

EARLY BUDDHIST EPISTEMOLOGY

By Anagarika Tevijjo

Introduction

Before beginning our text, today, we shall, first, respectfully urge our readers [unless they happen to be Pali scholars] to *remain open to the possibility* of undergoing a total, mental ‘twist-of-mind’— a paradigm shift — in other words to be prepared to see phenomena in the exact opposite way in which, we, as ‘*so-called*’ normal human beings, are commonly-accustomed to ‘experiencing’ ‘*so-called*’ solid things in this ‘*so-called*’ world, around us.

To be more explicit, we should be prepared to realize that things and objects in-the-world, which we ‘believe’ we see as fixed-entities (right before our very eyes) arising and moving around us, (as we imagine them to be), are just based upon sets of conventional assumptions within men’s minds, as a result of common man’s limited-perceptual, mental-physical [and wholly-inadequate] mental capacity for full and ultimate comprehension of the real nature of phenomena.

Such an opposite view [of the nature of phenomena] would be understandably true, for example, at the levels of waves and energies. This means that, in terms of contemporary science and particle physics, all phenomena might be better-understood as totally lacking in substance.

Despite evidence [from particle theory in physics], most common [mundane] men still conventionally and often tenaciously continue to see the world of appearances, and believe-in and conceive-of mind-objects, as consisting of concrete, solid matter — as being permanent and abiding-entities on commonly-understood levels.

The surprise which shakes the very foundations of Western Philosophy and Western Theory of Knowledge concerning ‘*so called*’ conventional truth is that, [more than 2500 years ago], what we may call a ‘Buddhist phenomenology’ was used in original Pali Theravada analysis to explicate the process of fleeting arising and ceasing of appearances in the realm of ultimate truths.

Buddhist Phenomenology

As very few, [especially within the western world], as yet know much about such an esoteric area of study, we shall undertake to discuss and explicate how images come into a perceived-form of phenomenal appearance, as immeasurably small impulses of energy, arising and ceasing (burning-up instantly), together within the course of the process of an instantaneous flow of impulses of energy.

Such a thesis is, actually not hard to explain because there is lots of Pali textual evidence and commentary to support it.

Within the course of our essay, for back-up, in order to illustrate how Buddhist phenomenology works to aid us in seeing and explaining unsubstantial ultimate realities: initially, we shall begin, by citing some selected textual references, from the Venerable Narada Maha Thera’s classical book, *The Buddha and His Teaching*, [Searchable on the Internet] in which he focusses upon explaining-away the most problematic and paradoxical parts of the ‘*human predicament of phenomenal existence.*’

Following that, to build upon said foundation, [laid down by Narada Thera], we shall, subsequently, proceed to elucidate, through further references and quotations from a range of further authoritative textual sources, in a sequence of citations from a number of equally-distinguished monks and Pali scholars, [the sources for which are, incidentally, also available on the Internet].

Note: Much of the terminology, which is based on Pali-English translations used in the scholarship, may prove difficult for readers without previous background in the traditional study of Theravada texts, in which Pali words are usually included as guidelines so the original meanings may be maintained and English renderings won’t go wrong over time. Those who find they are getting the gist through paying careful attention to the wording may find that consulting an Pali- EnglishGlossary or Dictionary will also be helpful and insightful.

Phenomena Relative to Phenomena

To state the human dilemma, in an easy-to-understand introductory vein, we may explain that, the nature of what we believe to be phenomenal appearance may be viewed in two opposite ways: while

On the one hand,

- Exterior actions in the world of arising-forms ‘seem’ to be taking place in a perfectly-obvious, ‘self-evident,’ clearly-observable, wholly-common and absolutely-believable and perceivable-process; and the ‘apparent’ *becoming* of arising phenomena also *appears*, to the normal, everyday, eye of a person in the world as ‘perceiver,’ to be occurring within his own objective, subjective, location-space, person-centered, delimited time-frame,

On the other hand,

- Quite paradoxically, the process of *becoming* is, in actual fact, an impermanent, ever-continuing, dependently originating, simultaneously and instantaneously, coming-together and breaking-apart [falling-away] of arising and ceasing of waves and particles, or in other words — an immediately-dissolving-away of all arising transient phenomenal impressions, — and, if this is true, the world as we ‘normally’ see it is not real, and the person who ‘thinks’ he sees it as real is not real either.

In a not-so-easy and much more complex formulation we might word our thesis as follows:

“Individual phenomenon are relative to concomitantly arising inter-related, phenomena, which are, consecutively converging and continually coming-together in series of impermanent, ever-changing accumulations of inestimable millions of energy-impulses of invisible, fleeting waves of infinitesimally inter-dependent bodies of invisible vibrations, which are constituted or ‘made-up’ of accumulations of psycho-mechanical occurrences of mental awareness of psycho-physically-cognizable perceptions registering within the human organism and arising as ‘merely apparent’ forms in a process of emerging ephemeral images passing through the mind — always in motion and always changing relative to one another.”

This is a rather intricately-structured complex-sentence; so, if you don’t quite get the intended meaning yet, you may just skim-over it, and continue reading-on, allowing the gradually-unfolding essay to explain itself.

[You may also want to come back and re-read the above statement, once again, after working your way through to the end of the explication.]

Pali texts describe *right understanding* of the actual flow of phenomenal impressions as following consecutively in a series of ‘thought moments,’ which, may be defined as series of continually flowing-into and flowing-out of consciousness of intangible images, i.e. metaphorically speaking as ‘shimmering,’ images from a passing stream or fast-flowing river of multiple-impressions in a process of what is, in actuality, just bare psycho-physical flowing consciousness concomitantly-related to residual memory of recorded, fleeting, impermanent images.

Simply stated, the so-called ‘mind’ is nothing more than a process of conscious awareness, and the flow of the mind is just a mental-mechanical processing of ultimately intangible, impermanent, instantaneous images. What is commonly called ‘life’ may be compared to an awareness of the passing of mere, impersonal series, analogous to moving ‘cinematic graphical film-clips’ without any so-called ‘viewer’ as ‘perceiver’ or ‘receiver’ thereof.

There is only a neutral process of viewing, that is all; and there is no viewer as a continually existing entity. There is only the ‘flowing’ going-on’ and nothing else. What we perceive as ‘self’ is, similarly, just a flowing-going on in a mere psycho-physical organism and nothing more.

To tighten the analogy, what *seems* to have concrete ‘form’ in the mind, in the instant of cognition is comparable to a mental picture [mirage] which is, in actuality, nothing more than an aggregate or coming-together of fast-moving, pixel-like points, cognizable, in actual fact, only within impermanent refractions of light which the psycho-physical organism focuses-upon and tries to psycho-mechanically organize, in order to gain orientation within what would be otherwise experienced as a confusing, spinning-whirl of swirling and disoriented-impressions. [Without such a focal point, ‘life’ would be experienced as anxiety-causing, life-threatening fraught with mental distraction and disorder.

Contrary to what men may conventionally believe, there is only 'thinking-thinking' without any thinker.

There is only an ever-flowing, on-going-process of fleeting psycho-physical awareness of countless, internal mental actions, [a constantly moving perpetual-motion of inter-relating accumulations of relative co-conditions and factors and dependently inter-linked relations], merely appearing and disappearing as unsubstantial phenomena, which, [incidentally], could never be repeated for one (or more) person(s) because no aggregate dependent upon any such sets of arising conditions could ever be exactly (or in any way even approximately) conditionally the same.

Imagine the infinitely possible arising potentialities. For example, some factors in thought moments might be mental motions or 'movements' in series of related moments [of impression] from man's evolutionary experience [in the primeval and distant past], while some others would otherwise be appearing in a subjective, immediate and possibly-confusing relationship between the immediate or not so immediate past and present and, then, subsequently, converging with further, as yet, unarisen impulses, dependent on newly arising events, also relative to previous experiences of similar objects and experiences and impressions (retained within continuing-memory) as phenomena in the mind.

It is certainly more complex than it at first seems to an untrained and unexamined mind.

The reason why no two mental phenomena could ever be wholly the same is because the arising individual vibrations and mental motions converging in any possible present moment could never be repeated and coincidentally combined, within the same convergence of accumulating conditions, having come together from impressions in the present being mixed with memory of perceived phenomena from the past. This is true within any individual psycho-physical organism (a momentary 'human' being) — and could, most certainly never ever occur in two different psycho-physical organisms simultaneously.

What is illuminating to an analytical mind, which is capable of comprehending it, is that, in addition to the stuff of the fluff of the mind arising within presently converging mental aggregates, the psycho-mechanical process passes through three phases of mental experience appearing from the (i) distant and immediate past, ii) the immediate present and, then, (iii) disappearing out of present consciousness.

Moreover, there can also be infinitesimal possibilities of cognized and recorded and residual impressions and memories of sequences of thought moments which may be concurrently-moving into present awareness from infinitesimally possible and countless instances in-between the above-mentioned phases, in what can be compared to a vast and far-reaching, potential energy-field in an infinitely galactic gathering within the of the mind as a mirror of momentary movements within the cosmos.

To summarize, our thesis is that there is no such thing as a 'being' which exists prior to the actual appearance and convergence of appearing of 'fleeting, impermanent phenomena,' instantaneously and dependently-arising and causally coming-together, arising out of millions of present and previously arisen vibrational energy conditions, — continuously coming together, always in an infinitesimal 'instant' which may be conventionally called a 'thought moment,' — which is evolving much too rapidly ever to be measured by contemporary science before 'it' [the phenomena or impression] dissolves, in a process of temporarily appearing and simultaneously disappearing series of dependently related phenomena, which are, always, ceasing to exist the very moment they arise and appear.

To reiterate, there are only phenomenal compactions of individual thought moments as ultimate realities moving relative to one another and there are no existing "individuals" — except in a way which may be conventionally called an instantaneous, momentarily arising of a sense of 'being' a 'so-called' human being or, more exactly stated, a 'cause-and-effect rising becoming and disappearing instantaneously.'

Note: We must not misapprehend the denotation of 'individual' as meaning anything more than awareness of mind-consciousness in a thought moment moving relative to all inter-related movements in inter-dependent relations within a cosmos.

Just as an aside, in ending these introductory remarks, we might also mention that it is possible to imagine that, just as one individual atom is small in comparison to a galaxy, so a galaxy of the mind would seem small in comparison to the vastness of developing cosmology. When we start to think of such mind-consciousness acting inter-dependently following the conditioned-causality of the powerful flow of the ultimate energy of emerging cosmology, then, we are beginning to understand the potential movements of psycho-physical energy and how far and wide such psycho-physical vibrational-energy might have the capacity of reaching.

Imagining the power of potential mind-energy possible within an ever-evolving cosmos is mind-expanding, and this gives us a hint of the possible, potential powers of the energetically awakened-mind.

Note: To use a further simile, again, for the sake of comparison, [for those who are interested only], we may draw the parallel that just as the speed of energy particles within a particular atom may be conceived of as infinitesimal units of moving energy, which, in turn, are conceived of as similar and relative to the speed of movement of particles within other atoms; and just as particles within any atom may be compared as moving relatively within an inter-dependent pattern of speed to one another, and even throughout a wider and vaster cosmological process, so arising phenomena might be considered as merely inter-related, momentarily moving vibrations, swiftly moving and coming together, according to certain causal conditions, all of which are relative to uncountable sequences of rapid movements [waves or vibrations] which may be taking place, in the present, in relation to inestimable numbers of series of dependently moving experienced events or actions from this ‘thought moment’ or from conceivable sequences of life in the past — even all the way back through the process of human evolution.

According to the **Venerable Narada Mahathera**, in his book *The Buddha and his Teachings*, which has often been reprinted by the Buddhist Publication Society, BPS, and which commands considerable respect based on the author’s high level of scholarship and knowledge of the Pali texts, we read:

“There are two realities apparent and ultimate. Apparent reality is ordinary conventional (*sammuti sacca*). Ultimate reality is abstract truth (*parámattha sacca*).

“For instance, the table we see is apparent reality. In an ultimate, abstract sense the so-called table consists of forces and qualities.”

The table looks and feels like a solid entity, but if we know our physics, we realize that it is made up of cells with almost impregnable walls but, within the inside of the cell, there is mostly empty space. Whether the table is made of bamboo or teak, its apparent solidity is relatively temporary. Similarly, an oaken table may outlast the life of an individual, but both are still only temporary phenomena as seen against the unfathomable relativity of time.

Tables and chairs and men and even oceans and mountains have no fixed reality. They are only phenomena that come together, which are formed and made-up of different elements and then disappear—or better said—the so-called “forms” disappear while the elements of which they consisted move on through the cycle of nature to be recycled once again and immediately (or even eventually) reappear as the elements consistent in wholly different forms. Tables and men have no absolute reality and neither do any other so-called formed objects in the world and the universe.

Narada Thera further writes,

“For ordinary purposes a scientist would use the term water, but in the laboratory he would say H₂O.”

When we see a sheet of water it seems to have apparent reality, when, in actual fact, it consists of millions of small, individual water drops which have run and collected together. When we know our physics, we know that water is made of molecules that are almost empty of particles and matter and that water evaporates and becomes hydrogen and oxygen, which in turn can change again and take on different forms dependent on different conditions. Just as water has no permanent form or abiding reality, so neither bamboo nor wood, nor any other apparent object of perception may be thought to be have unchanging reality. Everything is in a state of ever-changing.

The Venerable author also states,

“In the same way, for conventional purposes, such terms as man, woman, being, self and so forth are used. The so-called fleeting forms consist of psycho-physical phenomena which are constantly changing, not remaining for two consecutive moments the same.” Men, women and beings have no ultimate reality.

Just as the form of a table may be “conventionally” seen, so may the form of a living being but neither have what is conventionally called “solidity,” because both are composed of intangible, impermanent states of elements which change and arise and cease in accordance with the abstract laws of nature.

Despite the fact that there seems to be a doer and receiver of any mental action, in reality there is just a psycho-mechanical, vibrational, organic process which organizes and categorizes swirling impressions impacting on the mind for the sake of on-going survival. The seeming-self is just a mode of perception, (which may be compared from a wider perspective to a small point in a vast, ever-moving, timeless, unsubstantial, and otherwise, un-understandable universe), which picks up and scans and screens a multiplicity of incoming impulses arising, through an unsubstantial, complex working tool conventionally called the mind.

So what we conventionally call man is just a vibrational perceiving process which is there for the sake of originating dependent protective self-perpetuating action. What goes on in the mind is, at first, just a whirl of confusing actions which occur during the time it takes for the psycho-mechanical machine to receive and then arrange converging series of external and internal events into some kind of cognitive order as part of the process of causing resultant reactions which effect the continuation of the course of life in the human species.

Man’s sense of mental confusion will be discussed again later under the heading of *sankhara*, which will attempt to approach the core of the problem of how phenomena arising in thought moments cause the mind’s continuing sense of mental uneasiness, unsatisfactoriness and suffering.

Meanwhile, as there is some potential for selection of action and reaction, (in the way the organism reacts to incoming impulses), this means that, due to arising volition, things can go one way or another when it comes to the effects of such actions and reactions, as being beneficial or non-beneficial, promulgating resultant states of (i)safety or (ii) suffering, or (iii) something in-between, to arise in the face of continuing life and survival.

All there is is ‘volition’ which is, otherwise, called ‘will.’ There is no actual, substantial man or person as performing actor or agent performing an action according to what common, conventional man would call “his” will. This is just a ‘personification,’ a figure of speech for what is actually an on-going ‘willing’ in the process of happening. Since this may be hard to understand for those unfamiliar with what is also often, [and perhaps wrongly] translated as Buddhist Psychology, it may be wise to first approach the “existence” problem following another tack.

Narada Thera, (who had an excellent, English-based, Western education) also quotes that:

As C.E.M. Joad says in *The Meaning of Life*:

“Matter has since disintegrated under our very eyes. It is no longer solid; it is no longer enduring; it is no longer determined by compulsive laws; and more important than all it is no longer known.”

The so-called atoms, it seems, are both “divisible and destructible.” The electrons and protons that compose atoms “can meet and annihilate one another, while their persistence, such as it is, is rather that of a wave lacking fixed boundaries, and in process of continual change both as regards shape and position, than that of a thing.”

The same may be posited as being true of states of mind. Mind and matter are no longer seen as they were once, formerly, imagined to be.

Narada Thera says,

“Buddhists agree with Bertrand Russell when he says in *Religion and Science*:

‘There is obviously some reason in which I [in the “conventional” sense] am the same person as I was yesterday, and, to take an even more obvious example, if I simultaneously see a man and hear him speaking, there is some sense in which the I that sees is the same as the I that hears.

‘Until recently scientists believed in an indivisible and indestructible atom. For sufficient reasons physicists have reduced this atom to a series of events; *for equally good reasons psychologists find that*

mind has not the identity of a single continuing thing but is a series of occurrences bound together by certain intimate relations.’”

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Once we realize the significance of Russell’s words on the relativity of “*series of occurrences*” in the mind, we begin to see that imagining the mind of its ‘self’ as a being a single, existing, abiding, personal, unchanging entity or unity is an idea which, now, must be thrown away.

In other words, understanding phenomena relative to phenomena will depend on our getting-rid of the idea of ‘ego-centric personality’ being the focal point of the mind and reaching into the realm beyond into the realm of “*series of occurrences bound together by certain intimate relations.*”

This topic of *series of occurrences* is explained in the Buddhist philosophy of relations within the wider cosmic context of ultimate dependent origination, which we shall discuss in the process of writing this paper.

Meanwhile, let it suffice to say that, ultimately, phenomena in the world, the universe and the cosmos have interdependent, fast-moving complex relationships relative to one another, in which comparatively insignificant human organisms may, also, have the potential to interact for the better-ment of man and the world, but, more commonly, the ‘human organism’ has a in-built natural system—of input-data-processing—a mental-organization-mechanism, which delusively simplifies the overall ongoing process, in a way which makes it ‘seem’ that everything outside (and, subsequently, inside the mind) appears to be revolving around and somehow belonging to the immediate world of perpetuating the existence of ‘self for its own sake’ and for its own needs.

This we may call *the limited-circle of the self-preservation cycle* which works as a defensive wall, which is useful for orientation and self-protection in a swirling-world, — but is just a deception in the mind — just a simplified moving picture — (comparable to a moving series of dots and pixels suggesting an overall evolving picture) which is working as an identification and categorization tool, consequently creating a defensive/aggressive subjective point of view from which the organism reacts to do what it has to do to survive and gain and maintain substance upon which to live and thrive, within the limited-terms of a seemingly never-ending and excruciating fight for continuing existence and subsistence.

What most ‘world-centered’ people fail to see, however, is that there are also phenomena, outside those defensive walls, of their limited, self-protective circle self-preservation and perception, which may also be cognized and realized and known by the mind. Seen in one way, (i) while the mind might, [most of the time] have to pull-in-tight and compact itself to fight and survive in an existing body, in yet another way, (ii) which does not mean that actions of self-preservation are the only functions of which the mind is necessarily capable. The mind is also capable of sublime mental actions on planes even higher than that of this mundane world.

For many of us, life is an unending existential fight, first, with intervening forces from the world outside and, then, within our own minds, as we experience mental stress in attempting to unwind and unbind the impacts and accumulations of ‘impressions,’ from external movements, causing mental threads and spindles and tangles and bundles of mental energy which, consequently, arise to cause uneasiness and tension within a perplexed and agitated and thus-externally and, frequently, internally tortured-mind. Some have such an unfortunate *kamma* that they never untangle the tangle in the mind, in this life or the next.

For some others, who have the fortunate *kamma* to bring the mind to rest and experience, (at least for temporary periods of rest and peace), sometimes, the mind gets glimpses and insights into more positive impulses and phenomena and movements, which lie outside the walls of the man-made circle of the prison of selfishness, defensiveness, acquisitiveness and aggressiveness.

Sometimes, the mind gets glimpses into mental energy impulses, which are harmless and wholesome and morally pure, and the inquisitive mind naturally wants to gain further experience and insight into (and come to know more about) the nature of harmlessness and wholesomeness and purity on higher levels.

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Narada Thera asserts that Buddhists do not believe in an unchanging entity, in an actor apart from action, in a perceiver apart from perception, in a corporeal, controlling subject behind consciousness.

The Venerable author further states:

“In this respect Buddhists agree with Prof. William James (*Principles of Psychology*) when, unlike Descartes, he asserts:

‘Thoughts themselves are the thinkers.’”

There is no “I think: therefore I am.” The conception of an “I” is an assumption, and so is, therefore, the existence based upon it. There is only thinking thinking about thinking. This may sound absurd to the normal everyday mind, but in the realm of ultimate realities, it is the way things actually are.

Here [we must also note that] it is well known fact that, while the Buddha used the word “I” when talking to common people, using their own worldly language, he used the word, “I” “*without misapprehending it.*” In other words, “I” can be loosely-used when there is a commonly agreed consensus regarding a sense of continuity of perception which seems like a continuous self to ordinary people because it all runs together and seems to be a unity, until it is taken apart by *Abhidhammist* practitioners under the methodological microscope of mind analysis, observation and concentration. The common mind only perceives the subjective “I” and that is why common man suffers, but there is a wonderful paradox in the statement in which the Buddha says: “I will beat the deathless drum,” — in which the metaphor “deathless drum” denotes the very eradication of the “I” that suffers.

To round off his summary of regarding epistemology and Western Philosophy on the particular subject of change and self, the Venerable Narada Thera cites some further erudite points:

“Hume in his search after a soul declares:

‘There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self: that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity.

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other—of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception...’”

Bergson says:

“All consciousness is time existence; and a conscious state is not a state that endures without changing. It is a change without ceasing; when change ceases, it ceases; it is itself nothing but change.”

