considered as a motive and also as a drive. A drive is a stimulus that arouses persistent mass activity, and a motive is a stimulus that sustains activity until the stimulus is removed, as by eating in the case of hunger, or until the organism has moved out of the range of the stimulus, as in the case of a pin-prick. Since cetanā and Karman are synonymous . . . this idea of motive and drive applied to Karman would mean that the individual is bound and fettered to the effective range of Karman, hence the equation of attainment of Nirvāna and cessation of all Karman.⁵

"Volition is action, thus I say, bhikkhus, for as soon as volition arises one does the action, whether bodily, vocally, or mentally."⁶

Kamma- is action which strives to gain desired results, done for the sake of the doer, and ignorant that in reality there is no doer, let alone any object or result that is permanent, substantial, and satisfactory. When the motives and drives are removed by insight and self-control, then there occurs the cessation of all kamma-.

We may contrast kamma- as "forceful" activity in comparison to the

"nonforcefulness" of spontaneity⁷; or the activity of one who is bound by his habits in comparison to the man who is completely free. By forcefulness is meant essentially two things. First, kamma- is compulsive behavior caused by the force of habit(s).

The indispensable key to an understanding of the Buddha's therapeutic attack upon suffering is best grasped in the West through the concept of compulsive behavior, understood as behavior driven by unconscious motivations which exploit all powers of sensation and thought and thus permit the individual no alternative course of action. It is as though the basic needs of the individual were blocked and turned into neurotic, i.e., rigid and compulsive demands behavior is compulsive as long as it is motivated, i.e., aroused, driven, and controlled by forces of whose identity a person is unaware.⁸

Behavior of this nature is conditioned by ignorance (avijjā-, i.e., the lack of self-knowledge and insight) and by certain acquired dispositions (samkhārā) which affect either an attraction-to or repulsion-from or neutral reaction towards an object. As long as dispositions are present, coupled with ignorance, habitual activity will continually occur.

Second, habitual behavior (kamma-) is forceful because it causes in return either new habits or reinforces previous ones. This regeneration of habits forces man into habitual patterns or ruts which deny him flexibility and spontaneity. This cycle of habits breeding new habits is perpetuated by the impulse of ignorance and by the drive of thirst or craving (tanhā-) which causes intentional striving (kamma-) directed towards objects mistakenly presupposed as permanent, substantial, and satisfactory.

By ignorance the being fails to view the true impermanent and substanceless nature of existence. He relishes the things of the world, taking them to be real and lasting and creates a craving for them. Due to his cravings, he grasps to attain one and avoid the other. This craving leads to the continuity of his life-process, a chain of struggle for living. His cravings and graspings do not end with the destruction of his physical frame, but they keep the struggle on in another birth.⁹

Ignorance and thirst lead to subsequent attachment or clinging (upā-

dāna) to sensual objects. The behavior which we call kamma- is the behavior of one attached (by habit) to the fruits of action or to the objects which his actions are directed. The counterpart of kamma- is renunciation (nekkhamma-) and the counterpart of attachment or clinging is nonattachment (virāga-, literally "dispassion"). The necessary condition for both is the faith born of the conviction that one is capable of mastering whatever challenge confronts him. Without faith, even though the person maybe aware of his dilemma, he may refuse to exert his powers. This is resignation not renunciation.

The crucial difference between these two polar attitudinal concepts is that while the resigned man doubts his ability to master that which he is resigned to, the man who renounces is confident of his ability to gain that which he renounces but finds more mastery--greater freedom--in meeting the challenge of not exerting his power for gain. The man who renounces has faith in his powers, while the resigned man does not have faith and doubts his capacity to effect all that he wishes And that which signifies lack of faith is doubt, that doubt born of an inadequate conception of self, a conception of self broken off from others and from the world in which we live in some way sets limits on man's capacities in general. This doubt is manifested inwardly as fear, the fear that one is at the mercy of some or all of one's environment since it is irradicably other than oneself and thus incapable of being brought under control.¹⁰

Again, in this way Buddhism may be distinguished as a religion and its adherents religious (as opposed to the non-religious man) because they possess the firm conviction that man can overcome his present inadequate condition. The Buddhist has faith that complete freedom is possible, and that faith becomes the ultimate concern which directs his activities.

Renunciation refers to man's capacity to give up or renounce whatever gain or loss might result from exerting that capacity. This leads to nonattachment to the fruits of one's action.

We saw that as one succeeds in gaining control over nature, over others, and over himself, one inevitably runs the risk of being bound by his own success One who can manipulate the things of this world is tempted to use his ability to gain more goods, and so falls into bond-

age to the very ability which could be used by him as a lever toward self-improvement; the thing that is lacking in him is the right attitude toward wealth, namely, nonattachment to its presence or absence. Likewise, one who by his attractive personality can wield control over other human beings, who is loved by many, is tempted to use this ability for the gratification of his desires; he once again lacks the right attitude of nonattachment to the fruits of his ability. And finally, even one who has mastered himself, who has self-knowledge and self-control, may fall prey to the error of pride, and become self-satisfied and content in his own righteousness. Once again the source of error is a lack of the right attitude, for the proud man is here, perhaps without himself knowing it, forming a picture of himself and gives a false sense of security and contentment--false because it habituates him to ruts which rob him of resiliency in novel situations. The antidote to this is once more nonattachment to the satisfaction he derives from his ability to form this picture.¹¹

Although there is a distinction drawn between "good" and "bad" kamma-, from the standpoint of complete freedom all kamma- and karmic forces must be eliminated in order for complete freedom to occur. Even the adherent who is well on his way on the road to freedom will not reach his destination so long as his actions are directed towards desired results. The habits developed to gain a firmer footing on the path must eventually be dissolved, since they too deny flexibility and spontaneity. A person can become bound just as easily by good habits as by bad ones.

Whatever one does or refrains from doing in a situation is an action. Unless it is an act of renunciation it is bound to breed kamma-, bondage (bandha-), and suffering (dukkha-). For Buddhism, the choice of action is not between which action will have consequences which are desirable or not, but rather between acting attached to the fruits of action or acting unattached. The latter choice is the most crucial, since one leads to bondage, while the other, renunciation or nonattachment, leads to freedom. The ultimate value of action does not rest in the fruits of action, i.e., whether there results personal gain or loss, but intrinsically in acting freely, i.e., acting according to one's capacities, unrestrained by habitual forces.

Renunciation is the maximum concern for freedom alone.

A necessary condition for renunciation or self-control is insight.

It is necessary to have self-knowledge of one personality make-up and one's capacities in a given situation, and full awareness of the nature of the situation in order to successfully renounce and become free. One must be able to anticipate the results of his actions, as opposed to waiting in anticipation, in order to have full control over his actions. Insight, which replaces ignorance, and renunciation, which replaces thirst and clinging, are both the sufficient conditions for complete freedom.

The man endowed with insight (i.e., what amounts to freedom-to) and self-control (i.e., freedom-from), his behavior is of a nonforceful nature. By nonforcefulness is meant two things. First, it is spontaneous activity because it is free from the karmic forces of ignorance and thirst compelling the person to strive after desired objects; objects which in reality are empty (suññaⁿⁿ-). Spontaneity is the action of one who is at ease, resilient, insightful, and in full control of himself and the situation. This is in contrast to one whose actions are compelled by forces out of his control. Spontaneity is action free from attachment.

Second, the man who is completely free, his behavior is nonforceful because it does not reproduce new kamma-, which leads to bondage, etc.

From the proceeding analysis of kamma- and renunciation (nekkhamma-), one can surmise that the Buddhist conceives of man as one who possesses the sole ability to determine the nature of his personality and behavior. Ignorance, thirst, attachment, habits of mind and action are all of his own accord. Likewise, it is he alone who rids himself of these self-imposed forces which rob him of flexibility and spontaneity. It is the individual who causes his own bondage and brings about his own freedom.

Notes

¹M.1:324, trans. by Kalupahana, BP, p. 47.

²Ibid., p. 47.

³The proceeding paragraphs follow the explanation in BP, pp. 46-47.

⁴See Compendium^o, pp. 235-36.

⁵Guenther, Philosophy and Psychology of Abhidharma, Lucknow, 1957, p. 62.

⁶A.6:13. In respect to the five aggregates, the samkhāra's activate the other four.

⁷The idea of "forceful" and "nonforceful" are taken from Presuppositions^o, pp. 131-35.

⁸Nolan Jacobson, Buddhism: The Religion of Analysis, London, 1966, pp. 72-73.

⁹Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, The Abhidhamma Philosophy, p. 212, cited by Jacobson, Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁰Presuppositions^o, pp. 15-16.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 38-39.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
EVALUATION OF BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

This chapter is an examination of the word papañca- as it occurs in the Pāli Canon and its position within the Theravādin conception of the internal conscious process and the external perceived and interpreted world. It is also an examination of the Theravāda Buddhist analysis of the nature of discriminative knowledge (vinñāna-) in relation to the human condition or existential situation (i.e., samsāra-) and penetrative knowledge (pañña-) in relation to transcendence (i.e., nibbāna-).

Consciousness or Discriminative Knowledge (Vinñāna-)

The human dilemma of bondage arises from the conscious process and the forces which condition and regenerate it, when man mistakenly presupposes phenomena to be permanent, substantial, and satisfactory, as well as mistakenly identifying the continuum of conscious states as an abiding ego-entity underlying the entire process. As previously stated, "In Buddhism there is no actor apart from action, no percipient apart from perception. In other words, there is no conscious subject behind consciousness."¹

Consciousness (vinñāna-) may be defined as "a subject cognizant of an object," i.e., the subject (ārammaṇika-)-object (ārammaṇa-) relationship. It is conditioned by the delusion that an abiding subject underlies it and by the delusion that objects outside oneself can be conceived of as objective reals, i.e., that one's cognitions objectively reflect reality; and it is conditioned by certain acquired dispositions (samkhārā²) that affect either an attraction-to or repulsion-from, or neutral reaction towards a phenomenon. It is continually regenerated by the impulse of

ignorance, or in this case, the want of insight into the nature of reality, whereby all cognitions by their inherent nature are seen as delusions or empty, because both subject and object, as well as the judgments projected onto the world are held to be substantially real, while in truth they are empty. Consciousness is also regenerated by the drive of thirst or craving which causes habitual activity directed towards objects mistakenly presupposed as self-sufficient entities.

Vinnāna- may also be described as "discriminative knowledge" or as "cognition" (i.e., awareness + judgment).³ It is relative because it is the interacting relationship between the external perceived world and the internal conceived world. These relationships manifested as some sort of mental image, e.g., concepts, ideas, judgments, words, etc., relate the objective world into subjective terms. Because of ignorance, these relative notions are held by the illusionary self as objectively real. The word papañca- as found in the Nikāyas⁴ represents this interacting relationship. It serves the function of conceptualizing or differentiating the world into phenomena. In its subjective aspect it is consciousness, in its objective aspect it is the phenomenal world. I will have more to say about papañca- in the succeeding sections of this chapter.

The transitory character (aniccalakkhana-) of the human existence is represented internally by the fleeting moments of thought or states or consciousness, and externally by the slow, yet continuous change of the body. The Buddhist compare this to the flow of a river having its source in birth and its mouth in death.

Since birth and death are merely communicating doors from one life to another, the stream of causally connected processes--that is, continuous processes of consciousness (in which alone existence is represented)--is the medium uniting the different lives of an in-

dividual (as well as the different moments and phases within one life) there can be no question about the river's existence, and doubtless one can speak of its reality in a certain sense. But this is not objective in a material sense. It is the relations of material, temporal, and spatial kind, existing among the changing components, that form the constant element. In the same way, the constancy of relations in the ever renewing process of becoming conscious (being conscious does not exist in reality, but only constant becoming conscious), creates the illusion of an 'ego-entity' or an unchangeable personality.⁵

Consciousness is, according to Govinda's analysis, "a phenomenon of resistance--an obstruction of the stream of being"6 a result of the tension between two components: movement and inertia. Movement represents the radical becoming or transitoriness of all things. Inertia is the desire latent in the conscious process for permanence, substantiality, and satisfaction; and the desire for self-maintenance or the desire for duration in conscious beings represented by the notion of a persisting "self" in man. Figuratively speaking,

The Stream of Being, then, is an indispensable condition or factor, the sine qua non of present conscious existence; it is the raison d'être of individual life; it is the life-continuum; it is, as it were, the background on which thought pictures are drawn. It is comparable to the current of a river when it flows calmly on, unhindered by any obstacle, unruffled by any wind, unrippled by any wave; and neither receiving tributary waters, nor parting with its contents to the world. And when that current is opposed by an obstacle of thought from the world within or perturbed by tributary streams of the senses from the world without, then thoughts (vithi-citta's) arise. But it must not be supposed that the stream of being is a subplane from which thoughts rise to the surface. There is juxtaposition of momentary states of consciousness, subliminal and supraliminal, throughout a life-time and from existence to existence. But there is no superposition of such state.⁷

The tension or vibration between movement and inertia seemingly interrupts the stream of being. The longer this interruption continues the more intensive consciousness becomes.