Prof. William James further writes:

“This *me* is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known. The ‘I’ which knows them cannot itself be an aggregate, neither for psychological purpose need it be considered to be an unchanging metaphysical entity like the soul, or a principal like the pure Ego viewed as out of time. *It is a thought, at each moment different from that of the last moment,* but appropriative of the latter, together with all that the latter calls its own. All the experimental facts find their place in this description, unencumbered with any hypothesis save that of the existence of passing thoughts or states of mind.” (*Principles of Psychology*)

We may also comment that Edmund Husserl is not far off track when he writes, on *Phenomenological Reflection*, that

“Every experience and any other way we are consciously involved with objects clearly allows of a, ‘phenomenological turn,’ transference into a process of ‘phenomenological experience.’ In simple perception, we are directed towards perceived matter, in memory towards remembered matters, in thinking towards thoughts, in valuing towards values, in willing towards ends and means, and so on. Thus every such pursuit has its object” [Thema] But *at any given moment, we can effect a change of focus that shifts our thematic gaze away from the current matters, thoughts, values, ends, etc, and directs our gaze, instead, towards the manifoldly changing ...*”

While Husserl goes on to use words like ‘subjective’ and ‘consciousness’ in a conventional, European psychological sense, he is still a full step ahead of his contemporaries in aiding us to reach the point of demolishing the barriers and borders of what had been traditionally conceived of as fixed reality. Through his opening insight, into the nature of experience, Husserl shook the foundations of so-called Absolute-Truth and, eventually, the walls all came tumbling down.

Narada Thera, in his own words, explains perception of phenomena this way:

“In Buddhism no distinction is made between mind and consciousness. Both are used as synonymous terms. Mind may be defined as simply the awareness of an object since there is no agent or a soul that directs all activities.

It consists of fleeting mental states which constantly arise and perish with lightning rapidity. ‘With birth for its source and death for its mouth it persistently flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood.’ Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life-stream, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions, to its successor. Every fresh consciousness therefore consists of the potentialities of its predecessors and something more. As all impressions are indelibly recorded in this ever-changing palimpsest-like mind, and as all potentialities are transmitted from life to life, irrespective of temporary physical disintegrations, reminiscence of past births or past incidents becomes a possibility. If memory depends solely on brain cells, it becomes impossibility. *(Parchment-like)*

Speaking of stored-experience which arises with consciousness, Narada Thera explains:

“Stored within the *psyche*,” writes a certain psychoanalyst, “but usually inaccessible and to be reached only by some, is the whole record, without exception, of every experience the individual has passed through, every influence felt, every impression received. The subconscious mind is not only an indelible record of individual experiences but also retains the impress of primeval impulses and tendencies, which so far from being outgrown as we fondly deem them in civilized man, are subconsciously active and apt to break out in disconcerting strength at unexpected moments.”

A Buddhist would make the same assertion with a vital modification. Not stored within any postulatory “psyche,” for there is no proof of any such receptacle or store-house in this ever-changing complex machinery of man, but *dependent on the individual psycho-physical continuity or flux is every experience the so-called being has passed through, every influence felt, every impression received, every characteristic—divine, human, or brutal—developed*. In short the entire kammic force is dependent on the dynamic mental flux (*citta santati*) ever ready to manifest itself in multifarious phenomena as occasion arises.

Regarding, “Who then is the doer of kamma? Who experiences the effect?” he answers:

“*Volition or will (cetaná) is itself the doer*. Feeling (*vedaná*) is itself the reaper of the fruits of action. Apart from these pure mental states (*suddhadhammá*) there is none to sow and none to reap.

Just as, says the venerable Buddhaghosa, in the case of those elements of matter that go under the name of tree, as soon as at any point the fruit springs up, it is then said the tree bears fruit or ‘thus the tree has fructified,’ so also in the case of ‘aggregates’ (*khandhas*) which go under the name of deva or man, when a fruition of happiness or misery springs up at any point, then it is said “that deva or man is happy or miserable.”

The working of the law of cause and effect is an intricate law which only a Buddha can ultimately comprehend — especially when it comes to the effects of what may be called moral choices which neither modern science nor so-called *psychology* have been as yet able to locate and isolate and measure and understand.

To obtain a clear understanding of this difficult subject, says Narada Thera, “it is necessary to acquaint oneself with thought-processes (*cittavithi*) according to *Abhidhamma*.

“*Mind or consciousness, the essence of the so-called being, plays the most important part in the complex machinery of man. It is mind that either defiles or purifies one. Mind in fact is both the bitterest enemy and the greatest friend of oneself.*”

Concerning consciousness, he says,

“When a person is fast asleep and is in a dreamless state, he experiences a kind of consciousness which is more or less passive than active. It is similar to the consciousness one experiences at the moment of conception and at the moment of death (*cuti*). The Buddhist philosophical term for this type of consciousness is *bhavaḍga* which means factor of life, or indispensable cause or condition of existence. Arising and perishing every moment, it flows on like a stream not remaining the same for two consecutive moments.

“We do experience this type of consciousness not only in a dreamless state but also in our waking state. In the course of our life we experience *bhavaḍga* thought-moments more than any other type of consciousness. Hence *bhavaḍga* becomes an indispensable condition of life.

“*Bhavaḍga* is so called because it is an essential condition for continued existence. ‘Life-continuum’ has been suggested as the closest English equivalent for *bhavaḍga*.

“This *bhavaḍga* consciousness, which one always experiences as long as it is uninterrupted by external stimuli, *vibrates for a thought-moment and passes away* when a physical or mental object enters the mind. Suppose, for instance, the object presented is a physical form. Now, when the *bhavaḍga* stream of consciousness is arrested, sense door consciousness (*pañcadvāravajjana*), whose function is to turn the consciousness towards the object, arises and passes away. Immediately after this there arises visual consciousness (*cakkhuvīññāḍā*) which sees the object, but yet knows no more about it. This sense operation is followed by a moment of the reception of the object so seen (*sampapicchana*). Next, arises the investigating thought-moment (*santiraḍā*) which momentarily examines the object so seen. This is followed by the determining thought-moment (*vothapana*) when discrimination is exercised and freewill may play its part. On this depends the subsequent psychologically important stage *javana*. It is at this stage that an action is judged, whether it be moral or immoral kamma is performed at this stage.”

“If viewed rightly (*yoniso manasikāra*), it becomes moral; if wrongly (*ayoniso manasikāra*), immoral. Irrespective of the desirability or the undesirability of the object presented to the mind, it is possible for one to make the *Javana* process moral or immoral. If, for instance, one meets an enemy, anger will arise automatically. A wise person might, on the contrary, with self-control, radiate a thought of love towards him.

“It is an admitted fact that environment, circumstances, habitual tendencies and the like condition our thoughts. On such occasions freewill is subordinated. There exists, however, the possibility for us to overcome those external forces and produce moral and immoral thoughts exercising our own freewill.

“An extraneous element may be a causative factor, but we ourselves are directly responsible for the actions that finally follow.

“It is extremely difficult to suggest a suitable rendering for *Javana*. Apperception is suggested by some. Impulse is suggested as an alternative rendering, which seems to be less satisfactory than apperception. Here the Pali term is retained.

“*Javana*, literally, means *running*. It is so called because, in the course of a thought-process, it runs *consequently for seven thought-moments*, or, at times of death, for five thought-moments with an identical object. The mental states occurring in all these thought-moments are similar, but the potential force differs. This entire thought-process which *takes place in an infinitesimal part of time ends with the registering consciousness (tadálambana)* lasting for two thought-moments. Thus one thought-process is completed at the expiration of seventeen thought-moments.

Concerning the thought process Narada Thera writes,

“According to Buddhist philosophy there is no moment when we do not ordinarily experience a particular kind of consciousness, hanging on to some object—whether physical or mental. The time limit of such consciousness is termed one thought-moment. *Each thought-moment is followed by another. The rapidity of the succession of such thought-moments is hardly conceivable by the ken of human knowledge. It pleases the commentators to say that during the time occupied by a flash of lightning billions and billions of thought-moments may arise.*”

Furthermore, concerning the *speed of a thought moment*,

“It pleases the commentators to say that the time duration of one thought-moment is even less than the one millionth part of the time occupied by a flash of lightning.”

This is why thoughts, sometimes, seem to the untrained mind (which is still in darkness) to be converging simultaneously, thus causing confusion, when actually they are arising in dependent series, so rapidly that it is impossible to distinguish them as *imperceptible parts or mental clips in a series in the thought process*. This explains why the mind is frequently so overwhelmed by what appear to be mixed-thoughts welling-up in a whirlpool of what seem to become conflicting feelings and intentions. Mixed thoughts, however, do not arise simultaneously. They arise in lightening-fast succession.

In another place, Narada Thera says,

“*Just as the wheel rests on the ground only at one point, so, strictly speaking, we live only for one thought-moment. We are always in the present, and that present is ever slipping into the irrevocable past. Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life-process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions on it, to its successor.*

“Every fresh consciousness, therefore, consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more. At death, the consciousness perishes, as in truth it perishes every moment, only to give birth to another in a rebirth. This renewed consciousness inherits all past experiences. As all impressions are indelibly recorded in the ever-changing palimpsest-like mind, and all potentialities are transmitted from life to life, irrespective of temporary disintegration, thus there may be reminiscence of past births or past incidents.”

Analysis of an individual thought moment gives us an insight into the intricacy of the overall thought process and the relativity of phenomenological objects of perception to one another.

In a parallel commentary to that of the Venerable Narada Thera, (which explains the movements within Thought-Moments), the Sri Lankan scholar, **V. F. Gunaratna**, in *Rebirth Explained*, also published by the Buddhist Publication Society, in 1980, in Kandy, Sri Lanka (BPS Wheel Publication No. 167/168/169, Pages 26-36.) writes,

“The mind is an endless succession of thoughts, each following the next with such a rapidity of succession as to give it the semblance of something permanent and stable, whereas in reality it is not a unity but a process, with this difference that it is a limited process—a *process of 17 thought-moments each following the other.*

“So that, *what we loosely call a thought is a thought-process*. When a man sees a tree and instantly recognizes it as a tree, it means that there arose in him an awareness or consciousness of the tree, but this does not arise by one single mental operation.

“Before this awareness or consciousness or thought of the tree completely arose, 17 stages or thought-moments would have occurred. *The man may not be conscious of all these 17 stages or thought-moments, since some of these mental processes, especially the earlier processes occur in the bhavanga or unconscious state of the mind.*

“Although as many as 17 stages or thought-moments are necessary to conclude and complete one single thought-process, it is wrong to imagine that much time is involved in the process. On the contrary, in trying to emphasize the extreme shortness of time taken, commentators resort to a comparison with a flash of lightning or a twinkling of the eye. So infinitesimally, brief is the period of time involved.

What is a thought-moment?

“The unit of measure for the duration of a thought-process is a thought-moment (*cittakkhaina*), which is also an infinitesimally small division of time. All thought-moments rise up in the conscious *vithi citta*, remain there for just a fleeting moment and then sink down to the unconscious *bhavanga citta*, just as *waves of the ocean rise up, remain there for a fleeting moment and then subside*. Thought-moments therefore have the following three stages: (1) The genetic stage or nascent stage (*uppada*); (2) the continuing stage (*tithi*) (3) the cessant stage (*bhavanga*). These three stages also occur within, the shortest possible time. A thought-moment does not persist by itself but runs most rapidly from the first to the second stage and from the second to the third.

Thought-moments and thought-processes

“A thought-process is made up of 17 thought-moments, and a thought-moment is made up of 3 stages. 17 thought-moments must arise, remain and pass away to conclude and complete one single thought-process. When the cessant stage of the 17th thought-moment passes away and before the genetic or nascent stage of the first thought-moment in the next thought-process arises, at this particular juncture, since one thought-process has completed itself, the conscious *vithi citta* subsides and the unconscious *bhavanga citta* reappears into activity. This unconscious *bhavanga citta* also does not remain long. It too remains for just a fleeting moment and then subsides to enable the next thought-process to arise in the conscious *vithi citta*. This too then runs its course of 17 stages or thought-moments, and then the *bhavanga citta* again appears. In this manner the unending stream of mental processes flows on and on.

“It is a mistake to think that these various mental states are joined together like carriages of a train to form a somewhat jagged combination. *Each mental stage merges completely into the next. There are no sharp dividing lines between one mental stage and the next.* Hence there is no sharp dividing line between the nascent stage of one thought-moment and its continuing stage or between its continuing stage and its cessant stage. Similarly *there is no sharp dividing line between one thought-process and another.* Although the *bhavanga citta* is said to appear when one conscious thought-process is over and before another begins, here too, there is no sharp dividing line since *vithi citta* merges into the unconscious *bhavanga*, there being no sharp dividing lines between the two ... “

Concerning how a normal Thought-Process works, V.F. Gunaratana writes,

“Let us now trace the interesting course of a single normal thought-process through the 17 stages or thought-moments that constitute it, as explained in the commentaries. Here is the order of their occurrence in the normal case.

Order of a Normal Thought-Process

1. *Bhavanga atita* (past unconscious)
2. *Bhavanga calana* (vibration of the *bhavanga*)
3. *Bhavanga upacoheda* (arrest of the *bhavanga*)
4. (Five-door advertence)
5. *Panca viññāóa* (fivefold consciousness)

6. *Sampapicchana* (reception)
7. *Santirana* (investigation)
8. *Votthapana* (decision)
- 9 - 15. *Javana* (thought-impulsions)
- 16 & 17. *Tadalambana* (registration of the experience)

1st Thought-moment: past unconscious (*bhavanga atīta*)

“We must commence tracing from the stage immediately prior to the running of the conscious process. That is the stage when the conscious *vīthi citta* is in abeyance, and the stream of the unconscious *bhavanga citta* is flowing undisturbed. Such a state is present for instance, in a man who is enjoying deep sleep, when the mind does not respond to external objects or stimuli. This then is regarded as the first stage for the purpose of investigation, though actually the process has not yet begun. (This first stage is also present during that brief interval of time when one conscious thought has subsided and before the next arises).

2nd Thought moment: vibration of the *bhavanga* (*bhavanga calana*)

“Suppose now an external object or stimulus by way of a sight or sound or other sense-impression (any stimulus that attracts any of the senses) is received by the sleeping man the flow of the unconscious *bhavanga citta* is disturbed. This is the second thought-moment or stage. It can also arise in the waking state after one conscious thought has subsided and before the next arises. The mind is then in the *bhavanga* state for a ‘very short’ while (*calana* means shaking or vibrating).

The *bhavanga* flow now *begins to vibrate*. This vibration lasts for one thought-moment before it subsides, and is compared by Shwe Zan Aung, the translator of the *Abhidhammattha: Sangaha* (in his introduction), to the vibration of a spinning, top whose velocity is falling. This is the result of the stimulus or object trying to force its attention on the conscious, mind by impeding the flow of the *bhavanga* stream of unconsciousness.

3rd Thought-moment: arrest of the *bhavanga* (*bhavanga upaccheda*).

“This is the stage when the stream of the *bhavanga citta* is arrested or cut off (*upaccheda* means cutting off). As a result, the *vīthi citta* or the conscious process arises and, begins to flow, but this stimulus or object is not yet cognized by it.

4th Thought-moment: five-door apprehending consciousness (*pañcadvāra āvajjana*)

“This is the stage when a start is made by the conscious *vīthi citta* to cognize the object which has arrested the flow of the unconscious *bhavanga*. This stage is called *pañcadvāra, āvajjana* because there is turning round to find out through which of the five sense-doors the stimulus is coming (*pañcadvārā*) means five doors and *āvajjana* means turning towards. There is thus an adverting towards the stimulus or object through one of the five sense-channels of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.

“At this stage the sleeping man just awakened is *turning towards something which calls for attention but knows nothing more about it. This is sometimes compared to the action of the spider to find out the cause that disturbed his web.* The smooth flowing of this *bhavanga* undisturbed by any activity of the *vīthi citta*, is compared to the stillness of the spider resting motionlessly at the centre of his web. When an insect enters the web and is entangled in one of its threads, *the web begins to vibrate and thereafter the spider turns to see in which thread something lies entangled.* This is exactly the function of this thought moment of *pañcadvārāvajjana*. The sleeping man just awakened from his sleep is trying to find out through which of the five sense-doors the stimulus came. Is it a sight or sound or other sense-impression? He continues to watch. It is still a dim-awareness of something. If attention is aroused not externally through the five senses but internally through a thought, the stage is known as *manodvārāvajjana* (mind-door advertence). This is alternative to the five sense-door advertence. The course of such a thought-process is slightly different from the process now described, since the thought-moments 5th to 8th do not occur.

5th Thought moment: five-fold consciousness (*pañca viññāóó*)

“Now follows a consciousness of the kind that apprehends the particular sense-impression caused by the stimulus (*pañca*) means five and *viññāóa* means consciousness). If it is a sight it is *cakkhu vinnana* or visual consciousness that works. If it is a sound it is *sota viññāóa* or auditory consciousness that works. In this way in respect of every one of the sense-organs there is a particular sense-consciousness and this sense-consciousness begins to work. Yet there is no full comprehension of the stimulus. What appears through one of the sense-doors is merely sensed.

6th Thought moment: reception (*sampāpicchana*)

“This is the thought-moment which occurs when the sense-impression caused by the stimulus is properly received. What is sensed is now received. (*Sampāpicchana* means receiving).

7th Thought-moment: investigation (*santīrana*)

“After the function of receiving, there arises the function of investigation. This thought-process performs the function of investigating with discrimination the stimulus or object which caused the sense-impression. What is received is investigated. (*Santīrana* means investigation).

8th Thought-moment: decision (*vothapana*)

“This is the thought-moment when a decision is made regarding the stimulus which caused the sense-impression (*vothapana* means decision). What is investigated is decided on or determined.

9th to 15th Thought-moments: thought-impulsions (*javana*)

“Now follows the psychologically important stage of *javana* or apperception or impulsion which lasts for seven thought moments (at the time of death, only five such moments occur). It is a stage of introspection followed by action. The psychological importance of these thoughts cannot be over-emphasized. *Javana* is derived from the Pāli verb *javati* which means *to run, and also to impel or incite*. Hence these mental states, unlike the previous mental states, run for several thought moments and their one function is to impel. These are *impulsions which flash forth at the climax of a process of consciousness* of the *vithi citta*. Hence one is now fully conscious of the object or stimulus in all its relations, this being the stage of maximum cognition. It is at this stage that kamma begins to operate for good or bad, for this is the stage when the element of free will is present.

“All other stages of the *vithi* process are like reflex actions. They must occur. *Javana* is the only stage where man is relatively free to think and to decide. There is the element of choice in this important thought moment, and it has the power to affect one's future according to the nature of the volition. If the sense-object that entered the mind had been rightly comprehended (*yoniso manasikāra*), free from the impurities of lust, hatred and delusion, harmonious results will follow. If it had been wrongly comprehended (*ayoniso manasikāra*), disharmonious results will follow. *Javana* in this context is a difficult word to be rendered into English. Professor Rhys Davids in his Pāli Dictionary says that as the 12th stage in the course of an act of the *vithi citta*, *javana* means "going" not by way of swiftness but as intellectual movement. It is the stage of full perception or apperception.

“Mrs. Rhys Davids refers to *javana* as "the mental aspect or parallel of that moment in the nerve-process when central function is about to become efferent activity or innervation." Innervation being a reference to the nervous influences necessary for the maintenance of life and the functions of the various organs, the comparison is not inappropriate. But she herself has stated that she spent hours on this word, and finding no appropriate rendering was content to use the word untranslated.

“Shwe Zan Aung's introduction to the *Compendium of Philosophy* refers to the *javana* stage as follows: “Now intervenes the apperceptive stage of full cognition, wherein the object determined or integrated by the foregoing activity is apperceived or properly cognized. This is held to occupy ordinarily seven thought-moments or none at all, except in cases of death, stupefaction, creation of phenomena, and other special cases when a lesser number of moments than seven obtains. At this stage of apperception, the subject interprets the sensory, impression and fully appreciates the objective significance of his experience.”

16th and 17th Thought-moments: registration of the experience: (*tadalambana*),

“These are the two resultant thought-moments following immediately after the *javana* thought-moments. Their only function is to register the impression made by the *javana* thought-moments. They are not an integral part of the conscious *vithi* process. They are merely *a recall of an experience that is passing away*. If the impression made is not strong, they do not occur at all, “*tadalambana*,” derived from “*tadarammana*” means “that object.” It is so called because it takes the same object as that of the foregoing *javana* impulses and has been compared in the *Visuddhimagga* to the current of water that follows for a short while the boat which is going upstream ...

The 17 Thought-moments

“In general, *it must not be forgotten that these seemingly-long 17 thought-moments constitute just one sort, single thought-process, which takes place within an infinitesimally small fraction of time*. The progress of this process varies with the intensity of the stimulus. If the intensity is very great (*atimahanta*), the complete process takes place. If it is great (*mahanta*), the 16th and 17th moments of registration do not occur. If it is small (*paritta*) or very small (*atiparitta*), the process works functionally only, without full cognition.

The classic simile of a falling mango;

“These 17 thought-moments are compared by commentators to the 17 stages that occur between a man sleeping and the selfsame man eating a mango that falls by his side. A man is found sleeping soundly at the foot of a mango tree with his head covered. A wind blows and moves the branches of the tree causing a ripe mango to fall by his side. He is aroused from his sleep by this sound. He sees the fallen mango. He picks it up and examines it. Finding it to be desirable fruit he eats it, and after swallowing the last morsels, he replaces his head covering and resumes his sleep.

“The sleep of the man represents the unconscious *bhavanga* stream flowing undisturbed. The striking of the wind against the tree represents *atita bhavanga* or past unconscious. The sleeper is not disturbed. The sleep continues. So does the *bhavanga*. The moving of the branches represents the vibration of the *bhavanga*. The sleep is disturbed. So is the *bhavanga*. The falling of the mango represents the arrest of the *bhavanga*. The awakening of the man represents *pancadvaravajjana* or the arousing of attention through the five-door channels of sense. The removal of the head covering and the use of his eyes to observe the mango is *cakkhu vinnana*, or visual consciousness, which is one of the five types of consciousness together known as *pañca viññāḍā*. The picking up of the fruit represents *sampapicchana* or reception, and the examination of it represents *santirana* or investigation. The finding of the fruit as a desirable mango is *votthapana* or decision. The eating of the fruit represents the apperceptive acts of the seven *javana* thought-moments. The swallowing of the last morsels left in the mouth represents *tadalambana* or registration of the impression. The man's resumption of his sleep after replacing his head covering represents the *bhavanga citta* resuming to flow smoothly and undisturbed.” (From *Rebirth Explained* 26-36)

“This is *a technique that was also frequently used by the Buddha and his later followers in the explanation of perception of things, the mental processes, the doors of the mind and the breakdown of consciousness into minute stages which help us understand the arising and becoming and ending of things*.

“It must be remarked in conclusion, however, that while coherent and unified process analysis and categorization and detailing of things *helps explain many of the phenomena and processes* in this round of *samsara*, and even in the deva realm and the thirty-one planes of existence, it is *nothing more than a convention, a useful tool*, a recurring form in the structure of language, that cannot be used to explain everything.

In summary, coming back to the **Venerable Narada Thera**, in *The Buddha and his Teaching*, in the same simile of the mango tree, Narada Thera illustrates the thought-process somewhat

more concisely and explains where the continuing vibrations of mental energy go after a thought moment's ceasing, whether in the present or, in the case of human kamma, at and after death:

“A man, fast asleep, is lying at the foot of a mango tree with his head covered. A wind stirs the branches and a fruit falls beside the head of the sleeping man. He removes his head covering, and turns towards the object. He sees it and then picks it up. He examines it, and ascertains that it is a ripe mango fruit. He eats it, and swallowing the remnants with saliva, once more resigns himself to sleep.

“The dreamless sleep corresponds to the unperturbed current of *bhavaḍga*. The striking of the wind against the tree corresponds to past *bhavaḍga* and the swaying of the branches to vibrating *bhavaḍga*. The falling of the fruit represents the arrest *bhavaḍga*. Turning towards the object corresponds to sense-door advertent consciousness; sight of the object, to perception; picking up, to receiving consciousness; examination, to investigating consciousness; ascertaining that it is a ripe mango fruit, to determining consciousness.

“The actual eating resembles the *Javana* process, and the swallowing of the morsels corresponds to retention. His resigning to sleep resembles the subsidence of the mind into *bhavaḍga* again.

Concerning where the energy of the thought moment goes after death, he writes:

“*The death of a person is merely “the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon.”* Though the present form perishes another form which is neither absolutely the same nor totally different takes its place according to the thought that was powerful at the death moment since the kammic force which hitherto actuated it is not annihilated with the dissolution of the body. It is this last thought-process which is termed ‘reproductive kamma’ that determines the state of a person in his subsequent birth.

In the case of a ‘human’ phenomena,

“As a rule the last thought-process depends on the general conduct of a person. In some exceptional cases, perhaps due to favourable or unfavourable circumstances, at the moment of death a good person may experience a bad thought and a bad person a good one. The future birth will be determined by this last thought-process, irrespective of the general conduct. This does not mean that the effects of the past actions are obliterated. They will produce their inevitable results at the appropriate moment... Such reverse changes of birth account for the birth of vicious children to virtuous parents and of virtuous children to vicious parents.

“Now, to assist and maintain or to weaken and obstruct the fruition of this reproductive kamma another past kamma may intervene. Such actions are termed ‘supportive’ (*upatthambhaka*) kamma and ‘counteractive’ (*upapiḍaka*) kamma respectively.

“According to the law of kamma *the potential energy of the reproductive kamma can be totally annulled by a more powerful opposing past kamma, which seeking an opportunity, may quite unexpectedly operate, just as a counteractive force can obstruct the path of a flying arrow and bring it down to the ground.* Such an action is termed ‘Destructive’ (*upaghātaka*) kamma which is more powerful than the above two in that it not only obstructs but also destroys the whole force. ...

“When there is no weighty kamma to condition the future birth a Death-proximate (*āsanna*) kamma might operate. This is the action one does, or recollects, immediately before the dying moment. Owing to its significance in determining the future birth, the custom of reminding the dying person of his good deeds and making him do good on his death-bed still prevails in Buddhist countries.

“Sometimes a bad person may die happily and receive a good birth if, fortunately, he remembers or does a good act at the last moment. This does not mean that although he enjoys a good birth he will be exempt from the effects of the evil deeds he has accumulated during his life-time.

“At times a good person, on the other hand, may die unhappily by suddenly remembering an evil act or by conceiving a bad thought, perchance compelled by unfavourable circumstances.

“Habitual (*ációóa*) kamma is the next in priority of effect. It is the kamma that one constantly performs and recollects and towards which one has a great liking.

“Habits whether good or bad become second nature. They more or less tend to mould the character of a person. At leisure moments we often engage ourselves in our habitual thoughts and deeds. In the same way at the death-moment, unless influenced by other circumstances, we, as a rule, recall to mind our habitual thoughts and deeds.

“The last in this category is cumulative (*katattá*)^[7] kamma which embraces all that cannot be included in the foregoing three. This is as it were the reserve fund of a particular being.

“The last classification is according to the plane in which the effects take place. They are:

1. Evil actions (*akusala*) which may ripen in the sense sphere (*kámaloka*).
2. Good actions (*kusala*) which may ripen in the sense sphere.
3. Good actions which may ripen in the realms of form (*rúpaloka*), and
4. Good actions which may ripen in the formless realms (*arúpaloka*). ...”

*

Concerning the *sankhara*, which arise out of thought moments, the venerable author, Narada Thera, writes:

“Dependent on ignorance, arise conditioning activities (*saòkhára*).

“*Saòkhára* is a multi-significant term which should be understood according to the context.

“Here the term signifies immoral (*akusala*), moral (*kusala*) and unshakable (*áneñja*) volitions (*cetanaa*) which constitute kamma that produces rebirth. The first embraces all volitions in the twelve types of immoral consciousness; the second, all volitions in the eight types of beautiful (*sobhana*) moral consciousness and the five types of moral *rúpajhána* consciousness; the third, all volitions in the four types of moral *arúpajhána* consciousness.

“*Saòkhára*, as one of the five aggregates, implies fifty of the fifty-two mental states, excluding feeling and perception.

“There is no proper English equivalent which gives the exact connotation of this Pali term.

“All moral and immoral thoughts, words and deeds are included in *saòkhára*. Actions, whether good or bad, which are directly rooted in, or indirectly tainted with ignorance, and which must necessarily produce their due effects, tend to prolong wandering in *samsara*. Nevertheless, good deeds, freed from greed, hate and delusion, are necessary to get rid of the ills of life. Accordingly the Buddha compares his Dhamma to a raft whereby one crosses the ocean of life.

[“The volitions of the four supramundane path consciousness (*lokuttara maggacitta*) are not regarded as *saòkhára* because they tend to eradicate ignorance. Wisdom (*paññá*) is predominant in supramundane types of consciousness while volition (*cetaná*) is predominant in the mundane types of consciousness.

“The activities of Buddhas and arahats, however, are not treated as *saòkhára* as they have eradicated ignorance.]

“Ignorance is predominant in immoral activities, while it is latent in moral activities. Hence both moral and immoral activities are regarded as caused by ignorance.

“Dependent on past conditioning activities, arises relinking or rebirth-consciousness (*pāpisañhi-viññáóa*) in a subsequent birth.

“It is so called because it links the past with the present, and is the initial consciousness one experiences at the moment of conception.

“*Viññāóa* strictly denotes the nineteen types of rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāóa*) described in the *Abhidhamma*. All the thirty-two types of resultant consciousness (*vipāka citta*) experienced during a lifetime are also implied by the term.

“The foetus in the mother’s womb is formed by the combination of this relinking-consciousness with the sperm and ovum cells of the parents. In this consciousness, are latent all the past impressions, characteristics and tendencies of that particular individual life-flux.

This rebirth-consciousness is regarded as pure^[4] as it is either devoid of immoral roots of lust, hatred, and delusion^[5] or accompanied by moral roots.^[6]

“Simultaneous with the arising of the relinking-consciousness there occur mind and matter (*nāma-rúpa*) or, as some scholars prefer to say, “corporeal organism.”

“The second and third factors (*saḍkhárá* and *viññāóa*) pertain to the past and present lives of an individual.

“The third and fourth factors (*viññāóa* and *nāma-rúpa*) on the contrary, are contemporaneous.

“This compound *nāma-rúpa* should be understood as *nāma* (mind) alone, *rúpa* (matter) alone, and *nāma-rúpa* (mind and matter) together. In the case of formless planes (*arúpa*) there arises only mind; in the case of mindless (*asana*) planes, only matter; in the case of sentient realm (*kāma*) and realms of form (*rúpa*), both mind and matter.

Nāma here means the three aggregates—feeling (*vedaná*), perception (*sañña*) and mental states (*saḍkhárá*)—that arise simultaneous with the relinking-consciousness. *Rúpa* means the three decads—*kāya* (body), *bháva* (sex), and *vattu* (seat of consciousness)—that also arise simultaneous with the relinking-consciousness, conditioned by past kamma.

The body-decad is composed of the four elements: 1) the element of extension (*paphavi*), 2) the element of cohesion (*ápo*), 3) the element of heat (*tejo*), and 4) the element of motion (*váyo*); Its four derivatives (*upádá rúpa*) are 5) colour (*vanna*), 6) odour (*gandha*), 7) taste (*rasa*), 8) nutritive essence (*ojá*), vitality (*jīvitindriya*), and 10) *body* (*kāya*).

“Sex-decad and base decad also consist of the first nine and sex (*bháva*) and seat of consciousness (*vattu*) respectively.

“From this it is evident that sex is determined by past kamma at the very conception of the being. Here *kāya* means the sensitive part of the body (*pasáda*).

“Sex is not developed at the moment of conception but the potentiality is latent. Neither the heart nor the brain, the supposed seat of consciousness, has been evolved at the moment of conception, but the potentiality of the seat is latent.

“In this connection it should be remarked that the Buddha did not definitely assign a specific seat for consciousness as he has done with the other senses. It was the cardiac theory (the view that the heart is the seat of consciousness) that prevailed in his time, and this was evidently supported by the *Upanishads*.

The Buddha could have accepted the popular theory, but he did not commit himself. In the *patthána*, the Book of Relations, the Buddha refers to the seat of consciousness, in such indirect terms as “*yam rúpam nissáya*—depending on that material thing,” without positively asserting whether that *rúpa* was either the heart (*hadaya*) or the brain. But, according to the view of commentators like venerable *Buddhaghosa* and *Anuruddha*, the seat of consciousness is definitely the heart. It should be understood that the Buddha neither accepted nor rejected the popular cardiac theory.

During the embryonic period the six sense-bases (*saláyatana*) gradually evolve from these psycho-physical phenomena in which are latent infinite potentialities.

“The insignificant infinitesimally small speck now develops into a complex six senses-machine.

The human machine is very simple in its beginning but very complex in its end. Ordinary machines, on the other hand, are complex in the beginning but very simple in the end. The force of a finger is sufficient to operate even a most gigantic machine.

“The six-senses-human machine now operates almost mechanically without any agent like a soul to act as the operator. All the six senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—have their respective objects and functions. The six sense-objects such as forms, sounds, odours, sapids, tangibles and mental objects collide with their respective sense-organs giving rise to six types of consciousness.

The conjunction of the sense-bases, sense-objects, and the resultant consciousness is contact (*phassa*) which is purely subjective and impersonal.

The Buddha states:

“Because of eye and forms, visual consciousness arises; contact is the conjunction of the three. Because of ear and sounds, arises auditory consciousness; because of nose and odours, arises olfactory consciousness; because of tongue and sapids, arises gustatory consciousness; because of body and tangibles, arises tactile consciousness; because of mind and mental objects, arises mind-consciousness. The conjunction of these three is contact. (*Saíyutta Nikáya*, part ii, p. 70; *Kindred Sayings*, part ii, p. 50.)

It should not be understood that mere collision is contact (*na saògatimatto eva phasso*).

Dependent on contact, feelings (*vedaná*) arise.

Strictly speaking, it is feeling that experiences an object when it comes in contact with the senses. It is this feeling that experiences the desirable or undesirable fruits of an action done in this or in a previous birth. Besides this mental state there is no soul or any other agent to experience the result of the action.

Feeling or, as some prefer to say, sensation, is a mental state common to all types of consciousness. Chiefly there are three kinds of feeling: pleasurable (*somanassa*), unpleasurable (*domanassa*), and neutral (*adukkhamasukha*). With physical pain (*dukkha*) and physical happiness (*sukha*) there are altogether five kinds of feelings. The neutral feeling is also termed *upekkhá* which may be indifference or equanimity.

According to *Abhidhamma* there is only one type of consciousness accompanied by pain. Similarly there is only one accompanied by happiness. Two are connected with an unpleasurable feeling. Of the eighty-nine types of consciousness, in the remaining eighty-five are found either a pleasurable or a neutral feeling. It should be understood here that *nibbánic* bliss is not associated with any kind of feeling. *Nibbánic* bliss is certainly the highest happiness (*nibbánaí paramaí sukhaí*), but it is the happiness of relief from suffering. It is not the enjoyment of any pleasurable object.

Dependent on feeling, arises craving (*taóhá*) which, like ignorance, is the other most important factor in the “dependent origination.” Attachment, thirst, clinging are some renderings for this Pali term.

“Craving is threefold—namely, craving for sensual pleasures (*kámataóhá*), craving for sensual pleasures associated with the view of eternalism, (*bhavataóhá*) i.e., enjoying pleasures thinking that they are imperishable, and craving for sensual pleasures with the view of nihilism (*vibhavataóhá*) i.e., enjoying pleasures thinking that everything perishes after death. The last is the materialistic standpoint.

“*Bhavataóhá* and *vibhavataóhá* are also interpreted as attachment to realms of form (*rúpabhava*) and formless realms (*arúpabhava*) respectively. Usually these two terms are rendered by craving for existence and non-existence.

“There are six kinds of craving corresponding to the six sense objects such as form, sound and so on. They become twelve when they are treated as internal and external. They are reckoned as 36 when viewed as past, present and future. When multiplied by the foregoing three kinds of craving, they amount to 108.

“It is natural for a worldling to develop a craving for the pleasures of sense. To overcome sense-desires is extremely difficult.

“The most powerful factors in the wheel of life are ignorance and craving, the two main causes of the dependent origination. Ignorance is shown as the past cause that conditions the present; and craving, the present cause that conditions the future.

“Dependent on craving is grasping (*upádána*) which is intense craving. *Taóhá* is like groping in the dark to steal an object. *Upádána* corresponds to the actual stealing of the object. Grasping is caused by both attachment and error. It gives rise to the false notions, of “I” and “mine.”

Grasping is fourfold—namely, Sensuality, false views, Adherence to rites and ceremonies, and the theory of a soul.

“The last two are also regarded as false views.

“Dependent on grasping, arises *bhava* which literally, means becoming.

“It is explained as both moral and immoral actions which constitute kamma (*kammabhava*)—active process of becoming and the different planes of existence (*upapattibhava*)—passive process of becoming.

“The subtle difference between *saòkhára* and *kammabhava* is that the former pertains to the past and the latter to the present life. By both are meant kammic activities. It is only the *kammabhava* that conditions the future birth.

“Dependent on becoming, arises birth (*játi*) in a subsequent life.

“Birth strictly speaking, is the arising of the psycho-physical phenomena (*khandhánaí pá tubhávo*). Old age and death (*jarámaraoá*) are the inevitable results of birth.

“If, on account of a cause, an effect arises, then, if the cause ceases, the effect also must cease.

“The reverse order of the *paticca-samuppáda* will make the matter clear.

Old age and death are only possible in and with a psycho-physical organism, that is to say, a six-senses-machine. Such an organism must be born, therefore, it presupposes birth. But birth is the inevitable result of past kamma or action, which is conditioned by grasping due to craving. Such craving appears when feeling arises. Feeling is the outcome of contact between senses and objects.

“Therefore it presupposes organs of sense which cannot exist without mind and body. Mind originates with a rebirth-consciousness, conditioned by activities, due to ignorance of things as they truly are.

“The whole formula may be summed up thus:

Dependent on ignorance, arise conditioning activities.

Dependent on conditioning activities, arises relinking-consciousness.

Dependent on relinking-consciousness, arise mind and matter.

Dependent on mind and matter arise the six spheres of sense.

Dependent on the six spheres of sense, arises contact.

Dependent on contact, arises feeling.

Dependent on feeling, arises craving.

Dependent on craving arises grasping.

Dependent on grasping arise actions (*kamma bhava*).

Dependent on actions, arises birth.

Dependent on birth, arise decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

Thus does the entire aggregate of suffering arise.

The complete cessation of ignorance leads to the cessation of conditioning activities.

The cessation of conditioning activities leads to the cessation of relinking-consciousness.

The cessation of relinking-consciousness leads to the cessation of mind and matter.

The cessation of mind and matter leads to the cessation of the six spheres of sense.

The cessation of the six spheres of sense leads to the cessation of contact.

The cessation of contact leads to the cessation of feeling.

The cessation of feeling leads to the cessation of craving.

The cessation of craving leads to the cessation of grasping.

The cessation of grasping leads to the cessation of actions.

The cessation of actions leads to the cessation of birth.

The cessation of birth leads to the cessation of decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

Thus does the cessation of this entire aggregate of suffering result.

“The first two of these twelve factors pertain to the past, the middle eight to the present, and the last two to the future.

“Of them moral and immoral activities (*saḍḍkhāra*) and actions (*bhava*) are regarded as kamma.

“Ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taḍḍhā*), and grasping (*upādāna*) are regarded as passions or defilements (*kilesa*);

“Relinking-consciousness (*papīsandhi-viññāna*), mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*), spheres of sense (*salāyatana*), contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), birth (*jāti*), decay and death (*jarāmarāṇa*) are regarded as effects (*vipāka*).

Thus ignorance, activities, craving, grasping and kamma, the five causes of the past, condition the present five effects (*phala*)—namely, relinking-consciousness, mind and matter, spheres of sense, contact, and feeling.

“In the same way craving, grasping, kamma, ignorance, and activities of the present condition the above five effects of the future.

“This process of cause and effect continues *ad infinitum*. A beginning of this process cannot be determined as it is impossible to conceive of a time when this life-flux was not encompassed by ignorance. But when this ignorance is replaced by wisdom and the life-flux realizes the *nibbāna dhatu*, then only does the rebirth process terminate.

Concerning arising consciousness, the Venerable Narada Thera says,

“Material forms, through which the life-continuum expresses itself, are merely temporary visible manifestations of the kammic energy. The present physical body is not directly evolved from the past physical form, but is the successor of this past form—being linked with it through the same stream of kammic energy.

“Just as an electric current can be manifested in the forms of light, heat and motion successively—one not necessarily being evolved from the other—so this kammic energy may manifest itself in the form of a deva, man, animal, or other being, one form having no physical connection with the other. It is one’s kamma that determines the nature of one’s material form, which varies according to the skilfulness or unskilfulness of one’s past actions, and this again depends entirely on the evolution of one’s understanding of reality. Instead of saying that man becomes an animal, or vice versa, it would be more correct to say that

the kammic force which manifested itself in the form of man may manifest itself in the form of an animal...

“Arising or becoming is an essential characteristic of everything that is conditioned by a cause or causes. That which arises or becomes is subject to change and dissolution. Every conditioned thing is constantly becoming and is perpetually changing. *The universal law of change applies to everything in the cosmos, both mental and physical, ranging from the minutest germ or tiniest particle to the highest being or the most massive object. Mind, though imperceptible, changes faster even than matter.*

[“Nibbána, a supramundane state, realized by Buddhas and arahats, is declared to be not conditioned by any cause. Hence it is not subject to any becoming, change and dissolution. It is birthless (*ajáta*), decayless (*ajara*), and deathless (*amara*). Strictly speaking, Nibbána is neither a cause nor an effect. Hence it is unique (*kevala*).]

“Everything that has sprung from a cause must inevitably pass away, and as such is undesirable (*asubha*). Life is man’s dearest possession, but when he is confronted with insuperable difficulties and unbearable burdens, then that very life becomes an intolerable burden. Sometimes, he tries to seek relief by putting an end to his life as if suicide would solve all his individual problems.

“Bodies are adorned and adored. But those charming, adorable and enticing forms, when disfigured by time and disease, become extremely repulsive.

“Men desire to live peacefully and happily with their near ones, surrounded by amusements and pleasures, but, if by some misfortune, the wicked world runs counter to their ambitions and desires, the inevitable sorrow is then almost indescribably sharp.

“The following beautiful parable aptly illustrates the fleeting nature of life and its alluring pleasures.

“A man was forcing his way through a thick forest beset with thorns and stones. Suddenly to his great consternation, an elephant appeared and gave chase. He took to his heels through fear, and, seeing a well, he ran to hide in it. But to his horror he saw a viper at the bottom of the well. However, lacking other means of escape, he jumped into the well, and clung to a thorny creeper that was growing in it. Looking up, he saw two mice—a white one and a black one—gnawing at the creeper. Over his face there was a beehive from which occasional drops of honey trickled.

“This man, foolishly, unmindful of this precarious position, was greedily tasting the honey. A kind person volunteered to show him a path of escape. But the greedy man begged to be excused till he had enjoyed himself.

“The thorny path is *sáisára*, the ocean of life. Man’s life is not a bed of roses. It is beset with difficulties and obstacles to overcome, with opposition and unjust criticism, with attacks and insults to be borne. Such is the thorny path of life.

“The elephant here resembles death; the viper, old age; the creeper, birth; the two mice, night and day. The drops of honey correspond to the fleeting sensual pleasures. The man represents the so-called being. The kind person represents the Buddha.

“The temporary material happiness is merely the gratification of some desire. When the desired thing is gained, another desire arises. Insatiate are all desires.

“Sorrow is essential to life, and cannot be evaded.

“Nibbána, being non-conditioned, is eternal, (*dhuva*), desirable (*subha*), and happy (*sukha*).”

*

One might wonder how man could be so *ignorant* of the dangers of his immediate situation, yet, in this world and, perhaps, especially within ourselves, we see and encounter the same situations, arising over and over again. This is *avijja*, the ignorance of the world.