Because consciousness itself, as a phenomenon of resistance, is a constantly renewed effort to persist, and in this respect, in every phase identical with the previous ones. Hence the experience "I am I." One could define furthermore: if consciousness is a phenomenon

of resistance it must appear the most intensive in those forms of existence which are exposed to the greatest obstacles.⁸

The more change, the more movement, the more oscillation of form, the stronger the desire for persistency becomes. It is under this tension between movement and the desire for inertia that consciousness operates.

The tension caused by an apparent obstruction to the Stream of Being, then, is the disharmony, disequilibrium, disjointedness, or dis-ease (duk-kha-) created when man psychologically sets himself in opposition to reality as it really is.

This mental disharmony is called *avijjā*, ignorance, or "Self"-delusion. Under its influence everything will be valued from the egocentric standpoint of desire (*taṇhā*) The very essence of life is change, while the essence of clinging is to retain, to stabilize, to prevent change. This is why change appears to us as suffering It is therefore not the "world" or its transitoriness which is the cause of suffering but our attitude towards it, our clinging to it, our thirst, our ignorance.⁹

Human behavior, whether it be craving (i.e., attraction-to), aversion or rejection (i.e., repulsion-from), or freedom from both extremes, depends on whether one is in harmony or disharmony with himself and the world, or whether one is endowed with insight and self-control or ignorance and thirst. Attraction-to and repulsion-from are attempts to adjust the tensions between a mistakenly presupposed self-existent "I" or "ego" and self-existent "this's" and "that's," either for the satisfaction of one's desires or to annihilate opposing forces. Every such volitional action (kamma-) occasions, in return, an equally strong reaction back to the source of action, i.e., back to the causal agent. Every desire begets more willing, every act of obstruction begets more resistance to change. Every act done for the sake of self-satisfaction is the seed sown which yields as its fruit more seeds to be sown later.

Harmony or equilibrium between subject and object cannot occur so long

as (1) the delusion of mistaking subject and object, and the judgments superimposed on both, as substantial entities occurs; so long as (2) consciousness continues to differentiate the world into "I's," "this's" and "that's" which have no objective basis; and so long as (3) an obsession for the so-called "things" of the world is present.

The impossibility of the equilibrium of the state of tension, the total discrepancy between subjective willing and objectively given facts, the disharmony between ideation and actuality, is what we call suffering. The conquest of this disharmony, of these idiosyncrasies, the losing of the above-mentioned tie, in short, the release into the state of inner freedom, does not come about through the suppression of the will, but through the removal of the vacuum, that is, through the annihilation of the illusion (consisting precisely in the taking of the ego for an absolute). All suffering arises from a false attitude. The world is neither good nor bad. It is solely our relationship to it which makes it either the one or the other.¹⁰

The world is never what we conceptually make it. The relationship of the "normal" person to the world is that of ignorance and thirst, of disharmony with himself and the external world, of personal struggle for and against forces subjectively interpreted as permanent, substantial, and satisfactory. The objects of one's perceptions become "I"-conditioned, differentiated as "things," clothed in attributes desirable and undesirable, set in contrast to other so-called "things" and from one's imaginary "self," all due to the presence of ignorance and thirst. The human dilemma arises from the conscious process, since for consciousness to function it must assume that both subject and object are substantially real. Objectively this does not correspond to fact. As such, the normal man can never see reality as it really is because he sees the world through the workings of the conscious mind, a mind conditioned by ignorance and thirst.¹¹

Buddhism recognized that all average and normal individuals gain knowledge from the interaction of their sense-faculties (of which mano- is one) and respective sense-objects. The resultant type of knowledge arising from this interaction is called papañca- "diversification, multiplicity, expansiveness." This term refers more or less to the mental and material organism as perceiver and the external world as perceived.¹²

Papañca- (pa + pañc-: "to spread out, expand, diffuse, manifest, etc.") may be translated as either "differentiation, diversification, or proliferation (of concepts)." It is the generic term used in the Nikāyas for the internal mental apparatus and the external world perceived and interpreted subjectively by the individual.

In the Madhupindika-sutta¹³ papañca- is connected with the process of sense-perception.¹⁴

- 1) Because of sight and material shapes, Brothers, visual consciousness (arises); the coming together of the three is sensual contact: because of sensual contact sensation (arises); . . .

An impersonal, nonsubjective tone is found only up to the point of feeling or sensation (vedanā-). The process now takes on a personal, subjective tense suggestive of deliberate or volitional activity (kamma-), evident by the change in grammatical structure.

- 2) . . . what one senses, one perceives; what one perceives, one reckons or reflects on (vitakketi); what one reckons, one differentiates or proliferates (conceptually) (papañceti); . . .

Vitakka- (reckoning, reasoning, reflecting) denotes the initial application of thought, while papañca- refers to the consequent prolificity in ideation. The tendency towards diversification of concepts is the fundamental sense of papañca- as applied here. The proliferation of concepts envisaged by papañca- tends to obscure objectively given facts received initially in the process of perception, inasmuch as it is an unwarranted deviation which eventually gives rise to an obsession¹⁵ for the so-called "things" differentiated.

The deliberate activity implied by the third person verbs, viz., vedeti (he senses), sañjānāti (he perceives), vitakketi (he reckons), and papañceti (he differentiates), ends at papañceti. What occurs next is the most telling stage of cognition. "Apparently, it is no longer a mere contingent process, nor is it an activity deliberately directed, but an inexorable subjection to an objective order of things. At this final stage of sense perception, he who has hitherto been the subject now becomes the hapless object."¹⁶

- 3) . . . what one differentiates or proliferates (conceptually), because of that, concepts characterized by obsessed perceptions assail a man in regard to the visible objects cognized by sight belonging to the past, present, and future (M.1:111)

This final passage refers to the world perceived by the prolific conceptualizing tendency of the conscious mind (papañca-saññā-samkhā). The person becomes overwhelmed or subjected by the concepts he has evolved. This is partly due to certain peculiarities inherent in the medium of language. Language is composed of conventional-relational verbal designations which are but symbolic representations of the real objective world, i.e., they are subjective expressions used to relate the objective world into conventional-relational modes of communication, whose reality is purely subjective, existent only in the mind. These designations enjoy a sense of relative stability in that they divide a dynamically becoming world into seemingly static beings. Because of ignorance, one will equate verbal designations with the things they point at, etc. (see pp. 20-21). Conditioned either by one or all of these mistaken presuppositions, and because of the constant differentiating tendency inherent in consciousness, papañca- weaves in the person "a labyrinthine network of concepts connecting the three periods of time through processes of recognition, retrospection, and speculation. The

tangle maze with its apparent objectivity entices the worlding and ultimately obsesses and overwhelms him. The Buddha has compared the aggregate of consciousness to a conjuror's trick or an illusion (māyā')

"'The Kinsman of the Sun' (the Buddha) has compared corporeality to a mass of foam, feelings to a bubble, perceptions to a mirage, volitional-activities to a plantain-tree, and consciousness to an illusion." (S.3:142)¹⁷

What differentiates the man who is free from the man who is bound is that the man who is completely free truly understands the nature of all conceptions, and as such, does not become obsessed by them. The man who is ignorant, at the mercy of his own "I"-conditioned thirsts, believes that concepts--e.g., wealth, fame, worth, prestige, position, poverty, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, good and evil, money, and so on--are objectively real, when in truth they are but relative subjective values.

For instance, people often argue over what they perceive to be "right" and "wrong," from a position they believe is absolutely true. A confrontation of opposing personal opinions often leads to verbal and sometimes physical conflict. When the confrontation is elevated to the level of a national ideology opposing another national ideology often the outcome is armed conflict. Wars are fought over mentally fabricated values, opinions, priorities, etc., because the parties involved are obsessed by what they perceive as right and wrong, valuable or desirable, etc., and act according to their perceptions.

All verbal designations are mental fabrications whose relative reality varies from person to person and from time to time. They are neither eternal nor substantial, and by no means would the Buddhist maintain, can they provide lasting satisfaction. Even verbal designations such as the four Noble Truths, or samsāra- and nibbāna-, should be understood as symbolic repre-

sentations of the human condition, its resolution, and the nature of existence, not as representations in an absolute sense. To penetrate beyond their inherent limitations, most important, to penetrate to the absolute truth beyond all relative projections one must gain that penetrative knowledge or insight (pañña-) which transcends the operations of the conscious mind.

What occurs in the process of sense-perception is that the mind (mano-) receives a sensation from a sense faculty (indriya-) having come in contact with its respective object (visaya-). After the point of sensation (vedanā-), the ego-consciousness intrudes thereafter fashioning the remaining process. The individual personality, then, subjectively interprets the sensation according to his disposition and his ideational and cognitive processes inherent in consciousness. In this case, papañca- refers to (1) the subject as perceiver obsessed by his own perceptions, and (2) the objective world as conceived by one's perceptions. ". . . we are told that the six spheres (āyatana-) of contact between the senses and their respective objects conduce to the operation of diversification and that both lead to disharmony or dukkha-:

Anguttara-Nikāya II.162-3:

So long as the six spheres of contact operate, brother, so too does diversification; so long as diversification operates, so too do the six spheres of contact. Brother, the cessation and calming down of diversification is due to the complete and passionless cessation of the six sense spheres of contact.

Other passages that may be related to the above are the following:

Sutta Nipāta 530:

Having severed each and every diversified mental and material (component) both internally and externally (as) the root of sickness, utterly freed from the bonds of the root of every sickness, such a person is proclaimed to be in reality the one who has found out.

Majjhima-Nikāya I.65

Monks, whatever toilers or brahmins do not penetratively know the arising and disappearance of these two false opinions (i.e., of annihilation and becoming), as well as (their) relish, danger, and escape as they really are, (they) are attached, (they) have aversion, (they) are deluded, (they) have craving, (they) have clinging, (they) are ignorant, (they) have approved (this attachment) and are obstructed (by anger), they take pleasure in diversification; (as such) they are not utterly freed from (re-)birth, ageing, sorrows, lamentations, physical pains, mental griefs, despairs, I say they are not utterly freed from disharmony.

Samyutta-Nikāya IV.71:

Men in general are possessed of the notion of diversification. Possessed of this notion they approach the artifice of diversification. Having dispelled all that consists of mano- (the thinking organ or process) and (all that) is connected to the lay-life, he approaches that which is connected to renunciation.

Sutta Nipāta 734:

Whatever disharmony arises, all (of it) comes from conditioned consciousness; with the cessation of conditioned consciousness disharmony also ceases.

"These passages reveal that empirical, sensual perception--indeed, the mental process--lead man to bondage in samsāra- or papañca-. The object of this process is ideated as the phenomenal world."¹⁸

Turning back to the Madhupindika-sutta, M.1:109:

If, O monk, one neither delights in, nor asserts, nor clings to, that which makes one subject to concepts characterized by the prolific tendency, then that itself is the end of the proclivities to attachment, views, pride, ignorance, and attachment to becoming. That itself is the end of taking the stick, of taking the weapon, of quarreling, contending, disputing, accusation, slander, and lying speech. Here it is that these evil unskilled states cease without residue.¹⁹

What one should neither delight in, nor assert, nor cling to are the conceptions which arise from the process of sense-perception, here a process which comprehends the objective world from a subjective point of view.

The obsessions generated by sense-perception are craving or thirst (taṇhā-), conceit (māna-), and dogmatic views (ditthi-) or speculations, all bound up

with the notions of "I" and "mine." The notion of an abiding ego or subject underlying consciousness is a fundamental presupposition of the subject-object relationship which is the very essence of vinñāna-. From the stage of vedanā- (sensation), the dichotomy or tension between subject and object is maintained until fully crystalized and justified at the level of conception. The paradox is the objective fact that the ego-notion is an extension (papañca-) in thought and not true to objective facts.

Given the ego-consciousness, the ever-prolific process of conceptualization in all its complex ramifications, sets in. From one aspect, the notion of "I" with its concomitant notions of "my" and "mine," develops towards craving (tanhā). Viewed from another aspect, as inevitably and inextricably bound up with the notions of "not-I," of "thou" and "thine," it is a form of measuring or value-judgment (māna). Yet another aspect is the dogmatic adherence to the concept of an ego as a theoretical formulation. Thus Craving, Conceit, and Views (tanhā, māna, ditthi) are but three aspects of the self-same ego-consciousness, and we find these alluded to in the Madhupindika Sutta by the expressions, "abhinanditabbam," "abhivaditabbam," and "ajjhositabbam" ("delights in, asserts, clings")

Of similar significance are the three standpoints from which the worldling is said to view each of his Five Aggregates when he thinks of them as "This is mine" ("etaṃ mama"), "This am I" ("eso'ham asmi"), "This is my self" ("eso me attā")

. . . the three terms Craving, Conceit, and Views . . . arise from the self-same matrix of the super-imposed ego, they are not to be considered mutually exclusive. Now the prolificity in concepts suggested by the term "papañca" manifests itself through the above three main channels, so much so that, the term has been traditionally associated with them

Craving, Conceit, and Views . . . these are therefore "definitions of extension," seeking to define "papañca" by giving its most notable instances.²⁰

We may now summarize the message of the Madhupindika-sutta. One may become free from the yoke of proliferating concepts, thereby eradicating the tension between subject and object, i.e., dukkha- (disharmony, disequilibrium, dis-ease), provided that one does not entertain or become obsessed by way of thirst, conceit, and dogmatic views with regard to the

phenomenal world as perceived subjectively through the process of sense-perception. As such, the person will not become entangled in disputes or conflicts with another over personal wants, value judgments, or speculations, theories, points of view, etc.; and free from personal biases and prejudices, and the proclivities towards objects believed to be eternal, substantial, and satisfactory, the person is free to see reality as it really is.

According, then, to the Madhupindika-sutta's formula of sense-perception, which may be regarded as the locus classicus for our examination of papañca-, papañca- is used as a generic term to describe (1) the individual as perceiver obsessed with (2) what he has conceived, i.e., the phenomenal world. The habitual or inveterate tendency towards differentiation which leads to the threefold obsessions (tanhā-, māna-, and diṭṭhi-) estranges the person from nibbāna-.

He who is given to differentiation, delighting in differentiation, he fails to gain nibbāna-, the unsurpassed freedom from bondage.²¹

And he who having given up differentiation, delighting on the path to nondifferentiation, he gains nibbāna-, the unsurpassed freedom from bondage.²¹

According to James Santucci:

The person in bondage . . . is incapable of seeing the world as it really is. His vision of it is limited by his mental apparatus (vedanā-, sannā-, samkhāra-, viññāna-) which in turn is clouded and made impure by the defilements (kilesa-), taints (āsava-), clings (upādāna-), etc.

The general conclusion we arrive at concerning papañca-, therefore, is that it is nothing but a perceptual or psychological technical term equivalent to samsāra.²²

The Vepacitti-sutta, S.4:202f., brings into clear relief the vicious differentiating tendency in the cognitive-ideational processes implied by papañca-, and the bondage it causes.

. . . so subtle, monks, is the bondage of Vepacitti, yet even more

subtle is the bondage of Māra. He who imagines, monks, is bound by Māra; he who does not imagine is freed from the Evil One. "I am," this is imagination. "I am this," this is imagination. "I will become," . . . "I will not become," . . . "I will become embodied," . . . "I will become formless," . . . "I will become perceptually aware or conscious (sānni, "having perception")," . . . "I will not become perceptually aware," . . . "I will become neither perceptually aware nor unaware," Imagination, monks, is a disease, imagination is an abscess, imagination is a barb. Whereby, monks, (you must say:) "we will abide with minds free from imagination." In this way, you must discipline yourselves.

"I am," monks, this is agitation

"I am," monks, this is palpitation

"I am," monks, this is differentiation or proliferation (of concepts)

"I am," monks, this is conceit

The delusion of an ego as the agent behind all action is the root of papaṇca- as well as imagination (maṇṇita-), agitation (inḍita-), palpitation (phandita-), and conceit (mānagata-). The notion "I am" is none other than this concept of an abiding ego which must be eliminated else the problem of bondage will continue. This is brought out clearly in the Tuṇḍaka-sutta, Sutta Nipāta 915-16:

I ask you, who are a kinsman of the Ādiccas and a great sage, about seclusion and the state of peace, with what manner of insight, and not grasping anything in this world, does a bhikkhu realize Nibbāna?

Let him completely cut off the root of concepts tinged with the prolific tendency, namely, the notion "I am the thinker." So said the Buddha, "Whatever inward cravings there be, let him train himself to subdue them being always mindful."²³

The mistaken assumption "I am" is said to be the root of all disharmony.

It leads to attachment or passion (rāga-), aversion or hatred (dosa-), and delusion (moha-), as well as their symptomatic manifestations in society as quarrels (kalaha-), strife (viggaha-), dispute (vivada-), conceit (mānātimāna-), slander (pesuṇṇa-), jealousy and avarice (issāmacchariya-), etc.

"To know" means to have a conditioning (and conditioned) apparatus

for interiorizing existence. Existence becomes human existence when it is interpreted; and human existence includes the interpretative scheme provided by cognition. A person apprehends that aspect of existence which his patterns of sensitivity permit him to perceive"24 Papañca- refers to the conscious activities which interpret the world according to one's personal proclivities, as well as the interpretation themselves translated into conceptions. In this case, papañca- is the interaction between "subject" and "object" established on the false criteria that endows both subject and object with self-existence (sabhāva-). Consciousness cannot occur without the subject-object relationship (i.e., the perceptions coalesce to form a phenomenon), whereby the three elements, viz., subject, object, and their relationship, are mutually interdependent for their momentary occurrence. As such, they cannot be considered as substantial entities, but as merely mental constructions or fabrications (papañca-). When ignorance and dispositions (avijjā- and saṃkhārā) are absent, then the inveterate tendency to proliferate conceptually and to become overwhelmed by either an attraction-to or repulsion-from what one conceived ceases to occur.

The conscious mind cannot exist independent of the "objects of knowledge" that appear to be external to the mind. It is this habitual tendency inherent in the conscious process to construct phenomena and to become obsessed by one's own constructions that is the source of bondage.

From a subjective orientation, the construction of the phenomenal world was seen to depend on craving (trṣṇā) for illusory "things;" this construction, however, resulted in binding the energies of life, and this bondage is experience as sorrow (dukkha).25

In contrast, when one fully realizes that his mental constructions are empty (suñña-), then the false criteria which establishes differentia-

tion (papañca-) dissipates freeing him from the net of his own thoughts. One becomes completely aware that there is no "thing" dissipated nor a dissipator asided from the conventional-relational notions regarding these concepts. In this way, the liberated man is released from thirsting for and after illusionary ultimates and converts his energies from binding constructions to liberating distintegration.

The man endowed with "religious" or "saving knowledge" understands that there is no "being" outside of "being verbally designated." He knows this not because such knowledge melts away the frozen distinctions of concepts back to some preexisting essence, nor because it relates facts and feelings to an individual self-consciousness or ego, rather, because the insightful and self-controlled man sees that all things are empty of sabhāva- (self-existence). There is no ultimate essence or essences and no abiding subject behind consciousness. And because the man endowed with saving knowledge sees all things as empty, he neither has hatred or desire for them. He has no desire to control them and realizes that they cannot control him.

According to Buddhist doctrine, then, man must realize that there are no distinctions between things because that which is distinguished has some kind of intrinsic reality which "marks" it off from something else, and this is contrary to fact.

What human beings perceive as distinctive entities or segments of existence is a result of mental fabrications. These entities . . . do not exist in themselves; they exist because they are "named"--distinguished from something else. And the names given to that conglomerate of impulses, perceptions, and sensations called "things" are useful only for practical, conventional level of life.²⁶

The dilemma of papañca- is that the person slips into the error of regarding these conventional-relational distinctions as absolute facts, unable

to see that these distinctions are actually empty of objective reality.

Every object of perception or imagination requires a mental fabrication, and therefore every distinction participates in this fabrication If, on the other hand, this distinction is accompanied by the assumption or conviction of an absolute reality, then psychic energies are stimulated which bind the person to the fabrication. It is being bound to fabrication which is samsāra. Because of the danger in language to posit an essential reality with ideas, mental activity has been regarded with disfavor as a means for realizing Ultimate Truth.²⁷

It is ignorance and thirst which lead to attachment in regard to concepts and the habitual tendency to conceptualize and become obsessed with one's own mental constructions that is the source of bondage. In this way, papañca- is a technical term used as a synonym for samsāra-. The route to freedom from bondage to concepts is the path of nondifferentiation.

To gain freedom, we must train ourselves not to think of an "I" distinct from a "that," and to do that, we must train ourselves not to think of "thats" clothed in different attributes. By doing this, we gain freedom; we also gain a direct insight into things-in-themselves which constitutes the stream of reality

Nondifferentiation (Nippapañca-), Insight or Penetrative Knowledge (Pannā-), and Freedom (Vimokkha-)

The path of nondifferentiation or nonproliferation of concepts (nippapañca-) is discussed in the Sakkapañha-sutta of the Digha-Nikāya.²⁹

In this discourse, the Buddha traces the origin of disharmony through a causally connected series of mental stages, viz.: enviousness and selfishness (issā-macchariya-) arise because of proclivities towards things liked and disliked (piyappiya-); things liked and disliked arise because of desire (chanda-); desire from ratiocination or reckoning (vitakka-); and ratiocination from concepts characterized by obsessed perceptions (papañca-saṇṇā-samkhā-). The path leading to the cessation of papañca-saṇṇā-samkhā- consists of a method of mental cultivation (bhāvanā-) aimed at the progressive elimination of vitakka- and vicārā- (initial and sustained thought).³⁰

According to the Sakkapañña-sutta:

But how, sir, has that bhikkhu gone about, who has reached the path suitable for and leading to the cessation of concepts tinged with the proliferating tendency?

Happiness, ruler of gods, I declare to be twofold, according as it is to be followed after or avoided. Unhappiness too, I declare to be twofold Equanimity, too, I declare to be twofold

And the distinction I have affirmed in happiness, was drawn on these grounds: When in following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities develop and good qualities are diminished that kind of happiness should be avoided. And when following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities are diminished and good qualities develop, then such happiness should be followed. Now of such happiness as is accompanied by ratiocination (vitakka) and of such as is not accompanied, the latter is more excellent.

Again, ruler of gods, when I declare unhappiness to be twofold . . . the latter is the more excellent Again, ruler of gods, when I declare equanimity to be twofold . . . the latter is the more excellent.