It makes us wonder, “What is this phenomenon which perceives or thinks, which is sometimes called the human personality? What directs its desires? How can it be so short-sighted and blindly-ignorant? How can it be a slave to its immediate wants? What does its so-called thinking depend on and what determines the links between changing and shifting thought moments and the so-called aggregate of the human phenomena that in reality does not exist at all. It’s no wonder life seems so paradoxical.

The man’s problem in the unforgettable parable of hanging onto the creepers of the wall of the well waiting for honey when his demise is immanent (due to the gnawing mice and the deadly snake at the bottom) is that he is greedily following the sense aggregates which make him grasp after momentary pleasure, even though he should have the good sense to be aware that wider wisdom would demand he attend to the urgency of his situation.

We wonder if such a man a person is just plain stupid or if something else could be wrong with him? Yet deep in our hearts we know we are also like that. We know that we are caught in a double-bind between wanting what we want right now, even if it will not be good for us in the long run.

Unwisely giving in to the immediate fulfillment desire, despite the eventual cost, is like being a ‘self-made slave’ in a ‘self-made slippery prison’ from which is hard to escape, especially when the waiting for what one desires (the equivalent of the drops of honey) becomes a habit or way of life or a life-long addiction.

Professor Lily de Silva, a great Pali scholar, from Peradaniya University, (just outside of Kandy, in Sri Lanka), who was always a kind teacher and a warm friend to colleagues, in *The Self-Made Private Prison*,* explains the sense aggregates in language which is perhaps a bit easier to understand than that of some of her more erudite contemporaries. *(BPS, 120 Bodhi Leaves)

“According to the teachings of the Buddha the human personality comprises five "aggregates of grasping," called in Pali *pañc'upadanakkhandha*. They are enumerated as:

- the aggregate of body;
- the aggregate of feelings;
- the aggregate of perception;
- the aggregate of volitional activities;
- the aggregate of consciousness.

“We may wonder why the Buddha mentions only five aggregates, no more and no less. We can attempt to answer this question by analyzing any unit of experience in our day-to-day life. Suppose, for instance, we hear a big noise on the road, and we rush to the spot and recognize that a motorcycle accident has taken place; we feel sorry for the victim and want to rush him to the hospital. If we look at this experience and analyze the physical and mental phenomena involved, we will notice that they can be accommodated within the five aggregates of grasping.

“Of course, we all know the body or the material aspect of our personality. It is this body which approached the site of the accident. We heard the noise and saw the scene of the accident that means we have had auditory and visual consciousness. We recognized that it is a motorcycle accident that is the aggregate of perception and ideation. We felt sorry for the victim, and our sorrow is the feeling aspect of our personality. We wanted to take the victim to hospital, and that is the volitional aspect. Thus we have found all five aggregates of grasping in this unit of experience. The physical and mental phenomena involved in all our varied experiences can be included within these five aggregates. It is

very likely that the Buddha too discovered these five aggregates of grasping by analyzing experience through objective awareness (*sati*) and intuitive wisdom (*pañña*).”

“Why are they called aggregates, *khandha*? *Khandha* means ‘heap’ or ‘accumulation.’ It is easy to understand that the body is a ‘heap’ or accumulation of material elements. We maintain its process of growth by heaping it up with gross material food. In the mental sphere, too, through our experiences we accumulate feelings, perceptions and ideas, volitions, and consciousness. Therefore all five aspects of the personality are called heaps, accumulations, or aggregates. Since they are intimately interconnected and act on one another, the processes are extremely complex and complicated. According to one commentarial simile they are like the waters at a confluence where five rivers meet. One cannot take a handful of water and say that it came from such and such a river. The aggregates are ever-changing and are constantly in a state of flux. They are so volatile and dynamic that they give rise to the notion of "I" and "mine." Just as a fast revolving firebrand gives the illusion of a circle of fire, these dynamic processes of physical and mental energy give rise to the illusion of I, self, ego, soul.

“They are called aggregates of grasping because we cling to them passionately as "I" and "mine." Just as an animal tied with a strap to a firm post runs round and round the post, stands, sits, and lies down beside the post, so the person who regards the five aggregates as his self cannot escape from the aggregates and the suffering, disappointment, and anxiety which invariably accompany them (SN XXII.99; S iii.150).

“The five aggregates constitute a real private prison for us. We suffer a great deal due to our attachment to this prison and our expectations of what the prison should be. As our perception of the external world and our relations with our fellow human beings are conditioned by the nature of this prison, interpersonal relations and communication become extremely complex, tricky, and problematic. Problems become more and more complicated to the extent that we identify ourselves with this private prison.

“Now let us try to supplement our understanding of the canonical teachings in terms of our daily experience and see how we cling to each and every one of these aggregates as "I" and "mine," and continue to suffer in the private prison that we make for ourselves.

“The aggregate of body

“If someone were to ask us the question: "Who are you?" we would immediately respond by stating: "I am so and so." The name is but a label and it can be anything. We can also say: "I am a human being." By that we have only stated the species to which we belong. "I am a man or woman." This only affirms the sex of the person. "I am so and so's daughter, sister, wife, mother," etc. These describe relationships, but we have still not answered the question: "Who are you?" We produce the identity card to prove our identity, but the identity card shows only a picture of the body with the name label. Now we believe that we have satisfactorily answered the question: "Who are you?" Thus we identify ourselves with our bodies. When we say: "I am tall, I am fat, I am fair," etc., we really mean that the body is tall or fat or fair, but what we do is identify the body as I. What is more, we decorate it in various ways and regard it as our beautiful self, "Am I not beautiful in this sari?" We regard the body as our precious possession — "my face, my hair, my teeth," etc. Thus it is very clear that we cling to the material body as our very own self. This identification is so widely accepted and thorough that it has crept in linguistic usages as well. In words such as "somebody," "everybody," and "nobody," "body" is used in the sense of person.

“Now the Buddha, who analyzed the body objectively under the microscope of mindfulness, realized the true nature of the body and found that there is nothing in it that can be called beautiful. It is made up of flesh, phlegm, saliva, blood, urine, and feces, all very repulsive. Even what is generally considered beautiful such as hair, teeth, and nails, if found out of context, say for instance in one's food, becomes extremely repulsive. So too the face of a beauty queen if closely looked at before an early morning wash. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the ravages of old age and the decomposition of the body at death. Therefore the Buddha says that this body is a bag of filth, a burden to be discarded rather than clung to as "I" and "mine."

“The body is composed of the material elements of solidity (earth), cohesion (water), heat (fire), and motion (air). There is nothing worth grasping in any of these elements. They are found abundantly in the external world too, but we cling to this fathom-long blob of matter as "I" and "mine."

“The Buddha defines the body, or "form," as that which gets re-formed and de-formed; it is afflicted with heat, cold, and insects. The body is but a body-building activity. Modern medical science informs us that the body is composed of billions and billions of cells which are continually in a process of growth and decay. What is meant here can be explained with the help of a simile. We say that there is rain and use the noun "rain." But in actuality there is no "thing" called rain apart from the activity of raining. The process of drops of water falling from the sky — that we call rain. Though we use the noun "rain," there is in reality only the activity of raining which can be better described with a verb. Similarly, what we call the body is but a process of body building; therefore the Buddha defines the noun "form" (*rupa*) with its corresponding verb "forming" (*ruppati*). This process of body-building is going on all the time and thus is always in a state of unrest. Therefore form is looked upon as impermanent (*anicca*). In this changing process of body-building activity there is absolutely nothing that can be regarded as a self, an unchanging ego, an "I," a permanent soul. Thus our identification with the body as self is a big delusion.

“During its lifetime the body passes through the stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and old age. Throughout this process there is a type of suffering which is characteristic of each particular age. Teething, learning skills in locomotion, communication add much frustration to infancy. Childhood is comparatively free of suffering if one is fortunate to have a healthy body, but coping with the growing body can become frustrating if energy is not channeled towards healthy play and creative work. Adolescence, when an individual is neither small enough to be a child nor mature enough to be an adult, is particularly troublesome. In youth the body can be quite problematic as sexual energy is at its peak. Unless it is wisely channeled, indulged in lawfully accepted ways, restrained with understanding, and sublimated, youth can lead to much misery. In middle age the body is prone to pressure-related diseases; for many it is a period of much anxiety. Suffering in old age is manifold; the body becomes too big a burden to carry. Thus at no stage in life does the body remain trouble-free; it is a source of suffering throughout life.

“However much we pamper the body with all five strands of sense pleasures, the body is never grateful. It never behaves the way we would like it to behave. However much we wash it, it gets dirty. However much we feed it, it gets hungry and tired. It falls ill, it gets old, and it loses its beauty and strength. It never stays within our control. Therefore it is not worth hankering after, calling it "I" and "mine."

“In the private prison of the five aggregates the body is the most tangible shapely wall. The body of each person is a unique combination of elements having particular biochemical and bioelectrical properties. Each body has strengths and weaknesses peculiar to itself. Each one is prone to certain types of diseases in a particular way. There is no individual who is completely healthy all through life. One person may be asthmatic, another diabetic. One may have a weak respiratory system; another a weak digestive system. Each one suffers individually, privately, by the body he has inherited.

“Our bodies vary in size, shape, color and appearance, and because of these differences we suffer various complexities. Our bodies may not be what we would like them to be. Then we get disappointed and depressed. A woman who had lost her sight in early childhood regained her sight after about thirty years as a result of the shock of a sudden fall. She was overjoyed to regain her sight, but her joy was short-lived, for she discovered through the mirror that she was not beautiful. Such is the disappointment the body brings when it does not come up to our expectations.

“The body also changes from age to age: the once beautiful strong body becomes the haggard and infirm, and we suffer on account of that. We resort to various methods of making it beautiful and strong — we paint the face, dye the hair, use dentures and wigs; we take vitamins, tonics, and elixirs. Yet all the same the body defies our expectations and we continue to suffer within the confines of the private prison of our body.

“Once a friend of mine related how he saw a child meddling with the rear bumper of a parked car. The owner started driving the car, and the child, clinging to the rear bumper, was yelling as he got dragged along. If only the child let go of his hold on the car his suffering would have ceased. Similarly, we cling to our body, and we grieve and lament when it goes according to its nature. If only we would learn to let go of it, our suffering would cease. Therefore the Buddha says: "Give up that which does not belong to you. The five aggregates of grasping do not belong to you."

“The aggregate of feelings

“Feelings demarcate the body from the rest of the environment and give the body the sense of self. The *Khandhasamyutta* (SN XXII.47; S iii.46) says that the uninstructed man, being impressed by feelings which are produced through contact with ignorance, thinks "I am this (body)." The body is strewn with an intricately woven network of nerve fibers, and there is no part of the body which is not sensitive to touch. The entire sensitive volume constitutes the I, the self, the ego.

“When we say: ‘I am comfortable or happy or sad,’ we identify ourselves with feelings. Statements such as: "He does not care for *my* happiness, he hurt *my* feelings," also show how we establish a sense of possession for our feelings. There are three kinds of feelings, namely, pleasurable or happy feelings, unpleasant or painful feelings, and neutral feelings. No two types ever occur concurrently at any single moment. When pleasurable feelings are present the other two are absent; when painful feelings are there pleasant and neutral feelings are absent; similarly with neutral feelings. The *Mahanidana Sutta* asks the question: when feelings are so complex in this manner, which feeling would one accept as one's self?

“According to the *Vedanasamyutta*, innumerable feelings arise in the body just as all kinds of winds blow in different directions in the atmosphere. We are hardly aware of these feelings for the simple reason that we do not pay enough attention to them. If we observe, for a couple of minutes, how often we adjust our bodies and change the position of our limbs, we will be surprised to note that we hardly keep still even for a few seconds. What is the reason for this constant change of position and posture? Monotony of position causes discomfort and we change position and posture in search for comfort. We react to feelings, yearning for more and more pleasurable feelings, revolting against unpleasant feelings, and being generally unaware of neutral feelings. Therefore pleasurable feelings have desire as their latent tendency, unpleasant feelings have aversion as their latent tendency, and neutral feelings have ignorance as their latent tendency (MN 44; M i.303). Thus all feelings generate unskillful motivational roots and they partake of the nature of suffering (*yam kiñci vedayitam tam dukkhasmim* , SN XXXVI.11; S iv.216). Though the search for comfort and pleasure goes on constantly throughout life, pleasure always eludes us like a mirage.

“Our feelings are extremely private and personal. One may have a splitting headache, but the one next to him may not know anything about his painful sensations. We only *infer* the pain of another by his facial expressions, behavior, and words, but we certainly do not know the feelings of another. We are so unique in the experiences of feelings: one may be sensitive to heat; another to cold, mosquitoes, or fleas; another to certain kinds of pollen. One may have a low threshold for pain; another may have a high threshold. Thus each one is so unique in the totality of his sensitivity that we are utterly and absolutely alone in our private prison of feelings.

“The Buddha defines feeling as the act of feeling. There is no ‘thing’ called feeling apart from the act of feeling. Therefore feelings are dynamic, ever-changing and impermanent. They do not remain within our control either, for we cannot say: ‘Let me have or not have such and such feelings.’ They come and go as they please; we have no control or right of ownership over them. Therefore the Buddha exhorts us: "Give up that which does not belong to you." Trying to possess that which is fleeting and defies ownership causes grief. Giving-up spells the end of sorrow.

“The aggregate of perception

“*Sañña* in Pali is translated as perception or ideation. *Perception is nothing but the act of perceiving.* Thus it is *a dynamic process, an activity.* What does it perceive? *It perceives colors such as blue,*

yellow, red, white, etc. This definition of *sañña* seems to imply that the linguistic ability of man is associated with *sañña*. *The word sañña also means symbol, and symbolization is closely associated with language.* It is language that helps us to form ideas, and that is the reason why *sañña* is sometimes translated as ideation. *According to one's perception, one forms a point of view, an idea.*

“We identify ourselves with our ideas too: "This is *my* point of view, this is *my* idea, this is *my* opinion, this is what *I* meant" — these are all expressions identifying ourselves with ideation and perception. Sometimes this identification is so strong that we are ready to sacrifice our lives for the sake of an idea. Many wars are waged in the world propagating or defending ideas. As this is such a dominant form of clinging it has been singled out by the Buddha as *ditth'upadana*, clinging to a particular view one chooses to believe in. Identifying ourselves with various points of view we call ourselves democrats, socialists, eternalists, annihilationists, positivists.

“*Our ideas change due to changing emotions and circumstances.* A friend becomes a foe, an enemy becomes an ally, a stranger becomes a spouse. Therefore in ideation too there is nothing constant and permanent; it is not possible to hold them fast as "I" and "mine" without coming to grief.

“Memory is also associated with *sañña*. That is why we are able to recognize a person we have met before. *Through the faculty of memory we recall having existed in the past experiencing such and such events.* By projecting the same kind of experience into the future we anticipate that we will exist in the future. Thus *through the memory aspect of sañña we posit the illusion of a self continuing through the three periods of past, present and future. But we little realize that the retrospection of the past and the anticipation of the future are both in fact done in the present moment itself.*

“How does *sañña* form a wall in our private prison? Each one of us perceives the world around us through our own preconceived ideas. Let us take a very gross example. A doctor's perception of the world will be quite different from the perception of a politician or a businessman. A doctor looking at an apple might think of its nutritional value, a politician of the advantages and disadvantages permitting importation, the businessman of the commercial value. *Thus we are so much conditioned by our interests and ideologies — some absorbed from upbringing, some from the culture we are exposed to, some from the academic and professional training we have acquired — that no two people can have identical perceptions. There are sufficient common factors in these aspects to allow us to form general superficial agreements with other individuals, but when we take into account all ramifications we have to conclude that as regards perception too each one of us lives in a private prison.* If we wish to experience wisdom and happiness welling within ourselves, we have to give up clinging to our ideas, unlearn what we have spent years to learn, decondition ourselves and empty our minds.

“**The aggregate of volitional activities**

“There are three types of volitional activities: physical, verbal, and mental. We identify ourselves so much with these volitional activities that we posit an agent behind them as the doer, the speaker, and the thinker. Therefore we say: "*I* do (walk, stand, sit, work, rest, etc.), *I* speak, *I* think." Because this egocentricity in activities is so much emphasized, we want to perform not only at our maximum efficiency but we also try to outdo others. Record breaking is a mania today. There are so many competitors vying with one another at the international level eager to earn a place in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

“Because of our volitional activities we are involved in an endless process of preparation from womb to tomb. As infants we prepare ourselves for childhood, struggling and learning skills of locomotion and speech. As children we prepare ourselves for youth, and then we study various skills, arts, and sciences trying to become successful adults. Adults prepare for parenthood. At last in our old age too we do not give up preparation. We turn to religion in our old age to prepare for heaven. This same aspect of our personalities is expressed in different words as *cetana*, intention, which in turn is said to constitute the moral force of *kamma* which propels life from birth to birth.

“*Repeated action has the cumulative effect of transforming character, and thus through repeated volitional activities we can shape our destinies.* A little story taken from an Indian classical text illustrates how our destiny is affected by our behavior. One day two young men who were lost in a

forest chanced to meet a hermit living there who was able to predict the future. Before departing the young men requested the hermit to tell their fortunes. The hermit was reluctant, but the men pleaded. Then the hermit observed them closely and predicted that Vipul would be a king within a year and Vijan would die in the hands of an assassin. Vipul was very much elated and Vijan was naturally very sad. They went back to their homes and Vipul became very arrogant in his behavior towards others, thinking he would soon be king. Vijan was a teacher and he performed his duties conscientiously; he became very virtuous and led a humble meditative life.

“After about six months Vipul called his friend to go in search of a place to build a palace, and they went into a deserted area. When they were searching Vipul found a pot of gold and was very happy that his fortune was unfolding. When the two friends were examining the gold in great happiness and excitement, a bandit rushed in and snatched the pot. Vijan fought with the bandit and rescued the gold, but had to suffer a cut on the shoulder from the bandit's weapon. Vipul invited Vijan to share the gold, but Vijan declined the offer as he would die in a few months. Vipul took the gold and spent it in eating, drinking and enjoying himself in anticipation of becoming king. Vijan spent the time in meditation and humility. A year passed but the prediction did not come true. They revisited the hermit and asked why his prediction had not come to pass. The hermit explained that by the arrogant behavior of Vipul his fortune was reduced to a mere pot of gold, while the virtuous behavior of Vijan was powerful enough to mitigate his misfortune to a mere wound in the hands of a bandit.

“The noun *sankhara* is defined by its verbal counterpart thus: *“Volitional activities are those (mental forces) which construct, form, shape or prepare the physical body into what it is, the feelings into what they are, perceptions, volitional activities and consciousness into what they are.” This is a process that is going on all the time.* What is meant can be understood in the following manner: the distinctive physical and mental characteristic features of each individual are determined by these volitional activities. To this category belong all our hopes, aspirations, ambitions and determinations, and we identify ourselves with them as *my* hopes, *my* ambitions, etc. *No two people will be identical in this respect either.* What one person will treasure and strive for, another may consider a trifle. When one person prefers to hoard money, another would prefer to spend it on education. Still another may consider both of these as insignificant and run after power, honor, and prestige. *We shape our destinies alone, imprisoned as we are within the wall of volitional activities. If we want to free ourselves, we have to give up identification with this prison wall too.*

“The aggregate of consciousness

“Consciousness is defined as the act of becoming conscious of objects through the instrumentality of the sense faculties. Therefore there is eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness. *This cognitive process takes place so rapidly and so continuously that we identify ourselves with the function of the sense faculties as: “I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, I feel, I think and imagine.” According to the Buddha there is no I, ego, self, or soul who cognizes and enjoys these sense objects. Sense consciousness is but a causally produce phenomenon, dependent on sense faculties and sense objects. Each person's sense faculties are differently constituted.* Some are blind, some have weak eyes, some have keen vision, some are deaf, some are short of hearing and some have sharp hearing.

Because of the differences in the very constitution of the sense faculties our cognitive capacity too has to be different, however slight the differences may be. Moreover, our sense experiences are conditioned by our likes and dislikes, by our previous experiences and memories, by our aspirations and ambitions. As such, however much we value sense experience, as authentic, *no two people will experience the same sense object in exactly the same way.* For example, suppose that three people are watching a fight between two boys. If the three people happen to be a friend, an enemy, and a parent of one of those involved in the fight, the three people will have entirely different views regarding it.

“*Our senses communicate to us what we prefer to see.* Volitions condition consciousness throughout our day-to-day experiences. For instance, if we are looking for a pen on a crowded table, we may see the pen and take it away. We may have failed to see the glass that was next to it and we may have to make a fresh search for the glass, rather than look straight at the place where the pen was. This is

because *what we look for is predetermined by our will, which to a certain extent excludes from our field of attention and vision things irrelevant to our purposes.*

“If we gaze at a scene vacantly, only a few items which kindled our interest are registered in our memory. Interests are divergent; therefore, different people see different things in the same situation. Thus it is extremely difficult to acquire impartial objective experience of sense objects, as each one of us is psychologically conditioned in a unique way. Therefore in sense experience too we lead a lonely private life imprisoned in a private cell.

“Because each one of us is leading a secluded life within the confines of our individual personalities, interpersonal relations become extremely difficult and complicated. The way to be released from this self-imprisonment is to stop regarding the five constituents of personality individually or collectively as "I" and "mine."

“According to the *Khandhasamyutta* (SN XXII.93; S iii.137-38), a man carried down by the strong current of a river grabs at the grasses and leaves overhanging the river, but they give him no support as they are easily uprooted. Similarly, *the uninstructed man grabs at the five aggregates as his self or ego, but as they are themselves evanescent and unstable they cannot support him. Being dependent on them the man only comes to grief and delusion. We have to realize the impermanent, ever-changing, conditional nature of these five factors of personality and become detached from them. It is only with this detachment that we can make ourselves free from the self-made private prison of our personality.*

*Source: *Bodhi Leaves* No. 120 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1990).

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It should not be seen as a problem that there is no real, solid, personality, integral within itself. In fact, seeing the impermanence of all things including the fleeting, phenomenal nature of all human aggregates, (‘individuals’) and their perceptions should be seen as the solution. Losing one’s sense of self is no big thing.

At first, foolishly hanging onto our sense of human personality and, then, subsequently, letting go of our grip on it, is a significant step in the direction of realizing ultimate truth.