And it is in this wise that a bhikkhu, O ruler of gods, must have gone about, who has reached the path suitable for the leading to the cessation of concepts tinged with the proliferating tendency.³¹

It is important to note that although vitakka- and vicārā- are used to develop the cultivation of wholesome mental states and conducive to the elimination of unwholesome mental states, they themselves, in turn, must be eliminated to make way for penetrative knowledge or insight (pañña-). This is achieved much in the same way as a carpenter driving out a blunt peg with a succession of sharper ones, whereby each successive peg is replaced by a sharper one until finally the carpenter is able to pull out with ease the sharpest of them all.³² A description of the progressive elimination of the tendency to differentiate appears in the Potthapāda-sutta, D.1:184f.:

So, from the time Potthapāda, that the bhikkhu is thus conscious in a way brought about by himself (i.e., from the time of the First Rapture³³), he goes on from one stage to the next, and from that to the next, until he reaches the summit of consciousness. And when he is on the summit of consciousness, it may occur to him: "To be

thinking at all, is the inferior state. It were better not to be thinking. Were I to go on thinking and fancying these ideas, these states of consciousness, I have reached, would pass away, but other coarser ones, might arise. And so I will neither think or fancy any more." And he does not. And to him neither thinking any more, nor fancying, the ideas, the states of consciousness he had, pass away; and no others, coarser than they arise. So he touches (the state of) Cessation. Thus is it, Paṭṭhapāda, that the mindful attainment of the cessation of perceptions takes place step by step.³⁴

The sutta- explains how the person steps out of the obsessive centripetal forces of papaṇca- having gone through the levels of consciousness until he transcends that mode of knowledge with the highest sphere of knowledge, i.e., penetrative knowledge (pañña-) which penetrates the veils of illusion --i.e., mental constructions--to see reality as it really is. This sense of transcendence is evident in the Uraga-sutta of the Sutta Nipāta, 7-8:

From whom (all) reckoning (vitakka-) which has been subjectively fabricated are destroyed without residue, that bhikkhu renounces the higher and lower realms just as a snake (sheds) its worn-out skin.

He who neither goes beyond (or transgresses) or lags behind, he has transcended all obsession (papaṇca-), that bhikkhu renounces the higher and lower realms just as a snake (sheds) its worn-out skin.

Ethically speaking, the person who has successfully renounced the fruits of action sees that those once conceived fruits or aims of intentional action (kamma-) are actually empty. He "neither transgresses nor lags behind," i.e., he no longer intentionally acts overwhelmed by his projections of what he differentiates as desirable and nondesirable.

The consummation of the discipline of sense-restraint develops the mental capacity to refrain from thinking "in terms of" (maññanā-) sensory data. According to the Bodhivagga of the Udāna:

Then, Bāhiya, thus must you train yourself: "In the seen there will be just the seen; in the heard, just the heard; in the sensed (i.e., the sense impressions received by smelling, tasting, and touching), just the sensed; in the cognized, just the cognized. That is how, O Bāhiya, you must train yourself. Now, when, Bāhiya, in the seen

there will be to you just the seen, in the heard . . . just the cognized, then Bāhiya, you will have no 'thereby;' when you have no 'thereby,' then Bāhiya, you will have no 'therein;' as you, Bāhiya, will have no 'therein' it follows that you will have no 'here' or 'beyond,' or 'midway-between.' That is just the end of III."35

^N
Bhikkhu Nāṇananda comments on this passage:

The first part of the exhortation presents succinctly the sum-total of sense-restraint, while the latter part interprets the philosophy behind it. This sense-restraint consists in "stopping-short," at the level of sense-data without being led astray by them. He who succeeds in this, has truly comprehended the nature of sense-data so that he no longer thinks in terms of them ('na tena' = no 'thereby;' 'na tattha' = no 'therein'). He has thus transcended the superstitions of the grammatical structure as also the verbal dichotomy (nev'idha, na huraṃ, na ubhayamantare = 'neither here nor beyond nor midway-between'). In short, he has attained the Goal.³⁶

In this way, nippapaṇca^N-, the aim of sense-restraint, is used as a synonym for nibbāna- much like papaṇca^N- for samsāra-. As a result of the consummation of the path of nondifferentiation the person desist from vain striving (kaṃma-) caused as a result of the habitual tendency to proliferate conceptually, whereby one clings to his subjective interpretations slipping into unreality and disharmony. The path of nippapaṇca^N- enables the disciple to stand aloof and view all sense-data objectively. Such a vision is free from attachment, aversion, and delusion (raga-, dosa-, and moha-).

The clear, immediate, intuitive, objective (,etc.) discernment or vision of reality as it really is is known as pañṇa^{NN}-: "penetrative knowledge, insight, (the highest) knowledge or understanding, wisdom, etc."

Wisdom is a "means of knowing" which releases a person from the attachment to things . . . wisdom is the presupposition for, and the culmination of, the negation of self-sufficient entities. The aim of wisdom is to melt the chains of greed and thirst for possession of "things." Or to state the same thing from the viewpoint of a religious goal, its aim is to relate oneself to all "things" in a empty relationship, i.e., total freedom.³⁷

According to Buddhaghosa, pañṇa^{NN}- "is knowledge consisting in insight associated with wholesome thought."³⁸ He continues in a lengthy descrip-

tion of (1) "in what sense is it penetrative knowledge?", and (2) "what are its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause?"³⁹

It is understanding (paññā) in the sense of act of understanding (pañānana). What is this act of understanding? It is knowing (jānana) in a particular mode separate from the modes of perceiving (sañjānana) and cognizing (vi-jānana). For though the state of knowing (jānana-bhāva) is equally present in perception (sannā), in consciousness (vinñāna), and in understanding (paññā), nevertheless perception is only the mere perceiving of an object as, say, "blue" or "yellow;" it cannot bring about the penetration of its characteristics as impermanent, painful, and not-self. Consciousness knows the object as blue and yellow, and it brings about the penetration of its characteristics, but it cannot bring about, by endeavouring, the manifestation of the (supermundane) path. Understanding knows the object in the way already stated, it brings about the penetration of the characteristics and it brings about, by endeavouring, the manifestation of the path.

That is why this act of understanding should be understood as "knowing in a particular mode separate from the modes of perceiving and cognizing." For that is what the words "it is understanding in the sense of act of understanding" refer to.

Understanding has the characteristic of penetrating⁴⁰ the individual essence of states (i.e., their individual nature). Its function is to abolish the darkness of delusion, which conceals the individual essences of states. It is manifested as non-delusion. Because of the words "One who is concentrated knows and sees correctly" its proximate cause is concentration (samādhi).⁴¹

From this passage four things can be established: (1) paññā- is distinguished from sannā- and vinñāna- because (2) sannā- and vinñāna- are not equated with the conditions which cause the occurrence of complete freedom, therefore, (3) paññā- is the highest means of knowledge because it is associated with the highest goal, nibbāna-; and (4), there is a correlation between knowledge and vision, e.g., one who knows sees reality as it really is. I will have more to say about this point latter.

Perception and consciousness are legitimate means of knowledge in regards to conventional-relational matters, but because they differentiate the world into "I" and "non-I," "this's" and "that's," they fail to free the person from the mistaken assumption of nicca-, attan-, and sukha-

(permanence, substantiality, and satisfaction). What distinguishes paññā- from sannā- and vinñāṇa- is that the person endowed with penetrative knowledge is completely free from ignorance and thirst; ignorance defined as "the nonpenetration of the Noble Truths," while paññā- is "the penetration of the Noble Truths." Paññā- dispells ignorance, thirst, etc., and brings about the complete cessation of bondage and the occurrence of freedom.

Penetrative knowledge is associated with nippapañca-, yet one step beyond, in that it completely realizes that distinctions constructed for conventional-relational purposes in the phenomenal world are never to be confused with absolute truth which knows these distinctions as empty. Paññā- is the knowledge of "emptiness" (suñnatā-), whereby one endowed with paññā- realizes that even the notion of "emptiness" is not an expression of "something," nor is it a proposition about something.

Penetrative knowledge, though it is a perfection of man's intellect, is not to be equated with conceptual knowledge. It functions by draining away all attachments to entities which are actually mental and emotional fabrications.

This capacity (to differentiate and to become attached to what one differentiates) exists because the mind or consciousness does not exist independent of the "objects of knowledge" that appear external to the mind From early Buddhism onward, the conscious mind (vinñāṇa, viññāṇa) was understood not as a faculty that existed independent of perceived objects, but as arising from the interaction of "subjective" and "objective" elements. As every existing thing, the conscious mind is something which has "become;" and the becoming is due to "food," i.e., a stimulus. If the stimulus ceases, then "what becomes" ceases.

Wisdom is, in part, a concentrative exercise which dissolves the mental and emotional attachment of the apparent mind to "things" (including ideas or assertions), for it is the awareness that all "things" are empty.⁴²

The insightful and self-controlled man does not rely on anything, worldly or otherwise, but lets it all go "to give the resulting emptiness

a free run, unobstructed by anything whatever, or by the fight against it. To stop relying on anything, to seek nowhere any refuge or support, that is to be supported by the 'perfection of wisdom.'⁴³ Pannā- is the mental capacity or power which operates spontaneously, free from the habitual tendency to differentiate and to become attached to what one differentiates; and as the perfection of man's intelligence, it transcends conventional-relational knowledge with the penetration of absolute truth (= to reality as it really is). Mrs. Rhys Davids writes:

Pannā was not simply exercise of thought on matters of general knowledge and practice, nor was it dialectic, nor desultory reverie. It was intelligence diverted by--or rather as--concentrated volition, from lower practical issues till, as a fusion of sympathy, synthesis, synergy, it "made to become" that spiritual vision which had not been before.⁴⁴

In Buddhism, "becoming" and "knowledge" are coextensive. The character of the individual "becomes" or changes along the scale from ignorance to insight. The unenlightened man constructs his own world through his discriminative knowledge (vinñāna-) and produces attachments in the process. So long as he differentiates the world into so-called "things" and his energies (kamma-) continue this mental and emotional construction and the attachment which follows, the ignorant man will remain continually in bondage, constantly in disharmony within and without. Mrs. Rhys Davids describes the dilemma:

Thinking results in desire, through desire objects are divided into what we like and what we dislike, hence envy and selfishness, hence quarreling and fighting.⁴⁵

The binding energies (kamma-) dissipate when one achieves that penetration that all fabricated phenomena are empty of self-existence. When one truly sees the world objectively, as it really is, then his vision and action will no longer be in disharmony (dukkha-) to the way things are.⁴⁶

The man of insight and knowledge (vipassanā-nāna- = paññā-) no longer has his energies bound by his ignorance and thirst, nor his vision of reality impaired by subjective superimpositions. He is completely free.

Paññā- should be understood not as a means to an end, but the end in itself.

The ignorant man is bound, while the man of insight and knowledge is free.

Freedom or liberation (vimokkha-) is said to be three fold:

They are these three, namely, the signless, the desireless, and the void. For this is said: "When one who has great resolution brings (formations) to mind as impermanent, he acquires the signless liberation. When one who has great tranquillity brings (them) to mind as painful, he acquires the desireless liberation. When one who has great wisdom brings (them) to mind as not-self, he acquires the void aspect of liberation."⁴⁷

Shwe Aung remarks:

It is termed the "Signless" (animitta) when the meditator contemplates things as impermanent by ridding his mind of the signs of the three delusions--namely, of the hallucination of perception, thought, and views (sannā-vipallāsa, citta-vipallāsa, and diṭṭhi-vipallāsa), which have led mankind to believe that impermanent things are permanent. It is termed "the Undesired" (appaṇihita) when he contemplates things as evil by ridding his mind of the craving which lead mankind to covet things as if they were good. It is termed "the Void," or "Emptiness" (suñnatā), when he contemplates things as unsubstantial by ridding his mind of the idea of an ego, or soul.⁴⁸

In this way, freedom or liberation (vimokkha-) is equal to paññā- in that freedom is equate with the man endowed with penetrative knowledge who sees things as they really as, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and unsubstantial, and who, because of such knowledge, is no longer attached.

To conclude, according to Frederick Streng:

. . . (Paññā-) which permitted one "to see things as they really are," was significant from a religious point of view since one "became" what one knew

In summary we would say that the insight into the emptiness of all things destroyed illusion; for this illusion was created by positing self-existence on "things" distinguished by perception or imagination. Wisdom was not itself an ultimate view, nor was it an assertion about an absolute being. Wisdom was the practice (carya) of dissolving the grasping-after-hoped-for-ultimates either in the phenomenal world or

the realm of ideas. To know "emptiness" was to realize emptiness.⁴⁹ I.e., to realize that all things are empty means to live a life empty or void of attachments to things which are in reality empty.

Knowledge and Vision (Nāṇadassana-)

Throughout the Nikāyas the emphasis was on personal and direct knowledge as the condition necessary for freedom. Knowledge was described as one seeing. The Buddha was said to be one who "knowing, knows and seeing, sees having become sight and knowledge."⁵⁰ This characteristic description of the Buddha as "the knowing and seeing one" (jānatā passatā⁵¹) is usually said of what he claims to know that he both "knows and sees" (tam ahaṃ jānāmi passāmi ti⁵²). The central doctrines or truths of Buddhism are "seen." One "comprehends the Noble Truths and sees them."⁵³ Nibbāna- is "seen" (nibbānaṃ passeyyan ti⁵⁴) analogously to the seeing of a man previously blind having been cured by a physician.

The Buddha is one who "has knowledge and insight into all things" (sabbesu dhammesu ca nāṇa-dassī, Sutta Nipata 478) and "the religious life is lead under the Exalted One for the knowledge, insight, attainment, realization and comprehension of what is not known, not seen, not attained, not realized and not comprehended" (A. IV.384). It is said that the statement "I know, I see" is descriptive of one who claims to such knowledge is closely associated with bhāvanā-vāda or the claim to mental culture and development through meditation (A. IV.42,44).⁵⁵

When it was said that this knowledge was to be had "personally" or "individually" (sāmaṃ) it is necessary to point out that what is meant is not that his knowledge was incommunicable or subjective. The primary reason for the frequent use of 'sāmaṃ' to qualify the verb from dr̥ś in these contexts, seems to be to emphasize the fact that his knowledge is to be had by directly seeing "oneself" and not indirectly by hearing it from some source (as in the Vedic tradition).

It is said "a monk does not hear that in such and such a village there was a beautiful girl or woman but has himself seen her (sāmaṃ passati)."⁵⁷

The distinction is that he has himself seen her instead of assuming it to

be the case having heard it from some authority. In the same way, one having heard the teaching (dhamma-) cultivates (bhāvanā-) his mental capacities to perfection so that he may see the dhamma- himself. The Buddha emphasizes that "he has seen it by himself . . . and he is not saying so after having heard from another recluse or brahmin."⁵⁸ "Would it be proper," he remarked, "for him to say so . . . if he had not known, seen, experienced, realized, and apprehended with his penetrative knowledge (pañña-)?"⁵⁹ The Buddha claims that what he preaches he himself has personally verified and instructs his adherents to verify the dhamma- for themselves: "Let an intelligent person come to me, sincere, honest, and straightforward; I shall instruct him and teach the doctrines so that on my instructions he would conduct himself in such a way that before long he would himself know and himself see" ⁶⁰

The dhamma-, which is described as "bearing fruit in this life before long, an invitation to 'come and see,' leading to the goal and verifiable by the wise,"⁶¹ is to be personally realized; yet it is not a private or subjective experience which cannot be communicated or related in some limited fashion (please turn back to the discussion on Conceptual Mapping, pp. 5-7). The point is that although one's knowledge can be communicated in some distorted relative projection, that knowledge must be directly realized by one to whom the knowledge was related; i.e., to realize the Buddha's teaching, which relates his knowledge and vision of reality in conventional modes of communication, one must transcend those modes of knowledge and gain that knowledge and vision of reality which is direct, intuitive, and objective. This knowledge is gained by one's own initiative, as a product of the natural development of the mind due to the operation of causal processes and not derived from some supernatural source.

Buddhism stresses the importance of eliminating subjective bias and getting rid of habits of mind which cause the person to fall into error.

The first school of Sceptics said that truth cannot be arrived at and it was always a subjective factor such as attachment (*chando*), passion (*rāgo*), hate (*doso*), or repulsion (*paṭigho*), which makes one accept a proposition as true We see the influence (on Buddhism) of the above doctrine of the Sceptics where it is said that there are "four ways of falling into injustice" or untruth (*agati-gammanāni*, A. II.18), namely out of attachment (*chanda-*), hatred (*dosa-*), ignorance (*moha-*), and fear (*bhaya-*); the arahant or the "ideal person" in Buddhism is not misled in any of these four ways (D. III,133).⁶²

The important difference (especially from a religious point of view) between Buddhism and skepticism is that Buddhism is not totally skeptical in regards to the possibility of realizing the truth objectively. One's emotional dispositions, whether it be one's like or dislikes, can distort the truth and the Buddha warns his disciples, "If others were to speak ill of me, the *dhamma-*, and the *saṃgha-* (the "order" or "community" of monks), do not bear any hatred or ill-will towards them or be displeased at heart . . . for if you were to be enraged and upset, will you be able to know whether these statements (criticisms) of others were fair or not?" Or, "if others were to speak in praise of me, my *dhamma-*, or my *saṃgha-*, you should not be happy, delighted, and elated at heart . . . for if you were to be happy, delighted, and elated at heart, it will only be a danger to you"

For any statement to be true it must be established on evidence that warrents its assertion and not on the grounds of one's personal prejudice.

The terms used for "true" or "truth" are *bhūta-* and *tacca-*.⁶⁴

The use of *bhūta* in the sense of "true" is significant for it literally for it literally means "fact, i.e., what has become, taken place or happened." Likewise *yathābhūta*, which means "in accordance with fact," is often used synonymously with truth. It is the object of knowledge-- "one knows what is in accordance with fact" (*yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, D. I.83,84) Falsity is here defined as the denial of fact or as

what does not accord with fact.⁶⁵

To ascertain the facts clearly, one's mind must be empty of subjective bias and habits of mind, else the facts will become obscured. The penetration of truth (= to the reality of a given situation rightly ascertained and understood) is not established on one's subjective biases and prejudices, but rather on the direct, intuitive, objective knowledge and vision of reality as it really is (yathābhūta).

The impact of strong desire or thirst (taṇhā-) is also clearly recognized in Buddhist doctrine. One causal statement made is that "because of thirst clinging (occurs) . . ." (taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ⁶⁶). Clinging is described as fourfold: (1) clinging to sensual desires (kāmapādāna-), (2) clinging to rituals (sīlabbhatupādāna-), (3) clinging to dogmatic and/or metaphysical speculations (ditṭhupādāna-), and (4) clinging to theories of soul or substantiality (attavādupādāna-). Our concern here is with the latter two types of clinging. One believes in certain dogmatic views and theories of soul or substantiality because he is compelled by his desires to believe in that way, whereby, it may be said that one's desires and outlook or understanding are correlated. These desires (taṇhā-) are analyzed as threefold: (1) the thirst for sensual pleasures or sens-gratification (kāmatāṇhā-), (2) the thirst for becoming or personal immortality (bhavataṇhā-), and (3) the thirst for nonbecoming or annihilation (vibhavataṇhā-).⁶⁷ Although these strong desires were not correlated with any particular beliefs in the Pāli Canon, most probably it would have been said that those who desired personal immortality would have believed in a theory of personal immortality (bhavadiṭṭhi-⁶⁸), while those who had a strong desire for annihilation or power⁶⁹ would have believed in an annihilationist (i.e., Materialist) theory (vibhavadiṭṭhi-⁷⁰).

The beliefs in soul and substance thus not only have their origins in our linguistic habits ⁷¹ but also in a craving in us to believe in them The stress laid on the importance of eliminating subjective bias is therefore probably due to the realization of this impact of desire on belief. The objectivity that should be achieved in introspection after attaining the fourth jhāna (i.e., stage or trance of meditation⁷²) is described as follows: "Just as one person should objectively observe another, a person standing should observe a person seated or a person seated a person lying down, even so, should one's object of introspection be well-apprehended, well-reflected upon, well-contemplated and well-penetrated with one's knowledge" (A. III, 27). This emphasis on the importance of getting rid of our prejudices and habits of mind, which make us fall into error reminds us of Bacon's "idols," which according to him interfere with the objectivity of our thinking.⁷³

In short, to gain that knowledge and vision of things as they really are (yathābhūta), which consist of knowing and seeing "what exists as 'existing' and what does not exist as 'not existing'," ⁷⁴ is partly established by eliminating subjective biases, certain habits of thinking, and desires considered to be nonconducive to the penetration of things.

What, then, is the means of knowledge which constitutes this alleged objective "knowledge and vision" (nānadassana-) or "knowing and seeing" (jānāti passati)? We may dismiss the sources of knowledge such as divine revelation, testimony, and reasoning in the sense of takka- (i.e., indirect proof or a priori proof) as the means of knowing and seeing because these means are indirect and not personally genuine. "Proper reflection (yoniso manasikāra) involves both experience and reflection or reasoning. Thus the Buddha recognized experience both sensory and extrasensory, and reasoning or inference based on experience as sources of knowledge."⁷⁵

Direct perception, both sensory and extrasensory, provides man with the knowledge of phenomena (dhamme ñāna), and on the basis of this direct knowledge, the Buddha made inductive inferences with regard to the universality of (1) causality (paṭiccasamuppāda), (2) impermanence (aniccatā), (3) unsatisfactoriness (dukkhatā), and (4) non-substantiality (anattatā). These inferences came to be known as inferential knowledge (anvaye ñāna).⁷⁶

Knowledge and vision (nānadassana-) also denotes not only "knowledge

and insight of things as they really are" (yathābhūta-[✓]nānadassana-), but distinguishes as well the "knowledge and insight of complete freedom" (vi-mutti-[✓]nānadassana-), e.g., "there arose in me the knowledge and insight that my freedom is unshakable, that this is the last birth, and that there is no further rebirth."⁷⁷ In this sense, nānadassana- is equivalent to aññā- (final knowledge), a term used exclusively to denote this knowledge of final salvation.⁷⁸

The means of perception are both normal (i.e., sensory) and paranormal (i.e., extrasensory). For perception to be objective it must be characterized by nippapañca-. Both sensory and extrasensory perception have their corresponding objects, and the objects of extrasensory perception are those not perceived by the normal sense faculties. "The difference between the two forms of perception seems to be a difference in the degree of penetration"⁷⁹; whereas, in the Niddesa 1:323 it is said, "He saw with his telepathic knowledge . . . retrocognitive knowledge . . . his human eye or divine eye." The difference between sensory and extrasensory perception is that "the percipient seer using, as it were, another sense--paññā-, or dibba-cakkhu---not the 'eye of flesh'."⁸⁰ What is meant by "seen" may denote either normal or paranormal perception, however, nānadassana- generally is used to denote the knowledge and vision derived from extrasensory perception. In this way, "knowledge and vision" or "knowing and seeing" are mainly, though not exclusively, a byproduct of mental concentration (samādhi-). When the Buddha says that "there arose in him the knowledge and vision that Uddaka Rāmaputta had died the previous night,"⁸¹ it must be presumed that his knowledge and vision was had by means of extrasensory perception.

"The extrasensory perceptions or powers (abhiññā) recognized in early

Buddhism are as follows:

1. Psychokinesis (iddhividha), which is not a form of knowledge but a power. It consist in the various manifestations of the 'power of will' (adhiṭṭhāna iddhi) in the jhānas.
2. Clairaudience (dibbasota), the faculty of perceiving sounds even at a distance, far beyond the range of ordinary auditory faculties. This extension of auditory perception both in extent and in depth enable the person to perceive directly correlated phenomena which are otherwise only inferred.
3. Telepathy (cetopariyañāna), which enable one to comprehend the general state as well as the functioning of anothers mind.
4. Retrocognition (pubbenivāsānussatiñāna), the ability to perceive one's own past history. It is dependent on memory (sati), and this memory of past existence is attained through acts of intensive concentration (samādhi), as in the development of other faculties.
5. Clairvoyance (dibbacakkhu or cut'ūpapātāñāna), the knowledge of the decease and survival of other beings who wander in the cycle of existence in accordance with their behavior (karma). This together with retrocognition, enables one to verify the phenomenon of rebirth.
6. Knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses (āsavakkhayañāna) which, together with the last four mentioned above, provides an insight into the four Noble Truths."⁸²

Inference (anumāna-) or inductive knowledge (anayañāna-) is based on the knowledge of causality, established on the data of perception both normal and paranormal, whereby inferential knowledge is the knowledge that a causal sequence or concomitant observed to hold good in a number of present instances would as well have taken place in the unobserved past and will take place in the unobserved future. For example, the statement that "because of birth ageing and dying (occur)" (jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇam⁸³) is an empirical generalization based on the observation that all those who are "known and seen" to be born eventually age and die. From observed cases, then, the inductive knowledge (anayañāna-) is made that all those who are born are subject to ageing and dying, whether in the past or in the future.