Losing one’s sense of place and permanence is, ultimately, a good thing

To continue quoting Narada Thera, on this same subject:

“According to Buddhism the earth, an almost insignificant speck in the universe, is not the only habitable world, and humans are not the only living beings. Indefinite are world systems and so are living beings. Nor is ‘the impregnated ovum the only route to rebirth.’ By traversing one cannot reach the end of the world, [\[1\]](#) says the Buddha.

“Births may take place in different spheres of existence. There are altogether thirty-one places in which beings manifest themselves according to their moral or immoral kamma.”

As detailed delineation would take us somewhat off topic here, the reader who is interested may research them under ‘thirty-one states of being.’

Meanwhile Narada Thera continues,

“This new being which is the present manifestation of the stream of kamma-energy is not the same as, and has no identity with, the previous one in its line—the aggregates that make up its composition being different from, having no identity with, those that make up the being of its predecessor. And yet it is not an entirely different being since it has the same stream of kamma-energy, though modified perchance just by having shown itself in that manifestation, which is now making its presence known in the sense-perceptible world as the new being.”^[5]

Furthermore,

“Death, according to Buddhism, is the cessation of the psycho-physical life of any one ‘individual’ existence. It is the passing away of vitality (*áyu*), i.e., psychic and physical life (*jìvitindriya*), heat (*usma*) and consciousness (*viññáóa*).

“Death is not the complete annihilation of a being, for though a particular life span ends, the force which hitherto actuated it is not destroyed.

Just as an electric light is the outward visible manifestation of invisible electric energy, so *we are the outward manifestations of invisible kammic energy. The bulb may break, and the light may be extinguished, but the current remains* and the light may be reproduced in another bulb. In the same way, the kammic force remains undisturbed by the disintegration of the physical body, and the passing away of the present consciousness leads to the arising of a fresh one in another birth. But nothing unchangeable or permanent “*passes*” from the present to the future...

The reader must get it clear in his head that there is no sense of personality that passes or changes from one stage or state to another — there is only the mental energy or force that continues after everything else in connection with the body and self have been destroyed. Indeed, as energy in general is never destroyed, but recycled, so-to speak, only the temporary formations containing and depending on ever-moving potential energy are ever destroyed. When a formation breaks down, energy force continues-on in tiny, invisible and indivisible dhammas which will, eventually, become part of similarly, newly formed constituents of essential elements which have also been recycled according to the law of the Dhamma in the universe which some prefer to call the law nature or the lamp of the law...

No thing is permanent except the arising and forming and breaking down of the four elements and the energy that ‘moves’ them to reform.

*

According to Narada Thera, the Buddha, with his supernormal vision, saw and declared that the world is made up of a constantly arising and ceasing of swiftly moving elements of matter. He called these essential elements: *paphavi*, *ápo*, *tejo*, and *váyo*.

“*Paphavi* means the element of *extension*, the substratum of matter. Without it objects cannot occupy space. The qualities of hardness and softness which are relative are two conditions of this same element.

“*Ápo* is the element of *cohesion*. Unlike *paphavi* it is intangible. It is this element which makes the scattered atoms of matter cohere and gives us the idea of body. When solid bodies are melted, this element becomes more prominent in the resulting fluid. This element is found even in minute particles when solid bodies are reduced to powder. The element of extension and cohesion are so closely interrelated that when cohesion ceases extension disappears.

“*Tejo* is the element of *heat*. Cold is also a form of *tejo*. Both heat and cold are included in *tejo* because they possess the power of maturing bodies or, in other words, it is the vitalising energy. Preservation and decay are due to this element. Unlike the other three essentials of matter this element, also called *utu*, has the power to regenerate by itself.

“*Váyo* is the element of *motion*. Movements are caused by this element. Motion is regarded as the force or the generator of heat.

“Motion and heat in the material realm correspond respectively to consciousness and kamma in the mental.”

“These four are the fundamental units of matter and are invariably combined with the four derivatives—namely, colour (*vaóóa*), odour (*gandha*) taste (*rasa*), and nutritive essence (*ojá*).

“The four elements and the derivatives are inseparable and interrelated, but one element may preponderate over another, as for instance, the element of extension preponderates in earth; cohesion, in water; heat, in fire; and motion, in air.

“Thus, matter consists of forces and qualities which are in a state of constant flux, which according to Buddhism matter endures only for seventeen thought-moments.^[7]

“Mind, the more important part in the complex machinery of man, consists of fifty-two mental states. Feeling or sensation (*vedanā*) is one, perception (*saññā*) is another. The remaining fifty are collectively called volitional activities (*saḍkhārā*), a rendering which does not exactly convey the meaning of the Pali term. Of them volition or *cetanā* is the most important factor. All these psychic states arise in a consciousness (*viññāḍā*).

“According to Buddhist philosophy there is no moment when one does not experience a particular kind of consciousness, hanging on to some object whether physical or mental. The time limit of such a consciousness [as has been said] is termed one thought-moment. Each thought-moment is followed by another. Thus the succession of mental states contains a time element. The rapidity of the succession of such thought-moments is hardly conceivable.

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Concerning consciousness, Narada Thera further writes as follows:

Each unit of consciousness consists of three instants (*khaḍā*). They are arising or genesis (*uppāda*), static or development (*thiti*) and cessation or dissolution (*bhaḍga*).

“Immediately after the cessation stage of a thought-moment, there occurs the genesis stage of the subsequent thought-moment. *Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions, to its successor. Every fresh consciousness consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more.* There is therefore a continuous flow of consciousness like a stream without any interruption. The subsequent thought-moment is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor since its composition is not identical—nor entirely different—being the same stream of life. There is no identical being, but there is an identity in process.

“It must not be understood that consciousness is in bits joined together like a train or a chain. On the contrary, ‘it constantly flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood, and ever dispensing to the world around it the thought-stuff it has gathered by the way.’^[8] It has birth for its source and death for its mouth.’

“Here occurs a juxtaposition of fleeting states of consciousness but not a superposition of such states, as some appear to believe. *No state once gone ever recurs—none absolutely identical with what goes before. These states constantly change, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments.* Worldlings, enmeshed in the web of illusion, mistake this apparent continuity to be something eternal and go to the extent of introducing an unchanging soul (the supposed doer and observer of all actions) into this ever-changing consciousness.

“The four kinds of psychic phenomena, combined with the physical phenomena, form the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandā*), the complex-compound termed a living being.

“One’s individuality is the combination of these five aggregates.

“We see a vast expanse of water in the sea, but the water of the ocean consists of countless drops. An infinite number of particles of sand constitutes the sea-beach, but it appears as one long sheet. Waves arise and dash against the shore, but, strictly speaking, no single wave comes from the deep blue sea to lose its identity on the shore. *In the cinematograph we see a moving scene, but to represent that motion a series of momentary pictures must appear on the screen.*

“One cannot say that the perfume of a flower depends on the petal or on the pistil or on the colour, for the perfume is in the flower.

“In the same way one’s individuality is the combination of all the five aggregates.

“The whole process of these psycho-physical phenomena which are constantly becoming and passing away, *is at times called, in conventional terms, the self or atta by the Buddha; but it is a process, and not an identity that is thus termed.*

Buddhism does not totally deny the existence of a personality in an empirical sense. It denies, in an ultimate sense (*parāmaṅgha saccena*), an identical being or a permanent entity, but it does not deny a continuity in process. The Buddhist philosophical term for an individual is *santati*, that is, a flux or continuity. This uninterrupted flux or continuity of psycho-physical phenomena, conditioned by kamma, having neither perceptible source in the beginningless past nor any end to its continuation in the future, except by the Noble Eightfold Path, is the Buddhist substitute for the permanent ego or eternal soul in other religious systems...

“A child, for instance, becomes a man. The latter is neither absolutely the same as the former—since the cells have undergone a complete change nor totally different—being the identical stream of life. Nevertheless, the individual, as man, is responsible for whatever he has done in his childhood. Whether the flux dies here and is reborn elsewhere, or continues to exist in the same life, the essential factor is this continuity...

Continuing to describe the action of the mind in the flow of phenomena, Narada Thera says.

“Like electricity, mind is both a constructive and destructive powerful force. It is like a double-edged weapon that can, equally, be used either for good or evil. One single thought that arises in this invisible mind can even save or destroy the world. One such thought can either populate or depopulate a whole country. It is mind that creates one’s heaven. It is mind that creates one’s hell.

“Ouspensky writes: ‘Concerning the latent energy contained in the phenomena of consciousness, i.e., in thoughts, feelings, desires, we discover that its potentiality is even more immeasurable, more boundless. From personal experience, from observation, from history, we know that ideas, feelings, desires, manifesting themselves, can liberate enormous quantities of energy, and create infinite series of phenomena. An idea can act for centuries and millenniums and only grow and deepen, evoking ever new series of phenomena, liberating ever fresh energy. We know that thoughts continue to live and act when even the very name of the man who created them has been converted into a myth, like the names of the founders of ancient religions, the creators of the immortal poetical works of antiquity, heroes, leaders, and prophets. Their words are repeated by innumerable lips; their ideas are studied and commented upon. “Undoubtedly each thought of a poet contains enormous potential force, like the power confined in a piece of coal or in a living cell, but infinitely more subtle, imponderable and potent.”^[4]

Concerning where and when consciousness arises, Narada Thera writes,

“Mind or consciousness, according to Buddhism, arises at the very moment of conception, together with matter. Consciousness is therefore present in the foetus. This initial consciousness, technically known as rebirth-consciousness or relinking-consciousness (*paṭisandhi viññāóá*), is conditioned by past kamma of the person concerned. The subtle mental, intellectual, and moral differences that exist amongst mankind are due to this kamma conditioned consciousness, the second factor of man...

“Due to the presence of life reproduction becomes possible. Life manifests itself both in physical and mental phenomena. In Pali the two forms of life are termed *Nāma jīvitindriya* and *Rūpa jīvitindriya*—psychic and physical life.

“Matter, mind, and life are therefore the three distinct factors that constitute man. With their combination a powerful force [conventionally] known as man with inconceivable possibilities comes into being. He becomes his own creator and destroyer. In him are found a rubbish-heap of evil and a storehouse of virtue. In him are found the worm, the brute, the man, the superman, the deva, the Brahma. Both criminal

tendencies and saintly characteristics are dormant in him. He may either be a blessing or a curse to himself and others. In fact man is a world by himself.

How man originates is another question worthy of investigation:

“Either there must be a beginning for man or there cannot be a beginning.

Those who belong to the first school postulate a first cause, as a cosmic force or as an Almighty Being.

“Those who belong to the second school deny a first cause for, in common experience, the cause ever becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause.

“In a circle of cause and effect a first cause is inconceivable. According to the former, life has had a beginning; while according to the latter, it is beginningless.

In the opinion of some the conception of a first cause is as ridiculous as a round triangle.

To repeat a figurative image:

“The bulb may break, and the light may be extinguished, but the current remains and the light may be reproduced in another bulb.”

Similarly, the energy force continuum merely continues as a cause and effect process. The law of cause and effect need not be personified as an Almighty divine creator. There is a cause and effect process continuing and that is all that we need to know. The energy force continuum is a process in process, and the process is what we can see and know and base our observation and analysis and knowledge and understanding and developing wisdom upon. We learn directly from concentration on experience of what can be known, and, based upon that experience, we learn what cause beneficial and non-beneficial results in the cause and effect processes.

Great wisdom may be gained by observing the law of “*When this happens that happens.*”

Another highly-respected Sri Lankan scholar and teacher, the **Venerable Piyadassi Thera**, explains the Dhamma and the law of causality in clear and coherent English in his well-known book as follows (in BPS Wheel 15):

Dependent Origination

Paticca-samuppáda

Scholars and writers have rendered this term into English in various ways: as dependent origination, ‘conditioned co-production,’ ‘causal conditioning,’ ‘causal genesis,’ ‘conditioned genesis,’ causal dependencies.’ Throughout this essay the term ‘dependent origination’ is used. Dependent origination is not a discourse for the unintelligent and superficial, nor is it a doctrine to be grasped by speculation and mere logic put forward by hairsplitting disputants.

Hear these words of the Buddha:

“Deep, indeed, *Ánanda*, is this *paticca-samuppáda*, and deep does it appear. It is through not understanding, through not penetrating this doctrine, that these beings have become entangled like a matted ball of thread, become like *muñja* grass and rushes, unable to pass beyond the woeful states of existence and *saísára*, the cycle of existence.”¹

Those who fail to understand the real significance of this all-important doctrine mistake it to be a mechanical law of causality, or even a simple simultaneous arising, nay a first beginning of all things, animate and inanimate. Be it remembered that there is no First Cause with a capital 'F' and capital 'C' in Buddhist thought and dependent origination does not attempt to dig out or even investigate a first cause.

The Buddha emphatically declared that the first beginning of existence is something inconceivable,² and that such notions and speculations of a beginning may lead to mental derangement.³ If one posits a 'First Cause' one is justified in asking for the cause of that 'First Cause,' for nothing can escape the law of condition and cause which is patent in the world to all but those who will not see.

According to Aldous Huxley:

“Those who make the mistake of thinking in terms of a first cause are fated never to become men of science. But as they do not know what science is, they are not aware that they are losing anything. To refer phenomena back to a first cause has ceased to be fashionable, at any rate in the West. We shall never succeed in changing our age of iron into an age of gold until we give up our ambition to find a single cause for all our ills, and admit the existence of many causes acting simultaneously, of intricate correlations and reduplicated actions and reactions.”⁴

A Creator God who rewards and punishes the good deeds and ill deeds of the creatures of his creation has no place in Buddhist thought. A theist, however, who attributes beings and events to an omnipotent Creator God would emphatically say, “It is God’s will; it is sacrilege to question the authority.” This God-idea, however, stifles the human liberty to investigate, to analyse, to scrutinize, to see what is beyond this naked eye, and retards insight. Let us grant for argument’s sake that ‘x’ is the ‘first cause.’ Now does this assumption of ours bring us one bit nearer to our goal, our deliverance? Does it not close the door to it? Buddhism, on the other hand, states that things are neither due to one cause (*eka-hetuka*), nor are they causeless (*ahetuka*).

The twelve factors of *paticca-samuppáda* and the twenty-four conditioning relations (*paccaya*) shown in the *Pathána*, the seventh and the last book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka, clearly demonstrate how things are ‘multiple-caused’ (*aneka-hetuka*); and in stating that things are neither causeless nor due to one single cause, Buddhism antedated modern science by twenty-five centuries. We see a reign of natural law of beginningless causes and effects, and naught else, ruling the universe. Every effect becomes in turn a cause and it goes on forever (as long as ignorance and craving are allowed to continue). A coconut, for instance, is the principal cause or near cause of a coconut tree. ‘X’ has two parents, four grandparents, and thus the law of cause and effect extends unbrokenly like the waves of the sea, *ad infinitum*.

It is just impossible to conceive of a first beginning. None can trace the ultimate origin of anything, not even of a grain of sand, let alone of human beings. It is useless and meaningless to go in search of a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is not an identity, it is a becoming. It is a flux of psychological and physio-logical changes, a conflux of mind and body (*náma-rúpa*). “There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. Therefore, perhaps, I need not waste any more time upon the argument about the first cause.”⁵

Instead of a first cause, the Buddha speaks of conditionality. The whole world is subject to the law of cause and effect, in other words, action and reaction. We cannot think of anything in this cosmos that is causeless and unconditioned. As Viscount Samuel says:

‘There is no such thing as chance. Every event is the consequence of previous events; everything that happens is the effect of a combination of multitude of prior causes; and like causes always produce like effects. The laws of causality and of the uniformity of nature prevail everywhere and always...’⁶

Buddhism teaches that all compounded things come into being, presently exist, and cease (*uppáda, phiti, bhaòga*) dependent on conditions and causes. Compare the truth of this saying with that oft-quoted verse of the Arahat Thera Assaji, one of the Buddha's first five disciples, who crystallized the entire teaching of the Buddha when answering the question of Upatissa who later became known as Arahat Thera Sáriputta. Upatissa's question was: 'What is your teacher's doctrine? What does he proclaim?'

And this was the answer:

*'Ye dhammá hetuppabhavá.tesaí hetuí tathágato áha,
tesaí ca yo nirodho.evaívádi mahásamaáo.'*

'Whatever from a cause proceeds, thereof
The Tathágatha has explained the cause,
Its cessation too he has explained.
This is the teaching of the Supreme Sage.'⁷

Though brief, this expresses in unequivocal words dependent origination or conditionality. As the text says, during the whole of the first week, immediately after his enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree at Gayá experiencing the supreme bliss of emancipation. When the seven days had elapsed, he emerged from that *samádhi*, that state of concentrative thought, and during the first watch of the night thought over the dependent origination, as to how things arise (*anuloma*) thus:

'When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises, namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations; dependent on formations, consciousnesses and so on 'This is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.'⁸

Then in the middle watch of the night, he pondered over the dependent origination as to how things cease (*papiloma*)⁹ thus:

'When this is not, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: with the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations' and so on 'Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'

In the last watch of the night, he reflected over the dependent origination, both as to how things arise and cease thus:

'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: dependent on ignorance, arise volitional formations' and so on. Thus is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.'¹⁰

One may justifiably be inclined to pose the question: Why did the Buddha not set forth the doctrine of dependent origination in his first discourse,¹¹ the sermon delivered to the five ascetics, his erstwhile companions, at Benares? The answer is this: the main points discussed in that all-important sermon are the Four Noble Truths: suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the way to the cessation of suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path. There is no statement in it about dependent origination; but one who understands the philosophical and doctrinal significance of dependent origination certainly understands that the twelvefold *paticca-samuppáda*, dependent origination, both in its order of arising and ceasing (*anuloma* and *papiloma*), is included in the Four Noble Truths.

The *paticca-samuppáda* in its order of arising manifests the process of becoming (*bhava*), in other words, the appearance of suffering (*dukkha*, the first truth); and how this process of becoming or suffering is conditioned (*dukkha-samudaya*, the second truth). In its order of ceasing the *paticca-samuppáda* makes plain the cessation of this becoming, this suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*, the third truth), and how it ceases (*dukkha-nirodha-gámini papipadá*, the fourth truth). The Buddha-word with regard to this fact appears in the Aòguttara Nikáya thus:

‘And what, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of suffering? Dependent on ignorance arise volitional formations; dependent on volitional formations, consciousness; dependent on consciousness, mentality-materiality (mental and physical combination); dependent on mentality-materiality, the sixfold base (the five physical sense organs and consciousness as the sixth); dependent on the sixfold base, contact; dependent on contact, feeling; dependent on feeling, craving; dependent on craving, clinging; dependent on clinging, the process of becoming (rebirth); dependent on the process of becoming, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to pass. Thus, does the whole mass of suffering arise. ‘This, monks, is called the noble truth of the origination of suffering. ‘And what, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? Through the entire cessation of ignorance, cease volitional formations; through the cessation of volitional formations, [ceases]consciousness’... (and so on) ‘the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. This, monks, is called the ‘cessation of suffering.’¹²

It is now abundantly clear from the foregoing that the *paticca-samuppáda*, with its twelve factors, is the teaching of the Buddha and not, as some are inclined to think, the work of some writers on the Dhamma of later times. It is unreasonable, even dangerous, to rush to conclusions without fully understanding the significance of the *paticca-samuppáda*. Dependent origination, or the doctrine of conditionality, is often explained in severely practical terms, but it is not a mere pragmatical teaching, though it may appear to be so, owing to such explanation resorted to for brevity’s sake. Those conversant with the *Tipitaka* (the Buddhist Pali Canon) know that in the teachings of the *paticca-samuppáda* is found that which brings out the basic principles of knowledge (*ñāóa*) and wisdom (*paññá*) in the *saddhamma*, the Good Law. In this teaching of the conditionality of everything in the world, that is the five aggregates, can be realized the essence of the Buddha’s outlook on life. So if the Enlightened One’s explanation of the world is to be rightly understood, it has to be through a full grasp of this central teaching summed up in the dictum: ‘*ye dhammá hetuppabhavá,*’ referred to above.

The doctrine of *paticca-samuppáda* is not the work of some divine power; it is not a creation. Whether a Buddha arises or not the fact is:

‘When this is, that comes to be. With the arising of this, that arises. When this is not, that does not come to be. With the cessation of this, that ceases.’¹³

This conditionality goes on forever, uninterrupted and uncontrolled by any external agency or power of any sort. The Buddha discovered this eternal truth, solved the riddle of life, unravelled the mystery of being by comprehending, in all its fullness, the *paticca-samuppáda* with its twelve factors, and expounded it, without keeping back anything essential, to those who yet have sufficient intelligence to wish for light.

I. Ignorance (*Avijjá*)

Let us now deal with the twelve actors of the *paticca-samuppáda*, one by one, in due order. The first point for discussion is *avijjá* (Sanskrit, *avidyá*), ignorance. *Moha*, delusion and *aññáóa*, non-knowledge, are synonyms for *avijjá*. What is *avijjá*? It is the non-knowledge of the Supreme Enlightenment. In other words, [it is] not knowing the Four Noble Truths. It is also not-knowing dependent origination. Owing to this nescience, the uninstructed worldling entertains wrong views. He regards the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasant, the soulless as soul, the godless as god, the impure as pure, and the unreal as real. Further, *avijjá* is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhá*), or mind and body.

Ignorance or delusion is one of the root causes of all unwholesome actions, all moral defilements (*akusala*). All conceivable wrong notions are the result of ignorance. Independently of this crowning corruption no evil action, whether mental, verbal or physical, could be performed. That is why ignorance is enumerated as the first link of the chain of the twelvefold *paticca-samuppáda*. Nevertheless, ignorance should not be regarded as a *prima causa*, a first beginning, or an ultimate origin of things. It is certainly

not the first cause; there is no conception of a first cause in Buddhist thought. The doctrine of *paticca-samuppáda* can be illustrated by a circle, for it is the cycle of existence, *bhavacakka*. In a circle any given point may be taken as the starting point. Each and every factor of the *paticca-samuppáda* can be joined together with another of the series, and therefore no single factor can stand by itself or function independently of the rest. All are interdependent and inseparable. Nothing is independent, or isolated. Dependent origination is an unbroken process. In this process *nothing is stable or fixed, but all is in a whirl*. It is the arising of ever changing conditions dependent on similar evanescent conditions. Here there is neither absolute non-existence nor absolute existence, only bare phenomena roll on (*suddhadhammá pavattanti*).