Knowledge of these causal correlations or sequences is called "the

knowledge of phenomena" (dhamme nāṇam⁸⁴). It is then stated that:

This constitutes the knowledge of phenomena; by seeing, experiencing, acquiring knowledge before long and delving into these phenomena, he draws an inference (nayam neti) with regard to the past and the future (atitānāgate) as follows: "All those recluses and brahmins who thoroughly understood the nature of decay and death, its cause, its cessation and the path leading to the cessation of decay and death did so in the same way as I do at present; all those recluses and brahmins who in the future will thoroughly understand the nature of decay and death . . . will do so in the same way as I do at present"--this constitutes his inductive knowledge (idam assa anvaye nāṇam).⁸⁵

Thus, perception (normal and paranormal) and inference are considered the means of knowledge and vision (nāṇadassana-).

The emphasis that "knowing" (jāṇam) must be based on "seeing" (passam) or direct perceptive experience, makes Buddhism a form of Empiricism. We have, however, to modify the use of the term somewhat to mean not only that all our knowledge is derived from sense-experience but from extrasensory experience as well Early (as well as orthodox) Buddhism should therefore be regarded not as a system of metaphysics but as a verifiable hypothesis discovered by the Buddha in the course of his "trial and error" experimentation with the different ways of life. We agree with Dr. Warder when he says that "the Buddha legend synthesizes the quest for truth on scientific principles regardless of past traditions: observation of life, experiments in asceticism (under various teachers and independently), the final deduction of a way to end suffering." We also agree with him when, comparing Buddhism with Epicureanism, he says, "Both attacked old superstitions and sought knowledge of nature, knowledge which we may characterize as scientific on account of its basis of perception, inference, verification, etc." (*italics mine*)"⁸⁶

In the Sabba-sutta, S.4:15:

Here a contemporary of the Buddha, a philosopher named Jāṇussoṇī questions him with regard to "everything" (sabba), that is, the metaphysical questions as to what constitutes "everything" in this universe. The Buddha's immediate response is that "everything" means the eye, form, ear, sound, nose, odor, tongue, taste, body, tangible objects, mind, and mental objects or concepts. In short, "everything" consists of the six senses and their corresponding objects. The Buddha goes on to say that there may be others who would not agree with him and who would posit various other things as "everything." But such speculations lead only to vexation and worry, because any such thing would be beyond the sphere of experience (avisaya).⁸⁷

Finally, it should be noted here that paññā- (penetrative knowledge) is synonymous with nāṇadassana-; nāṇadassana are technical terms used to

describe paññā-. "A person who knows and sees things as they really are need not make an effort of will (saying), 'I shall become disinterested;' it is the nature of things (dhammatā-) that a person who knows and sees becomes disinterested,"⁸⁸ i.e., the man of wisdom, who has personally verified the Noble Truths with his knowledge and vision, sees things objectively; and because of his wisdom he is freed from attachments to things which are in reality empty. Thus, "becoming indifferent, he becomes free from attachment, from this freedom from attachment he is liberated, when he is released he has the knowledge, 'I am released,' then he has that penetrative knowledge (paññā-). Destroyed is rebirth, lived is the best life, done is what must be done, there is nothing more to this."⁸⁹

Two Truths in Buddhism

The chapter on Conceptual Mapping discussed the inherent limitations of mapping reality into relative conceptual schemes and their pragmatic worth. The problem which arises is that when one does not possess the awareness of these two facts--limitation and necessity--he will cling unaware to his subjective view of reality thinking it truly reflects the way things are objectively. As a result, he becomes obsessed with the world he conceptually constructs.

How, then, can the Buddhist relate their doctrines (dhammā) and yet avoid the problem of having their adherents become attached to those doctrines, i.e., holding on to what is relative as if it were absolute? How can they speak about the individual personality (pudgala-), about samsāra- and nibbāna-, etc., as if they were real entities, when in reality they exist only as mental fabrications? To avoid such confusion and problems the Buddhist introduce a system of two truths: conventional-relational

truth and absolute truth.

In order to avoid a confusion it should be mentioned here that there are two kinds of truths: conventional truth (sammuti-sacca, Skt. samvṛti-satya) and ultimate truth (paramattha-sacca, Skt. paramārtha-satya). When we use such expressions in our daily life as "I," "you," "being," "individual," etc., we do not lie because there is no self or being as such, but we speak a truth conforming to the convention of the world. But the ultimate truth is that there is no "I" of "being" in reality.⁹⁰

There exists no intrinsically different objects of knowledge. The distinction between "relative truth" and "absolute truth" does not pertain to different objects of knowledge, rather, it refers to the manner by which "things" are perceived, the means of knowledge by which "things" are known.

Mundane truth is based on the intellectual and emotional attachment to ideas or sense objects whereby such objects of knowledge were used as if they had an existence independent of the perceiver. Such truth discriminates, identifies, and categorizes segments of existence as "door," "room," "money," "I," "you," or any mental or sensual object of cognition. All men use such truth to carry on the everyday affairs of life. Likewise all religious doctrines and theories about the nature of existence fall within the bounds of mundane truth, for they are fabrications. Ultimate truth, on the other hand, is a quality of life expressed in the complete indifference to the construction or cessation of "things." Ultimate Truth is the realization of dependent co-origination whereby there is no attachment to fabricated "things"--not even to the formulation of dependent co-origination.⁹¹

In this way, the distinction between the two kinds of truths is a distinction in the level of understanding, i.e., between higher and lower knowledge. Conventional-relational truth is "just an erroneous view," while absolute truth is "established by the nature of things (sabhāva-siddham), it is opposed to mere opinion."⁹² Conventional-relational truth is established on a relative criterion of values, subject to subjective interpretations and currents, while absolute truth is objective, empty of any point of view at all. On a practical level it is necessary and conventionally true to say that "a chair is not a table," when when known and seen with one's penetrative knowledge, terms like "chair" and "table" are seen as

empty of self-existence (sabhāva-) to which language implies so misleadingly. According to Buddhism, it is ignorance (avijjā-) which causes one to think that verbal designations are ultimates, that relative truths are absolutely true.

The Buddhist well recognize the pragmatic value of conventional-relational truth not only in daily social interactions, but as an aid to lead the person from bondage to freedom. For example, one is to develop his intellectual capacities of understanding to apprehend the Noble Truths conceptually at first, then to transcend such conceptual knowledge with a perfect view (sammā ditṭhi-) of the Noble Truths. One begins the Eightfold Noble Path Leading to the Cessation of Dukkha-⁹³ by adopting what the Buddhist conceive as conventionally true. With this right view (sammā ditṭhi-) the adherent progresses through the cultivation of virute (sīla-) and mental concentration (saṁādhi-) and then eventually back to sammā ditṭhi-, now the the perfected vision of reality equal to paññā-. In short, he has moved from discriminative knowledge (vinñāṇa-) to penetrative knowledge (paññā-), samsāra- to nibbāna-, transcending the lower levels of knowledge which know and see things as static entities through conventional-relational means of knowledge.

The ability to understand a conceptual scheme is an ability necessary to achieve the "goal," in the same way as the ability to accurately read a map and road signs enables one to reach his desired destination without getting lost or distracted. In the "Parable of the Raft,"⁹⁴ the dhamma- (doctrine or teaching) is compared to a raft constructed to carry the person across a torrent river, i.e., the purpose the dhamma- serves is that it gives the adherent an instructural vehicle to carry him from normality to nobility. Yet in the end, when the destination is reached, one does

not carry the raft with him afterwards, and in the same way, one should not cling onto the dhamma- having reached the other shore (i.e., nibbāna-).

The danger is that:

If one tries to hold logical relationships as an absolute norm for truth of reality, he is doomed to failure. Logical and discursive thought as a process of meaning is a selective process, and this selectivity prevents it from being able to express the totality of existence, or the total human experience of existence. This principle of selectivity is both the strength and weakness of discursive thought. On the one hand, it permits meaningful communication; on the other, it limits the awareness according to habits of apprehension.⁹⁵

What the system of two truths achieves is that it recognizes the difference in the levels of understanding, as well as the pragmatic yet limited value of conventional-relational truths. It is the awareness that verbal designations are indirect expressions of truth which serve as symbols of absolute truth, which enable one to transcend conventional-relational modes of understanding and realize absolute truth. "If thoughts of mundane 'realities' were not imbued with an awareness of emptiness, they perverted the truth and posited self-existence in the objects of sense or imagination. It is this attachment to 'things' towards which mundane truth was prone, that the truth of emptiness attempted to dispel."⁹⁶ The system of two truths as well, then recognizes that higher knowledge, having known and seen things as empty, frees the person from previous attachments to things once conceived to be substantial. Thus, "the things of the apparent world are not destroyed, but they are reevaluated in such a way that they no longer have the power emotionally and intellectually to control human life."⁹⁷ Most important, the system of two truths recognizes that those who view the world from the standpoint of mundane truth are bound in sam-sāra- and those who view the world from the standpoint of ultimate truth have achieved nibbāna-.

Notes

¹Compendium^o, p. 7.

²"'Consciousness' in an eschatological sense is almost always associated with 'dispositions' (samkhāra). The nature of the samkhāras is exemplified by a statement in the Aṅguttara Nikāya that one who has attained 'the state of concentration free from cogitative and reflective thought can comprehend with his mind the mind of another, and by observing how the mental samkhāras are disposed in the mind of that particular individual, (he can) also predict that he would think such and such a thought at a later time.' (A.1.171)

". . . it is said that dispositions condition consciousness these dispositions are ultimately the results of perceptive activity. This is clearly implied in a passage in the Samyutta that discusses the difference between a dead man (mato kālakato) and a man who has entered the state of mental concentration characterized by the cessation of perception and sensation (sannāvedayitanirodham samāpanno). 'In the case of a dead man, his dispositions, bodily, verbal and mental, cease to exist and are pacified; life has come to an end, breath is calmed, and the senses are destroyed. But in the case of a man who has attained the state of cessation of perception and sensation, even though his dispositions have ceased to exist and are pacified, his life has not come to an end, breath is not calmed, and the senses are not destroyed.' (S.4.294)

"According to this account, although the senses of the man who has attained the state of cessation of perception and sensation are intact, because there is a temporary cessation of perceptive activity he does not accumulate any dispositions. The obvious conclusion is that dispositions are the results of perceptive activity. Not only the tendencies in the conscious mind but even those in the unconscious process are the results of perception." Causality^o, pp. 120-21.

³According to M.1:292, "It discriminates (viñāṇāti), therefore it is called discriminative knowledge (viññāṇa-). And what does it discriminate? It discriminates pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure or pain." According to Atthas. 112: "Just as, O great king, a town guard sitting at the cross-roads in the middle of the town could see a man coming from the east, could see a man coming from the west, south, north, so too, O great king, whatever material shape he sees with (his) sight, he discriminates (viñāṇāti) that by his discriminative knowledge, what sound he hears by his ear, what smell he smells with his nose, what taste he tastes by his tongue, what tangible he touches with his body, what mental phenomena (dhamma: idea) he discriminates with the mind (manasā) he discriminates by discriminative knowledge" (these verses trans. by Santucci, BPT, p. 86). Viññāṇa- is a pregnate term in Buddhism. It can mean mere sensual awareness. However, the definition used throughout this paper refers to intellectual discrimination, i.e., awareness + judgment. For instance, the guard judges that the object (awareness) moving towards him is a man. According to Kalupahana, ". . . the term viññāṇa . . . is used in the early Buddhist texts in a wide variety of meanings At least three important uses of viññāṇa can be clearly distinguished. First, it is used to denote psychi phenomena in general, synonymous with the terms citta, 'mind,' and mano, 'thought.' Second, it is used to describe a complete act of perception or cognition; and third, it stands for the connecting link between two lives, a form of

of consciousness that later came to be designated 'rebirth consciousness' (patisandhi-viññana).⁴ Causality⁰, p. 119. For our purpose, we will be concerned with viññana- defined as "perception" or "cognition."

⁴The Nikāyas (Collections) belong to the Sutta-Pitaka (Basket of Discourses). There are five, viz., Dīgha-Nikāya (Collection of Long Discourses), Majjhima-Nikāya (Collection of Medium Discourses), Samyutta-Nikāya (Collection of Connected Discourses), Aṅguttara-Nikāya (Collection of Item-more Discourses), and Khuddaka-Nikāya (Collection of Little Texts).

⁵Psychological Attitude⁰, p. 129.

⁶Ibid., see pp. 129-32.

⁷Compendium⁰, pp. 11-12.

⁸Op. cit., p. 131.

⁹Ibid., pp. 54-55.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80.

¹¹The preceeding analysis on disharmony, tension, and resistance follows closely that of Govinda's, Ibid., pp. 79-82 and 129-142, and Aung's, Compendium⁰, pp. 2-11.

¹²IPTB, p. 5.

¹³Discussed in Concept and Reality⁰, pp. 2-9; IPTB, pp. 5-7; BP, pp. 2--21 and 77-78; Causality⁰, pp. 121-25; and by E.R. Saratchandra, Buddhist Psychology of Perception, Colombo, Ceylon, 1958. Much of the following discussion follows Nananda's, Concept and Reality⁰, pp. 2-20.

¹⁴By sense-perception is meant sensual awareness interpreted or judged subjectively through the individual's conscious processes, conditioned by samkhāras (dispositions). The six sense spheres are, viz., (1) cakkhu- "sight, eye" and its object, rūpa- "visible objects, color, material shapes," (2) sota- "hearing, ear" and its object, sadda- "sound," (3) ghāna- "smell, nose" and its object, gandha- "smell, odor," (4) jivhā- "tasting, tongue" and its object, rasa- "taste, flavor," and (5) mano- "thinking, organ of consciousness" and its objects, dharmā "mental phenomena, mental datta, mental images," e.g., concepts, ideas, judgments, names or words.

¹⁵Kalupahana translates papañca- as "obsessed perceptions," see BP, p. 20, or Causality⁰, p. 122.

¹⁶Concept and Reality⁰, p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁸IPTB, pp. 5-6.

¹⁹Op. cit., p. 8.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 10-11.

²¹Theragāthā 980,990.

²²IPTB, p. 7.

²³trans. by Nānananda, Concept and Reality^o, p. 31.

²⁴Emptiness^o, pp. 17-18.

²⁵Ibid., p. 59.

²⁶Ibid., p. 69.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 52-53.

²⁸Presuppositions^o, p. 141.

²⁹cited in Concept and Reality^o, pp. 22-24.

³⁰According to Nānananda, Ibid., p. 23: "The causal connection between vitakka and papañca-saññā-samkhā might, at first sight, appear intriguing. Acquaintance with the Madhupindika formula of sense-perception (Sic! vitakka papañca) might make one wonder whether we have here a reversal of the correct order (vitakka papañca-saññā-samkhā). But the contradiction is more apparent than real. The assertion of the Sakkapañha sutta that vitakka originates from papañca-saññā-samkhā only means that in the case of the worlding the word or concept grasped as an object for ratiocination, is itself a product of papañca. This in its turn breeds more of its kind when one proceeds to indulge in conceptual proliferation (papañca). Concepts characterized by the proliferating tendency (papañca-saññā-samkhā) constitute the raw-material for the process and the end product is much the same in kind though with this difference that it has greater potency to obsess, bewilder, and overwhelm the worlding. Thus there is a curious reciprocity between vitakka and papañca-saññā-samkhā--a kind of vicious circle, as it were. Given papañca-saññā-samkhā there comes to be vitakka and given vitakka there arises more papañca-saññā-samkhā, resulting in the subjection to the same."

³¹trans. by Nānananda, Ibid., p. 24.

³²Simile found in Vitakkasaññā-sutta, M.1:119.

³³"Rapture" here refers to the term jhāna-. "Jhāna is explained in Vis.4:119 as 'meditating or reflecting upon (upanijjhānato) the object (ārammaṇa) or (vā) (it is so-called) due to its burning (jhāpanato 'destroying') of an adverse object (paccanīka-).' According to the description of jhāna, we find that the word never refers to meditation in general, but to a state or states as described below. The original classification of these states of meditation was divided into four stages. The first stage is achieved when the meditator frees his mind from sensuous and worldly ideas, concentrates his mind upon a meditation subject. He concentrates by using vitakka 'initial thought' and vicāra 'sustained thought; investigation.' The result of this investigation is the liberation of the five

nīvarana's (kamacchanda 'excitement of or for sensual pleasure' or 'sensual pleasure and excitement'; vyāpāda 'ill-will'; thīnamiddha 'sloth and torpor'; uddhaccakukkucca 'agitation and worry'; and vicikicchā 'doubt, perplexity'). Following upon this, pīti 'joy' and sukha 'happiness' arise. Thus the first stage of jhāna comprises the four elements of vitakka, vicāra, pīti, and sukha.

"With the second jhana, we find that vitakka and vicāra are suppressed, and pīti and sukha remain, being experienced by the meditator in his entire being.

"The third jhāna comes about when pīti is suppressed and experiences only sukha.

"The fourth jhāna comes about when the meditator disposes of both 'disease' (dukkha) and 'ease' or 'happiness' (sukha) and attains equanimity (upekkā).

"This listing appears in D.1:73-77; M.1:276-78, 454f.; Vis.4:79-197; A.1:163, 3:394f.; etc." BPT, p. 28.

³⁴trans. by Nāṇananda, Concept and Reality^o, p. 25.

³⁵Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon 10, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, II, cited in Ibid., p. 28.

³⁶Ibid., p. 28. The proceeding analysis on nippapañca- follows closely that of Nāṇananda's, Ibid., pp. 22-34.

³⁷Emptiness^o, p. 82.

³⁸Vis.14:2

³⁹Vis.14:1

⁴⁰Because penetration is the characteristic of paññā-, I translate it as "penetrative knowledge."

⁴¹Vis.14:3,5,7, trans. by Nyānamoli

⁴²Emptiness^o, p. 91.

⁴³Edward Conze, Buddhist Wisdom Books, London, 1958, p. 94. Cited in Emptiness^o, p. 85.

⁴⁴C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Buddhist Psychology, London, 1914, p. 133. Cited in Emptiness^o, p. 91.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 87-88. Cited in Emptiness^o, p. 38.

⁴⁶The analysis on knowledge and becoming as co-extensive was taken from Emptiness^o, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁷Vis.21:70, trans. by Nyānamoli.

⁴⁸Compendium^o, p. 67.

⁴⁹Emptiness^o, p. 98.

⁵⁰M.1:111.

⁵¹M.2:111.

⁵²M.1:329.

⁵³Sutta Nipāta 229.

⁵⁴M.1:511.

⁵⁵Early Buddhist^o, p. 418. The proceeding and following analysis on nanadassana- follows Jayatilleke's, Early Buddhist^o, pp. 417-43 and 457-64. Most of the citations were extracted from these pages, however, many of the translations are mine own (unless otherwise noted).

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 426-27.

⁵⁷A.3:90.

⁵⁸Itivuttaka 58.

⁵⁹M.1:475.

⁶⁰M.2:44, trans. by Jayatilleke, Early Buddhist^o, p. 427.

⁶¹M.1:37.

⁶²Op. cit., p. 428.

⁶³D.1:3.

⁶⁴M.2:170.

⁶⁵Early Buddhist^o, p. 352.

⁶⁶M.1:261.

⁶⁷M.1:48, 299; 3:250.

⁶⁸A.1:83.

⁶⁹Vibhava- may be translated as either "annihilation" or "power."

⁷⁰M.1:65.

⁷¹see Early Buddhist^o, pp. 102-3 and 319-20.

⁷²i.e., the stage of equanimity (upekkā).

⁷³Op. cit., pp. 430-31.

⁷⁴A.5:36.

⁷⁵BP, p. 20

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁷M.1:67; 3:162.

⁷⁸see M.2:43; 3:29; S.1:24.

⁷⁹BP, p. 22.

⁸⁰Compendium^o, p. 225.

⁸¹M.1:70.

⁸²BP, pp. 21-22. For a more complete analysis see Early Buddhist^o, pp. 438-41, and the entire 12th chapter of the Vis.

⁸³S.2:28.

⁸⁴S.2:58.

⁸⁵Early Buddhist^o, pp. 442-42. Citation S.2:58.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 463-64.

⁸⁷BP, pp. 23-24.

⁸⁸A.5:313.

⁸⁹Mahāvagga 1:21.

⁹⁰Rahula, What the Buddha Taught, p. 55. According to Jayatilleke, Early Buddhist^o, pp. 361-68, there appears in the Pāli Canon no clear-cut distinction between these two kinds of truth. The doctrine of two truths is a later emergence. Instead, in the Pāli Canon sammuti-sacca and paramattha-sacca refer to two types of suttas (discourses), those of direct meaning (nītattha-) and those of indirect meaning (neyyattha-). An indirect sutta would say, e.g., "there is an individual personality (pudgala-)," while a direct sutta would say, e.g., "there is no pudgala-." Because the Buddha, as with all religious teachers, is constrained by the use of language which has misleading implications, we have to at times infer what he means. This means is indirect. When he is pointing out the misleading implications of language without use of these implications, his meaning is plain and direct, nothing is to be inferred.

⁹¹Emptiness^o, p. 39.

⁹²Ledi Sadaw, "Some Points on Buddhist Doctrine," Journal of the Pāli Texts Society (1914), p. 129.

⁹³The Eightfold Noble Path is, viz., perfect (sammā) view (ditthi-), intention (samkappa-), speech (vācā-), acting (kammanta-), living (ajīva-), effort (vāyāma-), inspective recollection or mindfulness (sāti-), and con-

centration (samādhī-).

⁹⁴M.1:134f.

⁹⁵Emptiness^o, p. 97.

^{96,97}Ibid., p. 96.

CONCLUSION: NIBBĀNA- THE ANTITHESIS OF SAMSÃRA-

The Itivuttaka 38f. states that nibbāna- is of two kinds: (1) nibbāna- with substrate left (saupādisesa-, i.e., nibbāna- attained during one's lifespand) and (2) nibbāna- without substrate (anupādisesa-, i.e., the nibbāna- of the dead arahant-, "noble one").

What is the nature of nibbāna- with substrate left (saupādisesa-), i.e., nibbāna- attained in this life here and now; or, what is the nature of the living arahant-? As stated previously, human experience and personality are causally conditioned. From the time the individual is born his sense faculties (indriya-) start functioning and through these doors enter sense impressions. These impressions or sense data (phassa-, "contact") produce in him feelings or sensations (vedanā-), pleasurable, painful, or neither pleasure or pain. From here on, it is stated that because of sensation thirst arises, and because of thirst clinging arises, and so on. A more detailed analysis is found in the Madhupindika-sutta. Here, in an explanation of the causal process of sense-perception, we find that immediately after vedanā- the ego-consciousness intrudes and thereafter conditions the entire process, culminating in the generation of obsessions, either thirst, conceit, or dogmatic views. The individual then becomes the hapless object of these obsessions. This is the normal order of things (dhammatā-). Attachment (rāga-) and aversion or repulsion (paṭigha-) that one develops that one develops towards the things of the world are due to the presence of ignorance and habits of mind. One is ignorant, in this case, that both subject and object and the relationship between subject and object(s) which results in the proliferation of concepts (papañca-) are empty of self-existence. This is the manner in which "normal" human beings behave when they

come into contact with the external world. Such a person is called "one who follows the stream" (anusotagāmi-), i.e., one who gives into his own inclinations, following his own will. Thus it is declared:

Those who give rein to passions, in this world
Not passion-freed, in sense desires delighting,
These oft and oft subject to birth and eld;
Bondsmen to craving, down the current go.¹

The Buddha recognized two causal processes, one "determined by dispositions" (saṃkhata-) and the other "undetermined by dispositions" (asaṃkhata-). The causal process determined by dispositions (saṃkhāra-), both good and bad, leads to bondage (bandha-) and disharmony or dis-ease (dukkha-), while the causal process undetermined by dispositions leads to freedom (vimutti-) and harmony or ease (sukha-). The first four causal pattern previously mentioned--physical organic and inorganic order, psychological order, and moral order--may be classed under the former process, saṃkhata-. The last pattern mentioned, ideal spiritual order, may be classed under the latter, asaṃkhata-. Human beings whose behavior is determined by dispositions are those described as "following the stream" (anusotagāmi-), while those whose behavior is not determined by dispositions, i.e., those who have attained the pacification of all dispositions (sabbasaṃkhārasamatha-), either go against the stream, remain steadfast, or have crossed over the flood of existence (samsār'ogha-). Going against the stream, remaining steadfast, or crossing over is achieved as a result of insight and self-control, i.e., paññā- and virāga- (nonattachment) or nekkhamma- (renunciation). Because of insight and self-control nibbāna- is attained, and the life of one who has attained nibbāna- is one of transcendence (lokuttara-), like the lotus (pundarīka-) that remains unsmeared by the surrounding polluted water. In this way, "normal" human existence (samsāra-) is contrasted

with the freedom of nibbāna- attained by the "noble one" (arahant-).