Ignorance, the first factor of the series, therefore, is not the sole condition for volitional formations, the second factor (*saòkhára*). A tripod, for instance, is supported by its three legs; it stands upright because of the interdependence of the legs. If one gives way, the other two fall to the ground unsupported. So, too, the factors of this *paticca-samuppáda* support one another in various ways.

II. Volitional Formations (*Saòkhára*)

Avijjápaccayá saòkhára,

‘Dependent on ignorance arise rebirth-producing volitional formations.’

The term *saòkhára* has also another meaning. In the statement, ‘*sabbe saòkhára aniccá*. or ‘*aniccá vata saòkhára*’ (all compounded things are impermanent), the term ‘*saòkhára*’ applies to all compounded and conditioned things, i.e. all things that come into being as the effect of causes and conditions and which themselves act as causes and conditions in turn to give rise to other effects. In the *paticca-samuppáda*, however, *saòkhára* is restricted to mean simply all good and evil actions (*kusala-akusala kamma*), all actions, physical, verbal and mental (*káya-saòkhára*, *vacì-saòkhára*, and *citta-saòkhára*) which will bring about reactions.

It is difficult to give a satisfactory English equivalent to the term *saòkhára*. Let us, therefore, understand it in this context as rebirth-producing volitional activities, or volitional formations, or simply as *kamma*. Ignorance, *avijjá*, which has taken root in man is the blindness that prevents a man from seeing his actions as they really are, and so allows craving to drive him on to further actions. If there were no ignorance, there would be no such actions. In the absence of actions conditioned by ignorance, there will be no rebirth, and the whole mass of suffering will cease. In order to exemplify how the twelve factors of the *paticca-samuppáda* act upon a connected sequence of lives, the formula has been conceived as extending over three consecutive existences: past, present and future. Ignorance and volitional formations belong to the previous birth. Wholesome *saòkháras* are capable of bringing about a good rebirth, i.e. birth in a good state of existence. Unwholesome *saòkháras* can cause a bad rebirth or birth in an evil state of existence. It must be mentioned that all *saòkháras*, all good and evil actions, have ignorance as condition. Here a question may be raised as to how actions conditioned by ignorance could bring about good rebirth.

All attainment of good (*kusala*), from the state of virtuous worldling (*kalyáóaputhujjana*) and the ‘lesser stream-winner’ (*cúlasotápanna*) to that of the consummate one (*arahat*), is due to the balance of insight over delusion and of detachment over craving. Good actions are the direct consequence of whatever clear understanding there may be in the doer. It is not because of delusion and craving that a man gives up killing, etc., but because he has the wisdom to see the evil consequences of such actions and also because he is moved by such qualities as compassion and virtue. It is not possible, except for the perfect ones, to act from complete insight or detachment. To the generality of men such knowledge is unthinkable.

As Eddington says:

“If ‘to know’ means ‘to be quite certain of,’ [then] the term is of little use to those who wish to be undogmatic.”¹⁴

And if to be detached means to be neutral always, such detachment is for the imperfect quite impossible and meaningless. But occasional detachment is possible, and a measure of knowledge adequate for understanding the good is available for an intelligent man of virtue, for producing actions that are wise and unsoiled by the yearning for rewards in this life.

There is much that is done in the world today with no hope of reward, or recognition, out of compassion or for the furtherance of knowledge and peace. Such actions definitely are based on knowledge and detachment, not perhaps in the dogmatic, scholastic, or merely metaphysical sense, but in the light of sane, undogmatic thought. Good actions may well have ulterior motives, for instance, the yearning for the fruits of the good; but even in such instances, though tainted by greed and to that extent by delusion, there are in such good actions, for instance in liberality, the detachment to let go and the knowledge of seeing the evils of not giving at all, and the advantage of giving. The presence of craving and ignorance in a person does not mean that he can never act with insight and detachment.

Now it must also be understood that although man is capable of performing good actions unsoiled by strong desire for rewards in this life, there may be in him, unconsciously working, a tender longing for good rebirth, or a feeling of desire for rewards in the hereafter. Again, though he may be doing an action out of compassion and without any ulterior motives, he may still be lacking in full awareness of the real nature of life, its being impermanent, sorrow-stricken, and void of an abiding entity or soul. This non-knowledge of the real nature of life, though not so gross and strong as the delusion that induces a heinous act, can yet induce kammically wholesome action leading to a good rebirth. A good rebirth even in the heavens, is, however, temporary, and may be followed immediately by an unhappy rebirth. Such non-knowledge motivates and colours the good act. If, for instance, the performance of good actions is motivated by the desire for the resultant happiness in a good rebirth in a heavenly realm, or on earth, then that is the ignorance of the impermanence and unsatisfactory nature of all existence, which becomes a condition of good rebirth, i.e. and inducement or support condition (*upanissaya paccaya*).

In these and other ways, ignorance may act as a condition of good rebirth by motivating or colouring good volitional activities (*saòkhàrá*) of a mundane (*lokiya*) nature. Such is the intrinsic nature of ignorance. Ignorance of the real nature of life is primarily the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. It is because of this non-knowledge of the truths that beings take birth again and again.

Says the Buddha:

‘Monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that we have run so long, wandered on so long in this long long way, both you and I. But when these Four Noble Truths are understood and penetrated, rooted out is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no more coming to be.’¹⁵

Only the actions of one who has entirely eradicated all the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), and all the varied ramifications of sorrow’s cause, are incapable of producing rebirth; for such actions are issueless. He is the *arahat*, Consummate One, whose clarity of vision, whose depth of insight penetrates into the deepest recesses of life, in whom craving has quite ceased through cognizing the true nature that underlies all appearance. He has transcended all appearance. He has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which penetrative insight, *vipassaná*, alone can give. He is, therefore, released from ignorance (*avijjá*) and his actions no more bring about rebirth.

III. Consciousness (*Viññáóa*)

Saòkhàrapaccayá viññánaí,

‘Dependent on rebirth-producing volitional formations (belonging to the previous birth), arises consciousness (re-linking or rebirth consciousness).’

To express it in another way, dependent on the kamma or good and evil actions of the past, is conditioned the conscious life in this present birth. Consciousness, therefore, is the first factor (*nidána*), or first of the conditioning links belonging to the present existence. *Avijjá* and *saòkhára*, ignorance and volitional formations belonging to the past, together produce *viññáóa*, consciousness in this birth. We read in the *Mahánidána Sutta* of the *Digha Nikáya*, how

‘Once ignorance and craving are destroyed, good and evil actions no more come into being, consequently no more rebirth consciousness will spring up again in a mother’s womb.’

Hence, it is clear, that rebirth is caused by one’s own good and evil actions, and is not work of a supreme being, a Creator God, nor is it due to mere chance. As this consciousness or *viññáóa* is the first in the stream of consciousness (*cittasantati*) belonging to one single existence (*bhava*), it is also known as *paṭisandhiviññáóa*, re-linking consciousness. The term *paṭisandhi* literally means re-linking, reuniting, re-joining. It is re-birth, re-entry into the womb. Rebirth is the arising, the coming to be, the being born, in the future (*paṭisandhìti áyatìi uppatti*). It is called reuniting because of its linking back the new existence to the old (*bhavantara paṭisandhánato paṭisandhìti vuccati*). The joining of the new to the old is the function of re-uniting or re-linking. Therefore, it is said, the function of re-uniting is the joining together of (one) existence with (another) existence (*bhavato bhavassa paṭisandhánatì paṭisandhi kiccaí*). *Paṭisandhi-viññáóa* is the kamma resultant consciousness (*vipáka viññáóa*) present at rebirth, connecting the new existence with the immediately preceding one, and through that with the entire past of the ‘being’ reborn. This resultant consciousness is due to previous rebirth-producing volitional formations (*saòkhára* or kamma). In the *Aneñjasappáya Sutta*,¹⁶ the *vipáka viññáóa* is referred to as *saívattanikaí viññáóaí*, the consciousness that links on, that proceeds in one life as *vipáka* from the kamma in the former life.

When it is said,

‘The consciousness that links on,’

it does not mean that this consciousness abides unchanged, continues in the same state without perishing throughout this cycle of existence. Consciousness is also conditioned, and therefore is not permanent. Consciousness also comes into being and passes away yielding place to new consciousness. Thus, this perpetual stream of consciousness goes on until existence ceases. *Existence in a way is consciousness*. In the absence of consciousness no ‘being’ exists in this sentient world. In the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth the third factor required for rebirth, the *gandhabba*, is called ‘the rebirth consciousness,’ which is another term for the *paṭisandhi-viññáóa*, relinking consciousness.¹⁷ There is the last moment of consciousness (*cuti citta*), belonging to the immediately previous life. Immediately following the cessation of that consciousness there arises the first moment of consciousness of the present birth, which as stated above, is termed relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññáóa*). Between these two moments of consciousness, however, there is no interval, there is no *antarábhava* or *antarábhava-satta*, which means ‘either a being in the womb or a being in between the state of death and that of rebirth,’ as some of the Maháyána schools of thought maintain (*asti antar bhavah*).¹⁸ It should be clearly understood that this relinking consciousness is not a ‘self’ or a ‘soul’ or an ego entity that experiences the fruits (*vipáka*) of good and evil deeds.

The *Mahátaóhá-saòkhaya Sutta* records the following incident:

During the time of the Buddha there was a monk called *Sáti* who held the following view:

‘In so far as I understand the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, it is the same consciousness that transmigrates and wanders about (in rebirth).’

The monks who heard of this tried to dissuade *Sáti*, saying,

‘Do not, brother *Sáti*, speak thus, do not misrepresent the Lord; neither is misrepresentation of the Lord proper, nor would the Lord speak thus. For, brother *Sáti*, in many a figure is dependent

origination spoken of in connection with consciousness by the Lord, saying: ‘*Apart from condition there is no origination of consciousness.*’

But Sāti would not change his view. Thereupon the monks reported the matter to the Buddha, who summoning him, spoke to him thus:

‘Is it true, as is said, that a pernicious view like this has arisen in you, Sāti?’

‘In so far as I understand the Dhamma taught by the Lord, it is this consciousness itself that runs on, fares on, not another?’ Even so do I, Lord, understand the Dhamma taught by the Lord: ‘It is this consciousness itself that runs on, fares on, not another...’

‘What is this consciousness, Sati?’

‘It is that which expresses, which feels (*vado vedeyyo*) and experiences the result of good and evil deeds now here, now there.’

‘But to whom, foolish man, have you heard me teaching the Dhamma in this way? Have I not in many ways explained *consciousness as arising out of conditions*, that *apart from conditions, there is no arising of consciousness*? But now you, foolish man, misrepresent me because of your own wrong grasp.’¹⁹

The Buddha then explained the different types of consciousness and made clear, by means of examples, how consciousness arises depending on conditions. In the words of the Buddha, the *paticca-samuppāda* is a very deep and intricate doctrine, and in this difficult doctrine the most subtle and deep point, difficult to grasp, is this third link, consciousness, *viññāóa* or *paṭisandhi-viññāóa*; for it is this link that explains rebirth.

IV. Mentality-Materiality (*Nāma-Rúpa*)

Viññāópaccayá náma-rúpaí,

‘Dependent on consciousness arises mentality-materiality.’

The term *nāma* here stands for the mental states (*cetasika*), in other words, the three mental groups: namely, feeling (*vedanākkhandha*), perception (*saññākkhandha*), and volitional or mental formations (*saḍkhárákkhandha*). The so called ‘being’ (*satta*, Skt. *sattva*) is composed of five aggregates or groups (*pañcakkhandha*); namely, physical body, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness (*rúpa, vedaná, saññá, saḍkhára* and *viññāóa*). If consciousness is taken as the mind, then feeling, perceptions and volitional formations are the concomitants or factors of that mind. Now when we say dependent on consciousness arises *nāma-rúpa*, mentality-materiality, materiality means the physical body, its organs, faculties, and functions. Mentality means the factors of the mind mentioned above. In other words, *viññāóa-paccayá náma-rúpaí* means dependent on consciousness arise the three mental concomitants (feeling, perception, and volitional formations) that compose mentality, along with the consascent material body in its first embryonic stage. Consciousness and its factors (*citta-cetasika*) are always interrelated and interdependent. Consciousness cannot arise and function independently of its factors, nor can the factors arise and function without consciousness. They arise simultaneously (*sahajāta-paccaya*) and have no independent existence.

V. The Sixfold Base (*Saláyatana*)

Nāma-rúpapaccayá sa; áyatanaí,

‘Dependent on mentality-materiality arises the sixfold base,’—

Or the five physical sense organs ‘eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body’ and the mind base (*manáyatana*). *Manáyatana* is a collective term for the many different classes of consciousness, i.e. for the five kinds of sense-consciousness and the many kinds of mind-consciousness. Hence, *five bases are physical phenomena, namely eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body; and the sixth, mind base, is identical with consciousness.*²⁰

The function of *viññáóa*, consciousness, is varied. The third factor of the chain is made known to us as *viññáóa*; now here again we hear of a sixth base, *manáyatana*, which is identical with consciousness. But here by *manáyatana* different types of consciousness are meant. It should be borne in mind that consciousness is not something that is permanent and everlasting. It undergoes change, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments; it comes into being and immediately passes away yielding place to a new consciousness.

‘These mental phenomena are, as it were, only the different aspects of those units of consciousness which like lightning every moment flash up and immediately thereafter disappear forever.’²¹

If there were no *náma-rúpa* (mentality-materiality), no *saláyatana* (sixfold base) could arise. Because of *rúpa*, the physical sense organs, eye, ear, etc. appear, and because of *manáyatana* (different types of consciousness) the physical sense organs function. Thus *náma-rúpa* and *saláyatana* are inescapably interrelated and interdependent.

VI. Contact (*Phassa*)

Saláyatanapaccayá phasso,

‘Dependent on the sixfold base arises contact.’

In the preceding proposition we saw the sixfold base or *áyatanas*, eye, ear, etc.; they are internal bases (*ajjhattika-áyatana*). External to one’s material body, there are the corresponding five sense objects ‘form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile objects’ and further, the mental objects. These are known as the six external bases (*báhira-áyatana*). These external bases are food for our internal bases. Hence they are interrelated. Although there is this functional relationship between these six sense organs and their objects, awareness comes with *viññáóa* or consciousness. Hence it is said,

‘If consciousness arises because of eye and forms it is termed visual consciousness.’ Now when eye and forms are both present, visual consciousness arises dependent on them. Similarly with ear and sounds, and so on, down to mind and mental objects (ideas). Again, when the three, namely, eye, forms, and eye consciousness come together, it is their coincidence that is called ‘contact’ (or impression). From contact, there arises feeling, and so on...’²²

Thus it is clear that contact (*phassa*) is conditioned by both the internal sixfold base (*ajjhattika-áyatana*) and the external sixfold base (*báhira-áyatana*).

In brief, ‘Dependent on the sixfold base arises contact or impressions,’ means: The visual contact conditioned by the eye; the sound contact conditioned by the ear; the smell contact conditioned by the nose; the taste contact conditioned by the tongue; the bodily contact conditioned by the body; the mental contact conditioned by the mind.

VII. Feeling (*Vedaná*)

Phassa paccayá vedaná,

‘Dependent on contact, arises feeling.’

Feeling is sixfold: feeling born of visual contact; feeling born of sound contact; feeling born of smell contact; feeling born of taste contact; feeling born of body contact, and feeling born of mental contact. Feeling may be pleasurable (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*), or neutral, i.e. neither pleasurable nor painful (*adukkhamasukha = upekkhā*). As stated in the preceding clause, sense objects can never be cognized by the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness, but when these three factors come together, there arises contact. With the arising of contact, simultaneously, there arises feeling (*vedanā*) and it can never be stopped by any power or force.

Such is the nature of contact and feeling. The experiencing of desirable or undesirable kamma-results of good and evil actions performed here or in a previous birth, is one of the prior conditions due to which feeling can arise. Seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching some tangible thing, cognizing a mental object (idea), we experience feeling; but it cannot be said that all beings experience the same feeling with the same object. An object, for instance, which may be felt agreeable by one, may be felt unpleasant by another, and neutral by still another. Feeling also may differ in accordance with circumstances. A sense object which once evoked unpleasant feelings in us may possibly produce pleasant feelings in us under different circumstances, in a totally different background, geographical condition, climatic conditions, etc. Thus we learn how feeling is conditioned by contact.

VIII. Craving (*Taóhá*)

Vedanápaccayá taóhá,

‘Dependent on feeling, arises craving.’

Craving has its source, its genesis, its rise in feeling. All forms of appetite are included in *taóhá*. Greed, thirst, desire, lust, burning, yearning, longing, inclination, affection, household love: These are some of the many terms that denote *taóhá*, which in the words of the Buddha is the leader to becoming (*bhavanetti*). Becoming, which manifests as *dukkha*, as suffering, frustration, painful excitement, is our own experience. The enemy of the whole world is lust or craving through which all evils come to living beings. Through clear understanding of craving, the origin of craving, the cessation of craving, the true way of practice leading to the cessation of craving, one disentangles this tangle.

What then is craving? It is this craving which causes re-becoming, rebirth, accompanied by passionate pleasure, and finding fresh delight now here, now there, namely, craving for sense pleasures (*kāma-taóhá*), craving for continued existence, for becoming (*bhava-taóhá*), and craving for non-existence, for self-annihilation (*vibhavataóhá*).²³ Where does craving arise and take root? Where there is the delightful and the pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root. Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily contacts, and ideas are delightful and pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root.²⁴

Craving, when obstructed by some cause, is transformed into wrath and frustration. ‘From craving arises grief, from craving arises fear. To one free from craving there is no grief. Whence fear?’²⁵ Man is always attracted by the pleasant and the delightful, and in his search for pleasure he ceaselessly runs after the six kinds of sense objects and clings to them. He little realizes that no amount of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and mental objects will ever satisfy the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. In this intense thirst for either possessions or the gratification of desires, he gets bound to the wheel of *saísára*, is twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, and securely closes the door to final deliverance.

The Buddha was most emphatic against this mad rush, and warned: ‘Pleasure is a bond, a joy that’s brief, of little taste, leading to drawn-out pain. The wise know that the hook is baited.’²⁶ All mundane pleasures are fleeting; like sugar-coated pills of poison they deceive us, insidiously working harm. As stated above, whenever craving for these objects is connected with sensual pleasures, it is called ‘sensuous craving.’

When it is associated with the belief in eternal personal existence, then it is called ‘craving for continued existence.’ This is what is known as *sassata-dipphi* or eternalism. When craving is associated with the

belief in self-annihilation at death, then it is called ‘craving for self-annihilation’ (*vibhava-taóhá*); this is what is known as *uccheda-dibbhi* or nihilism.

Craving is conditioned not only by pleasurable and agreeable feelings, but by unhappy and unpleasant feelings, too. A man in distress craves and thirsts to get rid of it, and longs for happiness and release. To express it in another way, the poor and the needy, the sick and the disabled, in brief, all sufferers, crave for happiness, security, and solace. On the other hand, the rich, the healthy, who have not glimpsed the sufferings of the distressed, and who are already experiencing pleasure, also crave. They crave and long for more and more pleasures.

Thus craving is insatiable. As cattle go in search of fresh pasture so do people go in quest of fleeting pleasures, constantly seeking fuel for this life-flame. Their greed is inordinate. ‘All is burning, all is in flames.’ And what is the ‘all’ that is in flames, that is burning? The five sense organs and the five sense objects are burning. *Mind and thoughts are burning.*

The five aggregates of grasping (*pañca upádánakkhandha*) are burning. With what are they burning? With the fire of craving, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion.’²⁷ A fire keeps burning so long as there is fuel. The more fuel we add, the more it burns. It is the same with the fire of life. Craving is an insatiable fire and no fire is ever contented. Such is the nature of this corruption that spreads right up to the highest plane of existence (*bhavagga*) with respect to spheres, and right up to the *gottabhú citta*, the threshold of sainthood, with respect to mind-flux.

Where there is no self-desire, there indeed, is no sense desire either; and where there is no self-desire there all ill dies out like a flame whose fuel is spent. It is only when suffering comes as its consequence, and not before, that one realizes the viciousness of this poisonous creeper of craving which winds itself round all who are not arahats or perfectly pure ones who have uprooted its tap-root, ignorance.

The more we crave, the more we suffer; sorrow is the tribute we have to pay for having craved. Therefore, know this craving as our foe here, in *saísára*, that guides us to continued and repeated sentient existence, and so builds the ‘House of Being.’ The Buddha on attaining full enlightenment spoke these joyful words:

‘Repeated births are each a torment,
Seeking but not finding the ‘House Builder,’
I wandered through many a *saísáric* birth.
O House Builder, thou art seen,
Thou wilt not rebuild the house.
All thy rafters have been shattered,
Demolished has thy ridge pole been.
My mind has now attained the unformed Nibbána,
The extinction of craving is achieved.’²⁸

IX. Clinging (*Upádána*)

Taóhápaccayá upádánaí ‘dependent on craving arises clinging.’ This is the mental state that clings to, or grasps, the object even as a piece of raw meat that sticks to a saucepan. Because of this clinging, which is described as craving in a high degree, man becomes a slave to passion, and falls into the net he himself has made of his passion for pleasure, like the caterpillar that spins itself a tangle in which it lives.

Upádána, clinging or attachment, is fourfold: (i) attachment to sensuous pleasures or sense desires (*káma-upádána*); (ii) attachment to wrong and evil views (*dibbhi-upádána*); (iii) attachment to mere external observances, rites and rituals (*silabbata-upádána*); and (iv) attachment to self or a lasting soul-entity (*attavádaupádána*). *Káma* here means both the craving and the craved object (*kilesa-káma* and *vatthukáma*) and when that craving for such desired objects becomes intensified, it is known as *káma-upádána* or clinging. Man entertains thoughts of craving, and in proportion as he fails to ignore them, they grow till they get intensified to the degree of tenacious clinging.