There is said to be three types of persons contrasted to the "one who follows the stream." The first type generally attempts to follow a good life avoiding evil actions, he is called "one who goes against the stream" (paṭisotagāmi-). The second type is one who has advanced further along the path to freedom and has reached the stage of "nonreturner" (anagāmi-) to this world, because he has destroyed the five kinds of fetters (samyojana-²). The last type of person is the one who is fully enlightened and is completely freed, who remains unsmeared by the world like one who has "crossed over" (pārangata-) and remains in safety when the world outside him is in turmoil.³ Such a person through mental cultivation (bhāvanā-) has disciplined his mind and is able to control it as he wishes. When an external sense object comes into contact with a sense faculty he can prevent the intrusion of ego-consciousness, since he has insight into the nature of the process of sense-perception plus self-control. Once this intrusion is prevented, it is possible to arrest the influx of unwholesome mental states (akusalā dhammā) as coveting (abhiṭṭha-) and dejection (domanassa-). When confronted with the outside world, instead of generating attachment (rāga-) he generates nonattachment (virāga-).

Perceiving the aggregates that constitute the psychophysical personality as being nonsubstantial (anatta) and preventing the ego-consciousness from assailing himself when the process of perception takes place, "a learned Āryan disciple has revulsion for (nibbandati) the physical form (rūpa), feeling (vedanā), perception (saṇṇā), dispositions (samkhārā), and consciousness (viññāṇa). Having revulsion, he is not attached; being nonattached he is freed, and in him who is thus freed arises the knowledge of freedom: Destroyed is birth, lived is the higher life; done is what ought to be done; there is no further existence." (S.3:83f.)⁴

In this way, with the elimination of the false notion of the ego-consciousness and the development of pañña-, the normal process of sense-per-

ception is changed

With the attainment of mental concentration or restraint (samvara), one is able to prevent the influx of impurities (kilesa) such as attachment (rāga) and aversion (paṭigha). According to the description in the text, this is going against (paṭisota) the normal causal pattern. Yet it represents a causal pattern with different causal factors. This causal pattern may be stated as follows: The elimination of ego-consciousness produces revulsion (nibbidā) with regard to things which earlier were grasped as being substantial. Revulsion produces detachment (virāga). Detachment produces freedom (vimutti), and therefore one attains stability (thitātā) of mind so that one does not tremble or is not agitated as a result of gain (lābha) or loss (alābha), good repute (yasa) or disrepute (ayasa), praise (pasamsā) or blame (nindā), happiness (sukha) or suffering (dukkha). These are the eight worldly phenomena (aṭṭhalokadhamma) by which one is constantly assailed in this life (D.3: 260). Hence, the highest point of "blessedness" (maṅgala) is achieved, according to the Mahā-maṅgala-sutta, by a person "whose mind is not overwhelmed when in contact with worldly phenomena (lokadhamma), is freed from sorrow, taintless and secure (Sutta Nipāta 268)." Such a person feels secure and at peace in the midst of all the destruction and confusion prevailing in the world.⁵

The arahant-, then, experiences all sense impressions coming through his sense faculties, yet what distinguishes the "noble one" from "normal" human beings is that he is able to prevent the generation of attachment or aversion. For him, all sense impressions are properly understood through his penetrative knowledge or insight (pañña-) and because of the attainment of self-control. Although these impressions produce their respective sensations--pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure or pain--the arahant- remains unmoved by them. He is neither established on (appati-tthita-) or not leaning against (anissita-) anything in this world, and, as such, nothing in this world worries him or causes him pain. e.g., gain or loss, birth, ageing, or dying, and so on.

The attainment of insight and self-control causes the cessation of dukkha- and samsāra-, and brings about the occurrence of nibbana-. In this way, insight and self-control, the conditions necessary for complete freedom, are synonymous with nibbāna-. What is meant by "with the sub-

strate left" is that there remains a residue of kamma- left to be burnt up. In the same way as when a potter discontinues spinning his potter's wheel, yet the wheel continues to spin on its own energy until that energy which caused it to spin in the first place burns itself out causing the wheel to come to rest; so too will the arahant- remain in this life until he burns up or exhausts the residue of kamma- which has built up due to past actions, then he comes to rest.

The most misunderstood aspect of nibbāna- is that of nibbāna- "without substrate left," or of the arahant- who passed away. The question which arises is what happens to the arahant- after death? Does he exist, in what form, or is he completely destroyed?

If after denying that the tathāgata survives death, the Buddha maintained that he is annihilated he would have been guilty of saying something that is not based or dependent on any source of knowledge. Hence, the most reasonable way to interpret the Buddha's statements on this problem and not misrepresent him would be to say that the state of the arahant after death cannot be known by the available means of knowing (pamāṇa, Sk. pramāṇa). This explains the Buddha's decision to leave this question undelcared (avyākata).⁶

It is not the purpose of this report to either examine or resolve the speculations that have arisen in the various schools of Buddhist thought, including Theravāda Buddhism, concerning the question: "What happens to the arahant- after death?" Rather, since the purpose of this report is to examine the conditions which cause the human condition of samsāra-, and the conditions which cause its cessation, such discussion is not necessary to fulfill our purpose. We need only concern ourselves with nibbāna- achieved in this life, here and now. And as such, I shall follow the Buddha by example and remain silent on this issue.

Formally defined, nibbāna- literally means "blowing out" (from prefix nis "out," and root vā "to blow").

Buddhaghosa (Vis.8:247) states that nibbāna is called such "because it has gone out (nikkhanto), escaped from (nissato), is detached from (visamyutto) thirst (tanhāya), so called as 'vāna' (fastening) because to ensure successive becoming, thirst serves as a joining together, a binding, a lacing together of the four kinds of generation, five destinies, seven stations of consciousness, and nine abodes of being."

Nyānamoli (p. 319, note 72) believes that the original meaning of nibbāna was probably an extinction of a fire by ceasing to blow on it with a bellows. Then it was extended to the extinction of fire by any means; and by analogy, nibbāna was applied to the extinction of greed, etc., in the Arahant.

In the older texts there are passages which relate to the going out of a fire through lack of fuel. In M.1:487 the following dialogue occurs between Buddha and Vaccha:

"If, good Gotama, someone were to question me thus: This fire that is blazing in front of you--what is the reason that this fire is blazing?--I, good Gotama, on being questioned thus reply thus:
... this fire is blazing because of a supply (upādāna) of grass and sticks.

"If that fire that was in front of you, Vaccha, were to be quenched (nibbāyeyya) would you know: This fire that was in front of me has been quenched (nibbuto)?"

"... For, good Gotama, that fire blazed because of a supply of grass and sticks, yet having totally consumed this and from the lack of other fuel, being without fuel it is reckoned to be quenched."
(Horner, Middle Length Sayings, II, pp. 165-66).

In S.2:85 a similar statement arises:

"Verily, that great bonfire, when the first laid fuel were come to an end, and it were not fed by other fuel, would without food become extinct (nibbāyeyya)."
(Woodward, Kindred Sayings, II, pp. 59-60.

In M.3:245 we find that the quenching of the "fire" is applied to the enlightened person:

"He comprehends that on the breaking up of the body after the life-principle has come to an end all enjoyable experiences here will become cool (sītibhavissanti).

"Monk, an oil-lamp burns on account of the oil and on account of the wick but goes out (nibbāyati) from the lack of fuel if the oil and the wick come to an end and no others are brought, even so, monk, experiencing a feeling that is limited by the body . . . limited by the life-principle, he comprehends that he is experiencing limited by the life-principle, he comprehends that he is experiencing feeling limited by the body . . . limited by the

life-principle. He comprehends that on the breaking up of the body after the life-principle has come to an end all enjoyable experiences here will come cool." (Horner, Middle Length Sayings, III, pp. 291-92.

What is extinguished is the threefold fire of rāga "passion," dosa "hatred," and moha "delusion" among other defilements.⁷

Buddhaghosa tells us that, "It has peace as its characteristic. Its function is not to die; or its function is to comfort. It is manifested as the signless; or it is manifested as non-diversification (nippapañca)."⁸ Nibbāna- is also equated with the third Noble Truth, the cessation (nir- odha-⁹) of dukkha-, i.e., it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of dukkha-.¹⁰

For our intent and purpose, we may conclude that nibbāna- refers to the extinction of thirst (taṇhakkhaya-), hence the state of nonattachment (virāga-). According to the doctrine of kamma-, one continues to wander in samsāra-, from birth to birth, as a result of ignorance (avijjā-), thirst (taṇhā-), and the resultant clinging or grasping (upādāna-). Freedom (vimutti-¹¹) or the attainment of nibbāna- consists in the extinction of these karmic forces through the cultivation of insight or knowledge (vijjā-) and the elimination of thirst (taṇhakkhaya-) and nonclinging (anupādāna-) through self-control or renunciation. As the complete cessation of the causal conditions which generate and perpetuate dukkha-, nibbāna- may be characterized as the end of dukkha- (dukkhass'anta-) and the state of perfect happiness (parama sukha, "ease or harmony").

Nibbāna- is called "unconditioned" (asaṃkhata-¹²) because those conditions which cause dukkha- and its continuence are completely destroyed. They no longer affect the wise self-controlled man. In this way, nibbāna- may be regarded as the antithesis of samsāra- because the arahant- is no longer continually bound to his habitual behavior (kamma-) which results

in frustration, tension, and disharmony (dukkha-). It is the "noble" way of life of one in perfect harmony (parama sukha), compared to the "normal" human condition of disharmony (dukkha-) and bondage (bandha-). And as such, for Buddhism nibbāna- is the highest goal, the summon bonum, the state of having transcended the human dilemma of bondage (i.e., of ignorance and lack of self-control) by one endowed with insight and self-control.

Notes

¹A.2:5f., trans. by Kalupahana, BP, p. 72.

²According to Nyanatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary, p. 161, there are ten fetters, but we are concerned here only with the last five, viz.: (6) craving for fine-material existence (rūpa-rāga-), (7) craving for immaterial existence (arūpa-rāga-), (8) conceit (māna-), (9) restlessness (uddhacca-), and (10) ignorance (avijjā-).

³from A.2:5f.

⁴BP, pp. 72-73.

⁵Ibid., p. 73.

⁶Ibid., p. 80. The proceeding analysis closely follows Kalupahana's, BP, pp. 69-88.

⁷BPT, pp. 40-41.

⁸Vis.16:66, trans. by Nyānamoli.

⁹According to Buddhaghosa, Vis.16:18: "(Nirodha 'cessation'): the word ni denotes absence, and the word radha, a prison. Now the third truth is void of all destinies (by rebirth) and so there is no constraint (rodha) of suffering here reckoned as the prison of the round of rebirths; or when that cessation has been arrived at, there is no more constraint of suffering reckoned as the prison of the round of rebirths. And being the opposite of that prison, it is called dukkha-nirodha (cessation of suffering). Or alternatively, it is called 'cessation of suffering' because it is a condition for the cessation of suffering consisting in non-arising." (trans. by Nyānamoli)

¹⁰from Vis.16:64.

¹¹Vimutti- refers to the freedom from such evils as the āsavas (D.3:68), viz.: the intoxicant of sensual desires (kāmāsava-), the intoxicant of be-

coming (bhavāsava-), the intoxicant of ignorance (avijjāsava-) of the four Noble Truths, and the intoxicant of views (diṭṭhāsava-), i.e., speculations and wrong views).

¹²A.1:152; S.4:369f; Milp. 270.

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