All the various wrong views (*dibbhi*) that were in existence during the time of the Buddha can be included in annihilationism (*uccheda-dibbhi*) and eternalism (*sassatadibbhi*). To some, especially to the intellectuals, at times the giving up of a view that they have cherished is more difficult than giving up objects of sense. Of all wrong views the clinging to a belief in a soul or self or an abiding ego-entity (*attavádauádána*) is the strongest, foremost and most pernicious. It is not without good reason that the Buddha rejected the notion of a self or soul (*attá*). In this conflux of mind and body which undergoes change without remaining the same for two consecutive moments, the Buddha could not see a lasting, indestructible soul. In other words, he could locate no abiding soul in this everchanging ‘being.’ The Master, therefore, emphatically denied an *attá* either in the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, consciousness) or elsewhere. ‘All this,’ he said, ‘is void of an *attá* or anything of the nature of an *attá* (*suññái idaí attena vá attaniyena vá*).’²⁹ If this wrong notion is got rid of, all the existing wrong and pernicious views automatically cease. The Master’s clear injunction to *Mogharája* is:

*Suññato lokaí avekkhassu.mogharája sadá sato
attánudibbhií úhacca.evaí maccu taro siyá*

‘O *Mogharája*, ever mindful,
See the world as void.
Having eradicated the view of a self
One may overcome death.’ (Sn 1119)

The doctrine of *anattá* (*anátmá*) is exclusively Buddhistic and is distinguishable from every other religion and philosophy. It is the heart and core of the Buddha’s teaching. It was the recognition that this self (*attá*) is an illusion, a mirage, which made the Buddha’s doctrine so singular and so revolutionary. All the existing religions do believe in a soul or self and they claim it to be all-powerful, all-pervading, indestructible and permanent.

To the believers in a soul, soul is a permanent entity that has taken root in all beings. Some say that this *átmá* spreads throughout the length and breadth of the body like oil in a sesame seed; others say that it surrounds the body in the form of an imperceptible light, which light one perceives when cleansed of all impurities. Still others profess that it is within us, like a gem twinkling in a casket. Still others say it is consciousness, or perception, or sensation, or volition and some conclude that this *átmá* consists of both, mind and body, *náma and rúpa*.

Buddhism advocates no such unchanging entity or soul or *átmá*. *In conventional usage we speak of a ‘being,’ ‘I,’ etc., but in the highest sense there exists no ‘being’; there is no ‘I’ personality.* Each one of us is the manifestation of his or her kammic-force, and a composition of nothing but an ever-changing conflux of mind and body. This mind and body separated from each other lose something of their potency and cannot function alone indefinitely. But as a boat and a boatman together cross the stream, and as a lame man mounted on the shoulders of a blind man reach their destination, so mind and body when wedded-together function best.

Unceasingly does the mind and its factors change; and just as unceasingly, though at a slower rate, the body alters from moment to moment. The conflux of mind and body goes on as incessantly as the waves of the sea, or as the Buddhist say *nadì soto viya*, like a flowing stream. Thus the ‘being’ or mind and body, *sáisára* or the procession of events, is utterly free from the notion of a *jìvatma* or *paramátma*, microcosmic soul or macrocosmic soul.

X. Becoming (*Bhava*)

Upádánapaccayá bhavo,

‘Dependent on clinging arises becoming.’

Becoming is twofold, and should be understood as two processes: kamma-process (*kamma-bhava*) and kamma-resultant process (*upapatti-bhava*). *Kamma-bhava* is the accumulated good and evil actions, the ‘kammically active side of life.’ *Upapatti-bhava* is ‘the kammically passive and morally neutral side of life,’ and signifies the kamma-resultant rebirth-process in the next life. The next life may be in any sphere or plane, that of sensuous existence (*kāma-bhava*), that of form (*rúpa-bhava*), or that of formless existence (*arúpa-bhava*).

In the first clause (*avijjāpaccayā saḍḍhārá*), *saḍḍhārá* is explained as good and evil actions (*kamma*); if that is so, is it not repetitive to say that *kamma-bhava*, mentioned here, also means good and evil actions? The *paticca-samuppāda*, we must know, is concerned not only with the present life but with all the three lives, past, present, and future. Kamma, or the good and evil actions mentioned in the first clause, belong to the past, and on those past actions the present life depends. The kamma that is referred to here in this clause, *upādānapaccayā bhavo*, belongs to the present life and that in turn causes future life. *Upādānapaccayā bhavo* meaning clinging (*upādāna*) is the condition of the kamma-process, or actions, and of the kamma-resultant rebirth process.

XI. Birth (*Jāti*)

Bhavapaccayā jāti,

‘Dependent on becoming arises birth.’

Here birth means not the actual childbirth, but the appearance of the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness) in the mother’s womb. This process is conditioned by *kamma-bhava*. The present birth is brought about by the craving and clinging kamma.volitions (*taḍḍhā-upādāna*) of the past birth, and the craving and clinging acts of will of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to the teaching of the Buddha, it is this kamma-volition that divides beings into high and low. ‘Beings are heirs of their deeds; bearers of their deeds, and their deeds are the womb out of which they spring,’³⁰ and through their deeds alone they must change for the better, remake themselves, and win liberation from ill. We are reaping what we have sown in the past; some of our reapings, we know, we have even sown in this life. In the same way, our actions here mould the hereafter, and thus we begin to understand our position in this mysterious universe.

If we, through our ignorance, craving, and clinging in the long night of *sāśāric* wandering, have not shaped ourselves as we are, how could there be such difference and dissimilarity between living beings as we see in the world today? Can we conceive of a mind, a single mind, vast and confused enough to plan out such a motley sentient world as surrounds us? Thus kamma is the corollary of rebirth, and rebirth, on the one hand, is the corollary of kamma.

Here it may be asked: If kamma is the cause of rebirth and if Buddhism emphatically denies a soul or a transcendental ego, how does this kammic process bring about rebirth? Well, ‘No force is ever lost, and there is no reason to think that the force manifest in each being as mind and body is ever lost. It ever undergoes transformations. It is changing now, every moment of our lives. Nor is it lost at death. The vitalizing mind flux is merely reset. It resets in conditions harmonizing with itself, even as broadcast sounds reset in a receiver tuned to the particular wavelength. It is the resetting of this vital flux, in fresh conditions, that is called rebirth. Each reborn being starts with a unique set of latent possibilities, the accumulated experiences of the past. That is why character differs, why each endows himself with what theists call ‘gifts,’ and infinite possibilities.’³¹

There is nothing that passes or transmigrates from one life to another. *Is it not possible to light one lamp from another and in this process does any flame pass from one to the other? Do you not see the continuity of the flame? It is neither the same flame nor a totally different one.* The kammic process (*kamma-bhava*), therefore, is the force in virtue of which reaction follows actions; it is the energy that, out of a present life, conditions a future life in unending sequence.

‘Desire gives rise to deed; deed gives rise to result; result exhibits itself as new corporeality endowed with new desire. Deed is as inevitably followed by result as the body by its shadow. This is merely the universal natural law of conservation of energy extended to the moral domain. As in the universe no energy can ever be lost, so also in the individual nothing can be lost of the resilient force accumulated by desire. This resilient energy is always transmuted into fresh life and we live eternally through our lust to live. The medium, however, that makes all existence possible is kamma.’³²

XII. Ageing and Death (*Jarāmaraḍā*)

Jātipaccayā jarāmaraḍā,

‘Dependent on birth arise ageing and death.’

And with them naturally come sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Birth is inevitably followed by ageing and death; in the absence of birth there will be no ageing and death. Thus this whole mass of suffering arises dependent on the twelfold dependent origination. Ageing and death are followed by birth, and birth, on the other hand, is followed by ageing and death. The pair thus accompany each other in bewildering succession. *Nothing mundane is still; it is all in flux.* People build up wishful hopes and plans for the morrow, but one day, sudden perhaps and unexpected, there comes the inevitable hour when death puts an end to this brief span of life, and brings our hopes to naught.

So long as man is attached to existence through his ignorance, craving, and clinging, for him death is not the final end. He will continue his career of *whirling along with the wheel of existence*, and will be twisted and torn between the spokes of agony. Thus, looking around us in the world at the different types of men and women, and at the differences in their varying fortunes, we know that these cannot be due to mere chance. An external power or agency that punishes the ill deeds and rewards the good deeds of beings has no place in Buddhist thought. Buddhists do not resort to any especially-graced person or pray to any imperceptible individual to grant them deliverance. Not even the supreme Buddha could redeem them from *saṣāra*’s bond. In ourselves lies the power to mould our lives. Buddhists are *kammavādins*, believers in the efficacy of actions, good and evil.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life is the good and evil actions of each individual in past lives. In other words, each person is reaping what he has sowed in the past. In the same way, his actions here mould his hereafter. In all actions, good and evil, mind is the most important factor.

‘All mental states have mind as their forerunner; mind dominates, everything is mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a polluted mind, pain follows him in, consequence, as the cartwheel follows the foot of the beast of burden.’ In like manner, ‘in consequence of mentations made, words spoken and deeds done with a pure and placid mind, happiness follows him even like the inseparable shadow.’³³

Man is always changing either for good or for evil. This changing is unavoidable and depends entirely on our own actions and environment. The world seems to be imperfect and ill-balanced. We are too often confronted with many a difficulty and shortcoming. People differ from one another in many ways and aspects. Among us human beings, let alone the animal kingdom, we see some born as miserable wretches, sunk in deep distress and supremely unhappy; others born into a state of abundance and happiness enjoying a life of luxury and knowing nothing of the world’s woe. Again, a chosen few are gifted with keen intellect and great mental capacity while many are wrapped in ignorance.

How is it that some of us are blessed with health, beauty, sincere friends, and amiable relatives while others are despicable weaklings, destitute and lonely? How is it that some are born to enjoy long life while others pass away in the full bloom of youth? Why are some blessed with affluence, fame, and

recognition? Why are some chosen few given in full measure all the things which human beings deserve while others are utterly neglected? These are intricate problems that demand a solution. If we but pause for a moment and impartially investigate and intelligently inquire into things, we will find that these wide differences are not the work of an external agency or a superhuman being. We will find that we ourselves are responsible for our deeds whether good or ill and that we ourselves are the makers of our own kamma. Says the Buddha:

‘According to the seed that is sown,
So is the fruit ye reap therefrom.
The doer of good (will gather) good,
The doer of evil, evil (reaps).
Sown is the seed and planted well;
Thou shalt enjoy the fruit thereof.’³⁴

It is impossible to conceive of an external agency or some all-powerful being who distributes his gifts to different persons in diverse measures, and who at times showers all his gifts on the same individual. Is it not more rational to say that:

‘Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince,
For gentle worthiness and merit won.
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.’

Light of Asia

Buddhists do not blame the Buddha or a superhuman being or a deva or an especially-graced person for the ills of humanity or praise them for the happiness people experience. It is knowledge of kamma and *kamma-vipāka*, the law of cause and effect, or moral causation, that urges a true Buddhist to refrain from evil and do good. He who understands cause and effect knows well that it is his own actions and nothing else that make his life miserable or otherwise. He knows that the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life is the good and evil actions of each individual in past lives and in this life.

Man today is the result of millions of repetitions of thought and action. He is not ready-made; he becomes, and is still becoming. His character is predetermined by his own choice. The thought, the act which he chooses, that by habit he becomes. It should, however, be remembered that according to Buddhism not everything that occurs is due to past actions. During the time of the Buddha, sectarians like *Nigaópha Nátaputta*, *Makkhali Gosala*, and others, held the view that whatever the individual experiences, be it pleasant or unpleasant or neither, all come from former actions or past kamma.³⁵ The Buddha, however, rejected this theory of an exclusive determination by the past (*pubbekatahetu*) as unreasonable. Many things are the result of our own deeds done in this present life, and of external causes.

Hence it is not true to say that all things that occur are due to past kamma or actions. Is it not absurd for a student who fails in his examination due to sheer laxity on his part, to attribute the failure to his past kamma? Is it not equally ridiculous for a person to rush about carelessly, bang himself against a stone or some similar thing, and ascribe the mishap to his past kamma? One can multiply such instances to show that not everything is due to actions performed in the past. But when the causes and conditions of things are destroyed, automatically the effects also cease to be. Sorrow will disappear if the varied rootlets of sorrow's cause are eliminated. A man, for instance, who burns to ashes a mango seed, puts an end to its germinating power and that seed will never produce a mango plant. It is the same with all compounded things (*saòkhárá*), animate or inanimate. As kamma is of our own manufacture we have the power to break this endless chain, this Wheel of Existence (*bhavacakka*). Referring to those enlightened ones who have conquered themselves through the uprooting of the defilements, the Buddha says in the *Ratana Sutta*:

‘Their past (kamma) is spent, their new (kamma) no more arises, their mind to future becoming is unattached. The germ (of rebirth-consciousness) has died, they have no more desire for re-living. Those wise ones fade out (of existence) like the flame of this lamp.’³⁶

It is said that as the Buddha spoke these words he saw the flame of a lamp go out. The *paticca-samuppáda*, with its twelve links starting with ignorance and ending in ageing and death, shows how man, being fettered, wanders in *sáísára* birth after birth. But by getting rid of these twelve factors man can liberate himself from suffering and rebirth. The Buddha has taught us the way to put an end to this repeated wandering. It is by endeavouring to halt this Wheel of Existence that we may find the way out of this tangle. The Buddha-word which speaks of this cessation of suffering is stated thus:

‘Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations; Through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness ceases; Through the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality ceases; Through the cessation of mentality-materiality, the sixfold base ceases; through the cessation of the sixfold base, contact ceases; Through the cessation of contact, feeling ceases; Through the cessation of feeling, craving ceases; Through the cessation of craving, clinging ceases; Through the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases; Through the cessation of becoming, birth ceases; Through the cessation of birth, cease ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease.’³⁷

Though in Buddhism time is considered as a mere concept (*paññatti*), in the language of the apparent truth (*sammuti-sacca*) we speak of three periods of time, namely, the past, the present and the future and the *paticca-samuppáda* formula can be taken as representing them. The two factors ignorance and volitional formations (*avijjá* and *saòkhára*) belong to the past; the next eight, beginning with consciousness (*viññáóa*) belong to the present; and the last pair, birth and ageing and death, belong to the future.

In this Wheel of Existence there are then three connecting links (*sandhi*). Between volitional formations (*saòkhára*), the last factor of the past, and consciousness (*viññáóa*), the first factor of the present, there is one link consisting of past cause and present fruit (*hetu-phala*). Consciousness, mentality-materiality, the sixfold base, contact, and feeling are effects in the present life caused by ignorance and volitional formations of the past. Because of these five factors there come into being three other factors, namely, craving, clinging, and becoming, which will cause birth in the future. Therefore, between feeling and craving there is another link consisting of present fruit and present cause (*phala-hetu*). Because of craving, clinging, and becoming of the present, there come into being birth, ageing, and death in the future. Therefore, between becoming and birth there is another link. These three links consist of four sections: (i) ignorance, volitional formations; (ii) consciousness, mentality-materiality, the sixfold base, contact, feeling; (iii) craving, clinging, becoming; (iv) birth and ageing and death. ‘There were five causes in the past, And now there is a fivefold fruit, There are five causes now as well, And in the future fivefold fruit.’³⁸

The text mentions ignorance and volitional formations as past causes.

‘But one who is ignorant, hankers, and hankering, clings, and with his clinging as condition there is becoming; therefore craving, clinging, and becoming are included as well. Hence it is said: ‘In the previous kamma-process becoming, there is delusion, which is ignorance; there is accumulation, which is formations; there is attachment, which is craving; there is embracing, which is clinging; there is volition, which is becoming; thus these five things in the previous kamma-process becoming are conditions for rebirth-linking here (in the present becoming)...’³⁹

Now the fivefold fruit in the present life as given in the text is represented by five factors: consciousness, mentality-materiality, the sixfold base, contact, feeling. There are five causes we now produce, of which the text gives only craving, clinging, and becoming.

‘But when becoming is included, the formations that precede it or that are associated with it are included too. And by including craving and clinging, the ignorance associated with them, deluded by which a man performs kamma, is included too. So they are five.’

The fivefold fruit we reap in the future. This is represented by consciousness, mentality-materiality, the sixfold base, contact, feeling. The text gives also birth and ageing and death as the future fivefold fruit. Birth really is represented by these five beginning with consciousness and ending in feeling. Ageing and death is the ageing and death of these five.

On close analysis, it becomes clear that in this dependent origination, *paticca-samuppáda*, in this repeated process of rebirth, in this cycle of existence, there is nothing permanent, no enduring soul-entity that passes from one birth to the next. *All dhammas are causally dependent, they are conditioned (sabbe dhammá paṭiccasamuppanná), and this process of events is utterly free from the notion of a permanent soul or self.* The Buddha declares: ‘

‘To believe the doer of the deed will be the same as the one who experiences its results (in the next life), this is the one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed and the one who experiences its results are two different persons, this is the other extreme. Both these extremes the Tathágata, the Perfect One, has avoided and taught the truth that lies in the middle of both, namely:

‘Through ignorance conditioned are the kamma formations and so on (see formula). Thus arises this whole mass of suffering.’

Hence the ancients said:

‘There is no doer of a deed
Or one who reaps the deed’s result;
Phenomena alone flow on.
No other view than this is right.
For here there is no Brahma God,
Creator of the round of births;
Phenomena alone flow on.
Cause and component their condition.’⁴⁰

In concluding this essay on dependent origination, a confusion that may arise in the reader’s mind should be forestalled. If according to dependent origination things are determined by conditions, one may be inclined to think that the Buddha encouraged fatalism or determinism, and that human freedom and free will are put aside. But what is fatalism? According to the *Dictionary of Philosophy*, ‘Fatalism is determinism, especially in its theological form which asserts that all human activities are predetermined by God.’ Determinism, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is ‘the philosophical doctrine that human action is not free but necessarily determined by motives, which are regarded as external forces acting upon the will.’ The doctrine of kamma refutes that. A clear understanding of Buddhism shows that the Buddha never subscribed to the theory that all things are unalterably fixed, that all things happen by inevitable necessity, that is strict determinism (*niyatíváda*), nor did he uphold the theory of complete indeterminism (*adhicca-samuppanna*). Everywhere we see certain laws and conditions functioning, and one of these is *cetaná* or volition, which is kamma. There is no law giver, no external agency to interfere with the mental and material happenings. Through causes and conditions things come to be.

Thus is this endless play of action and reaction kept in perpetual motion by kamma, concealed by ignorance, and propelled by craving. In no way does this affect the freedom of the will and the responsibility of man for his acts (his kamma).

Lastly a word about ‘free will’: will is not something static. It is not a positive entity, or a self-existent thing. Will is quite momentary like any other mental state; there is, therefore, no ‘will’ as a ‘thing’ to be either free or not free.

The truth is that ‘will’ is conditioned and a passing phenomenon. To the genuine Buddhist the primary concern of life is not mere speculation, or vain voyages into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the

gaining of true happiness and freedom from all suffering. *Paticca-samuppáda*, which speaks of suffering (*dukkha*), and the cessation of suffering, is the central concept of Buddhism, and represents the finest flower of Indian thought.

Paticca-Samuppáda (*anuloma*)

Dependent Origination (in direct order; the arising)

i-ii *Avijjápaccayá saòkhára*
ii-iii *Saòkhárapaccayá viññáóái*
iii-iv. *Viññáópaccayá náma-rúpaí*
iv-v. *Náma-rúpapaccayá saçáyatanái*
v-vi *Saláyatanapaccayá phasso*
vi-vii. *Phassapaccayá vedaná*
vii-viii. *Vedanápaccayá taóhá*
viii-ix. *Taóhápaccayá upádánaí*
ix-x. *Upádánapaccayá bhavo*
x-xi. *Bhavapaccayá játi*
xi-xii. *Játipaccayá jará-maraóái soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupáyásá sambhavanti.*
Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.

Paticca-Samuppáda (*paḥiloma*)

Dependent Origination (the ceasing)

i-ii *Avijjáya tveva asesaviráganirodhá saòkháranirodho*
ii-iii *Saòkháranirodhá viññáóanirodho*
iii-iv. *Viññáóanirodhá náma-rúpanirodho*
iv-v. *Náma-rúpanirodhá saçáyatananirodho*
v-vi *Saláyatananirodhá phassanirodho*
vi-vii. *Phassanirodhá vedanánirodho*
vii-viii. *Vedanánirodhá taóhánirodho*
viii-ix. *Taóhánirodhá upádánanirodho*
ix-x. *Upádánanirodhá bhavanirodho*
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x-xi. *Bhavanirodhá játinirodho*
xi-xii. *Játinirodhá jará-maraóái soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupáyásá nirujjhanti.*
Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.
(Saiyutta Nikáya, II, 1)

Translation

The Arising of the Wheel of Existence

i-ii. Dependent on ignorance arise volitional or mental formations.
ii-iii. Dependent on volitional formations arises relinking or rebirth consciousness.
iii-iv. Dependent on consciousness arise mentality-materiality.
iv-v. Dependent on mentality-materiality arises the sixfold base.
v-vi Dependent on the sixfold base arises contact.
vi-vii. Dependent on contact arises feeling.
vii-viii. Dependent on feeling arises craving.
viii-ix. Dependent on craving arises clinging.
ix-x. Dependent on clinging arises becoming.

x-xi. Dependent on becoming arises birth.

xi-xii. Dependent on birth arises ageing and death, and sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus there is the origination of this whole mass of suffering.

The Cessation of the Wheel of Existence

i-ii. Through the entire cessation of this ignorance, volitional formations cease.

ii-iii. Through the cessation of volitional formations, rebirth consciousness ceases.

iii-iv. Through the cessation of rebirth consciousness, mentality-materiality ceases.

iv-v. Through the cessation of mentality-materiality, the sixfold base ceases.

v-vi. Through the cessation of the sixfold base, contact ceases.

vi-vii. Through the cessation of contact, feeling ceases.

vii-viii. Through the cessation of feeling, craving ceases.

viii-ix. Through the cessation of craving, clinging ceases.

ix-x. Through the cessation of clinging, becoming, ceases.

x-xi. Through the cessation of becoming, birth ceases.

ix-xii. Through the cessation of birth, ageing and death cease, and sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.

Thus there is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

Notes

1 *Mahánidána Sutta*, DN 15.

2 *Anamatagga Saíyutta*, S II 179.

3 A IV 77.

4 Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London, 1945), pp. 14.15.

5 Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (London, 1958), p. 4.

6 Viscount Samuel, *Belief and Action* (London: Penguin Books, 1939), p. 16.

7 Vin I 40.

8 The entire formula consisting of the twelve factors is found at the end of this essay

9 Generally the two Páli words *anuloma* and *papiloma* are translated as ‘direct order’ and ‘reverse order.’ However, it is not quite correct to say ‘reverse order’ for that means from the end towards the beginning or in the opposite order. Both the arising and the ceasing of the factors of dependent origination are from beginning to end. For instance, with the arising of ignorance arise volitional formations and so on. With the ceasing of ignorance cease volitional formations, and so on.

10 Ud 2.

11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, Vin I10.12; S V 420.

12 A I 176.

13 MN 79/M II 32.

14 Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (Cambridge University Press, 1939).

15 D II 90; S V 430; Vin I 229.

16 MN 106.

17 MN 38/M I 265.66.

18 *Lankavatára Súra*.

19 MN 38/MN I 258.

20 Nyanátiloka Thera, *Fundamentals of Buddhism* (Colombo, 1949), p.67.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

22 *Madhupiódhika Sutta*, MN 18, and *Mahátaóhásaókhaya Sutta*, MN 38.

23 S V 421.

24 DN 22/D II 308.309.

25 Dhp 216.

26 Sn 61.

27 Vin I 34.35. For details see Thera Piyadassi, *The Buddha’s Ancient Path* (BPS, 5th ed., 1987), p. 163.

28 Dhp 153, 154.

29 MN 22/M I 138.

³⁰ MN 135/M III 203.

³¹ Dr. Cassius A. Pereira (later Kassapa Thera), 'What I Believe?'. *Ceylon Observer*, October 1937.

³² Paul Dahlke, *Buddhist Essays* (London, 1908), p. 115.

³³ Dh 1, 2.

³⁴ S I 227; *The Kindred Sayings*, I. p. 293.

³⁵ MN 101; DN 2. This view is examined at A I 137.

³⁶ Sn 235.

³⁷ A I 176.

³⁸ *The Path of Purification*, trans. by Ñāóamoli (Kandy: BPS, 1997), p.597.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 622-23

In the subsection which, now, follows we will quote a long explication, using some of the difficult terminology which is characteristic of the Burmese Abhidhamma tradition, as exemplified in the works of Venerable Ledi Sayadaw. The reader who feels stressed by too much complex terminology may simply scan this section, for now, and go on to the following sub-section (which is easier to read), and, then, later, come back to familiarize himself with the Pali wording once more. In actual fact, those who are well-acquainted with the Pali texts will quite honestly say, "once more is not enough."

In his *Buddhist Philosophy of Relations (Patthanuddesa Dipani)*, the **Venerable Ledi Sayadaw** addresses the question of why we make ourselves so miserable by the way 'we' relate mentally to 'things' — a pain resultant from the fact that in ultimate reality, there are no 'persons' and 'things' as we normally label such fleeting phenomena. If 'persons' and 'things' are mere ephemeral phenomena, then, what is happening in the process of the sense of 'self' conceived of as perceiving and thinking?

The original preface to this book, which is now out of print, the text states that 'Buddhism views the world, with the exception of Nibbana and *paññatti*, to be impermanent, liable to suffering, and without soul-essence.'

"Buddhist philosophy, to elaborate the impermanency as applied to the Law of Perpetual Change, has from the outset dissolved all things, all phenomena both psychical and physical, into a continuous succession of happenings, of states (*sabhava*) of mind and matter, under the Fivefold Law of Cosmic Order (*niyama*). And the happenings are determined and determining, both as to their constituent states and as to other happenings, in a variety of ways, which Buddhist Philosophy expresses by the term '*paccaya*' or 'relations.'

One complex happening of mental and material states, with its three phases of — time-genesis or birth, cessation or death and a static interval between — is followed by another happening, wherein there is always a causal series of relations. Nothing is casual and fortuitous.

When one happening by its arising, persisting, cessation, priority, and posteriority, is determined by and determining another happening by means of producing (*janaka*), supporting (*upathambhaka*), and maintaining (*anupalana*), the former is called the relating thing (*paccaya-dhamma*), the latter the related thing (*paccayuppanna-dhamma*), and the determination or the influence or the specific function is called the correlativity (*paccayasatti*). As the various kinds of influence are apparently known, the relations are classified into the following 24 species:

Hetu--condition or root

Arammana--object

Adhipati--dominance

Anantara--contiguity

Samanantara--immediate contiguity

Sahajali--coexistence

Annamanna--reciprocity
Nissaya--dependence
Upanissaya--sufficing condition
Purejata--pre-existence
Pacchajata--causal relation of posteriority in time
Asevana--habitual recurrence
Kamma--kamma or action
Vipaka--effect
Ahara--food
Indriya--control
Jhana--jhana or ecstasy
Magga--path
Sampayutta--association
Vippayutta--dissociation
Atthi--presence
Natthi--absence
Vigata--abeyance
Avigata--continuance

These 24 species of relations are extensively and fully expounded in the seventh and last of the analytical works in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* of the Buddhist Canon, called the *Patthana* ('The Eminence'), or the *Maha-Pakarana* (*The Great Book*).

The Paccayattha-dipana, or the Analytical Exposition of Relations with their denotations and connotations

The Paccaya-sabhagasangaho or the Synthesis of Relations

The Paccaya-ghatana-nayo or the Synchrony of Relations.

“1. *Hetu-Paccaya* or the Relation by Way of Root

What is the *Hetu*-relation? Greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), dullness (*moha*), and their respective opposites, viz', disinterestedness (*alobha*), amity (*adosa*), intelligence (*amoha*) are all *hetu*-relations.

What are the things that are related by these *hetu*-relations? Those classes of mind and of mental qualities that are in coexistence along with greed, hate, dullness, disinterestedness, amity, and intelligence, as well as the groups of material qualities which coexist with the same, are the things that are so related. All these are called *hetupaccayuppanna dhamma*, since they arise or come into existence by virtue of the *hetu*-relation.

In the above exposition, by "the groups of material qualities which coexist with the same" are meant the material qualities produced by kamma at the initial moment of the *hetu*-conditioned conception of

a new being, as well as such material qualities as may be produced by the *hetu*-conditioned mind during the lifetime. Here by "the moment of conception" is meant the nascent instant of the rebirth-conception, and by "the lifetime" is meant the period starting from the static instant of the rebirth-conception right on to the moment of the dying-thought.

In what sense is *hetu* to be understood? — And in what sense *paccaya*? *Hetu* is to be understood in the sense of root (*mulattha*); and *paccaya* in the sense of assisting in the arising, or the coming to be, of the *paccayuppanna* dhamma or *upakaratta*. Of these two, *mulattha* is the state of being a root of the root, greed--and so on, as shown in *Mula-yamaka*. We have illustrated this *mulattha* in the *Mula-yamaka-dipani* by the simile of a tree. However, we shall deal with it here again.

Suppose a man is in love with a woman. Now so long as he does not dispel the lustful thought, all his acts, words and thoughts regarding this woman, will be cooperating with lust (or greed), which at the same time has also under its control the material qualities produced by the same thought. We see then that all these states of mental and material qualities have their root in lustful greed for that woman. Hence, by being a *hetu* (for it acts as a root) and by being a *paccaya* (for it assists in the arising of those states of mind and body), greed is *hetu-paccaya*. The rest may be explained and understood in the same manner- i.e., the arising of greed by way of desire for desirable things; the arising of hate by way of antipathy against hateful things; and the arising of dullness by way of lack of knowledge respecting dull things.

Take a tree as an illustration--we see that the roots of a tree, having firmly established themselves in the ground and drawing up sap both from soil and water, carry that sap right up to the crown of the tree, and so the tree develops and grows for a long time. In the same way, greed, having firmly established itself in desirable things and drawing up the essence of pleasure and enjoyment from them, conveys that essence to the concomitant mental elements, till they burst into immoral acts and words. That is to say, greed brings about transgression as regards moral acts and words. The same is to be said of hate, which by way of aversion draws up the essence of displeasure and discomfort, and also of dullness, which by way of lack of knowledge cherishes the growth of the essence of vain thought on many an object.

Transporting the essence thus, the three elements, *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, operate upon the component parts, so that they become happy (so to speak) and joyful at the desirable objects, etc. The component parts also become as they are operated upon, while the coexistent material qualities share the same effect. Here, from the words *Sampayutta-dhamme abhiharati*, it is to be understood that *lobha* transports the essence of pleasure and enjoyment to the concomitant elements.

Coming now to the bright side--suppose the man sees danger in sensual pleasure, and gives up that lustful thought for the woman. In doing so, disinterestedness as regards her arises in him. Before this, there took place impure acts, words and thoughts having illusion as their root; but for the time-being these are no longer present and in their stead there arise pure acts, words and thoughts having their root in disinterestedness. Moreover, renunciation, self-control, *Jhana*-exercise or higher ecstatic thoughts also come into being. Disinterestedness (*alobha*), therefore, is known as *hetu-paccaya*, it being a *hetu* because it acts as a root, while it is a *paccaya* because it assists in the arising of the concomitant. The same explanation applies to the remainder of disinterestedness and also to amity and intelligence, which three are the opposites of greed, hate and ignorance respectively.

Here, just as the root of the tree stimulates the whole stem and its parts, so it is with disinterestedness. It dispels the desire for desirable things and having promoted the growth of the essence of pleasure void of greed it cherishes the concomitant elements with that essence till they become so happy and joyful that they even reach the height of *Jhanic*-, *Path*-, or *Fruition*-pleasure. Similarly, amity and intelligence respectively dispel hate and ignorance with regard to hateful and dull things and promote the growth of the essence of pleasure void of hate and dullness. Thus the operation of the three elements (*alobha*, *adosa*, and *amoha*) lasts for a long time, making their mental concomitants happy and joyful. The concomitant elements also become as they are operated upon, while the coexistent groups of material qualities are affected in the same way.

Here the word *lobhavivekasukharasam* is a compound of the words *lobha*, *viveka*, *sukha* and *rasa*. *Viveka* is the state of being absent. *Lobhaviveka* is that which is absent from greed, or, is the absence of greed. *Lobhaviveka-sukha* is the pleasure which arises from the absence of greed. Hence the whole compound is defined thus: *Lobhavivekasukharasa* is the essence of pleasure which is derived from the absence of greed.

What has just been expounded is the Law of *Patthana* in the *Abhidhamma*. Turning to the Law of *Suttanta*, the two elements of dullness and greed, which are respectively termed nescience and craving, are the entire roots of all the three rounds of misery[1]. As to hate, it, being the incidental consequence of greed, is only a root of evil. The two elements of intelligence and disinterestedness, which are respectively termed wisdom and the element of renunciation, are the entire roots for the dissolution of the rounds of misery. As to amity, it, being the incidental consequence of disinterestedness, is only a root of good. Thus the six roots become the causes of all the states of mind and body, which are either coexistent or non-coexistent. Now what has been said is the Law of *Suttanta*.

End of the Hetu-Relation

2. *Arammana-Paccaya* or the Relation of Object

What is the *Arammana*-relation? All classes of consciousness, all states of mental concomitants, all kinds of material qualities, all phases of nibbana, all terms expressive of concepts, are *arammana*-relations. There is, in fact, not a single thing (*dhamma*) which does not become an object of mind and of the mental elements. Stated concisely, object is of six different kinds: visible object, audible object, odorous object, sapid object, tangible object, and cognizable object.

Which are those things that are related by the *arammana*-relations? All classes of mind and their concomitants are the things that are related by the *arammana*-relations. There is indeed not a single class of consciousness that can exist without its having an existing (*bhutena*) or non-existing (*abhutena*) object. (*Bhutena* and *abhutena* may also be rendered here as 'real' and 'unreal', or, as 'present' and 'non-present', respectively).

Here the present visible object is the *arammana-paccaya*, and is causally related to the two classes, good and bad, of consciousness of sight. Similarly, the present audible object is causally related to the two classes of consciousness of sound; the present odorous object, to the two classes of consciousness of smell; the present sapid object, to the two classes of consciousness of taste; the present three classes of tangible object, to the two classes of consciousness of touch; and the present five objects of sense, to the three classes of consciousness known as the triple element of apprehension[2]. All these five objects of sense, present, past or future, and all objects of thought, present, past, future or outside time, are *arammana-paccaya* and are causally related, severally, to the seventy-six classes of consciousness known as mind-cognitions (or elements of comprehension).

In what sense is '*arammana*' to be understood, and in what sense '*paccaya*'? *Arammana* is to be understood in the sense of '*alambitabba*', which means that which is held or hung upon, so to speak, by mind and mental elements. *Paccaya* is to be understood in the sense of '*upakaraka*,' which means that which assists or renders help (in the arising of *paccayuppannadhamma*).[3]

Concerning the word '*alambitabba*', the function of the '*alambana*' of minds and their mental factors is to take hold of or to attach to the object. For instance, there is in this physical world a kind of metal which receives its name of '*ayokantaka*' (literally, iron-desire), lodestone, on account of its apparent desire for iron. When it gets near a lump of iron, it shakes itself as though desiring it. Moreover, it moves itself forward and attaches itself firmly to the iron. In other cases, it attracts the iron, and so the iron shakes itself and approaches the lodestone, and attaches itself firmly to it. Here we see the power of the lodestone, which may be taken as a striking representation of the '*alambana*' of mind and the mental factors.

They (mind and its concomitants) not only attach themselves to objects, but, at the stage of their coming into existence within a personal entity, rise and cease every moment, while the objects remain present at the avenues of the six doors[4]. Thus the rising and ceasing is just like that of the sound of a

gong, which is produced only at each moment we strike its surface, followed by immediate silence. It is also like that of the sound of a violin, which is produced only while we strike its strings with the bow over its strings and then immediately ceases.

To a sleeping man--while the life-continua are flowing (in the stream of thought)--kamma, the sign of kamma and the sign of the destiny awaiting him in the succeeding life--which had distinctly entered the avenues of the six doors at the time of approaching death in the preceding existence--are *arammana*-relations, and are causally related to (the nineteen classes of) consciousness known as the life-continuum.

End of the *Arammana-Relation*.

3: *Adhipati-Paccaya* or the Relation of Dominance

The relation of dominance is of two kinds: the objective dominance and the coexistent dominance. Of these two, what is the relation of objective dominance? Among the objects dealt with in the section on the *Arammana*-relation there are some objects which are most agreeable, most lovable, most pleasing and most regardable. Such objects exhibit the relation of objective dominance. Here the objects may, naturally, be either agreeable or disagreeable; but by the word 'the most agreeable objects' only those objects that are most highly esteemed by this or that person are meant as exhibiting this relation. Excepting the two classes of consciousness rooted in aversion[5] the two classes of consciousness rooted in ignorance and the tactual consciousness accompanied by pain, together with the concomitants of all these, it may be shown, analytically[6], that all the remaining classes of Kama-consciousness, Rupa-consciousness, Arupa-consciousness and Transcendental consciousness, together with all their respective concomitants and all the most agreeable material qualities, are *paccaya-dhamma*.

Of these, Kama-objects are said to exhibit the causal relation of objective dominance only when they are highly regarded, otherwise they do not. But those who reach the *Jhana* stages are never lacking in high esteem for the sublime *Jhanas* they have obtained. Ariyan disciples also never fail in their great regard for the Transcendental Dhammas[7] they have obtained and enjoyed.

What are the things that are related by this relation? The eight classes of consciousness rooted in appetite (*lobha*), the eight classes of *Kamaloka* moral consciousness, the four classes of in-operative *Kamaloka* consciousness connected with knowledge, and the eight classes of Transcendental Consciousness--these are the things related by this relation. Here the sixfold mundane objects[8] are causally related to the eight classes of consciousness rooted in appetite. The seventeen classes of mundane moral consciousness are related to the four classes of moral Kama-consciousness disconnected from knowledge. The first three pairs of the Path and Fruit, and Nibbana, together with all those classes of mundane moral consciousness, are related to the four classes of moral Kama-consciousness connected with knowledge. The highest--the fourth stage of the Path and Fruit of Arahantship--together with Nibbana are related to the four classes of inoperative Kama-consciousness connected with knowledge. And Nibbana is related to the eight classes of Transcendental Consciousness.

In what sense is *arammana* to be understood, and in what sense *Adhipati*? *Arammana* is to be understood in the sense of *alambitabba* (cf. *arammana-paccaya*) and *adhipati* in the sense of *adhipaccattha*. Then what is *adhipaccattha*? *Adhipaccattha* is the potency of objects to control those states of mind and mental qualities by which the objects are highly regarded. It is to be understood that the relating things (*paccaya-dhamma*) of *arammanadhipati* resemble the overlords, while the related things (*paccayuppanna-dhamma*) resemble the thralls in human society.

In the *Sutasoma Jataka*, *Porisada*, the king, owing to his extreme delight in human flesh, abandoned his kingdom solely for the sake of the taste of human flesh and lived a wanderer's life in the forest. Here the savour of human flesh is the *paccayadhamma* of *arammanadhipati*; and King *Porisada*'s consciousness rooted in appetite is the *paccayuppanna-dhamma*. And again, King *Sutasoma*, having a very high regard for Truth[9], forsook his sovereignty, all his royal family and even his life for the sake of Truth, and went to throw himself into the hands of *Porisada*. In this case, Truth is the

paccayadhamma and King *Sutasoma's* moral consciousness is the *paccayuppanna-dhamma*. Thus must we understand all objects of sense to which great regard is attached.

What is the relation of coexistent dominance? Intention or desire-to-do, mind[10] or will, energy or effort, and reason or investigation, which have arrived at the dominant state, belong to this relation.

What are the things related by this relation? Classes of mind and of mental qualities which are adjuncts of the dominants, and material qualities produced by dominant thoughts are the things that are related by this relation.

In what sense is *sahajata* to be understood, and in what sense *adhipati*? *Sahajata* is to be understood in the sense of *sahuppadanattha*, and *adhipati* in the sense of *abhibhavanattha*. Here, a phenomenon, when it appears not only appears alone, but simultaneously causes its adjuncts to appear. Such a causal activity of the phenomenon is termed the *sahuppadanattha*. And the term *abhibhavanattha* means overcoming. For instance, King *Cakkavatti*, by his own power or merit, overcomes and becomes lord of the inhabitants of the whole continent whom he can lead according to his own will. They also become according as they are led. In like manner, those four influences which have arrived at the dominant stage become lord of, and lead, so to speak, their adjuncts to be at their will in each of their respective functions. The adjuncts also become according as they are led. To take another example, in each of these masses, earth, water, fire, and air, we see that the four elements--extension, cohesion, heat, and motion--are respectively predominant, and each has supremacy over the other three components and makes them conform to its own intrinsic nature [11]. The other three members of the group of four 'elements' also have to follow after the nature of the predominant element. In the same way, these four dominants, which have arrived at the dominant stage through their power, make the adjuncts conform to their own intrinsic nature. And their adjuncts also have to follow after the nature of the dominants. Such is the meaning of *abhibhavana*. Here some might say: "If these things, leaving out intention, are to be called dominants on account of their overcoming the adjuncts, greed also ought to be called a dominant, for obviously it possesses a more overwhelming power over the adjuncts than intention." But to this we may reply: Greed is, indeed, more powerful than intention, but only with ordinary unintelligent men. With the wise, intention is more powerful than greed in overwhelming the adjuncts. If it is assumed that greed is more powerful, then how should people, who are in the hands of greed, give up the repletion of their happy existence and wealth, carry out the methods of renunciation, and escape from the circle of misery? But, because intention is more powerful than greed, therefore those people who are in the hands of greed are able to give up the repletion of happy existence and wealth, fulfil the means of renunciation, and escape from the circle of misery. Hence, intention is a true dominant,--and not greed. The like should be borne in mind--in the same fashion--when intention is contrasted with hate, and so forth.

Let us explain this more clearly. When there arise great and difficult manly enterprises, the accomplishment of such enterprises necessitates the arising of these four dominants. How? When ill-intentioned people encounter any such enterprise, their intention recedes. They are not willing to undertake it. They leave it, having no inclination for it, and even say: "The task is not within the range of our ability." As to well-intentioned people, their intention becomes full of spirit at the sight of such a great enterprise. They are very willing to undertake it. They make up their mind to accomplish the task, saying: "This has been set within the orbit of our ability." A person of this type is so persuaded by his intention that he is unable to give up the enterprise during the course of his undertaking, so long as it is not yet accomplished. And since this is the case the task will some day arrive at its full accomplishment even though it may be a very great one.

Now, let us turn to the case of men of the indolent class. When they come face to face with such a great task they at once shrink from it. They shrink from it because they foresee that they will have to go through great hardships and also undergo bodily and mental pain if they wish to accomplish it. As to the industrious man, he becomes filled with energy at the sight of it and wishes to set himself to it. He goes on through thick and thin with the performance of the task for any length of time. He never turns back from his exertions, nor does he become disappointed. What he only thinks about is that such a great task cannot be accomplished without unswerving efforts every day and every night. And this being the case, the great task will certainly reach its end one day.

Let us take the case of the feeble-minded. They also turn away when they see such a great task. They will certainly never think of it again. But it is quite different with the strong-minded person. When he sees such a task he becomes highly interested in it. He is quite unable to dispel the thought of it. He is all the time wrapped up in thoughts about the task, and at its bidding sets himself to it for a long time, enduring all kinds of bodily and mental pain. The remainder should hereafter be explained in the same manner as the dominant intention above.

Again, a few words about unintelligent men: When they are confronted with such a task they become blinded. They know not how to begin, nor how to go on with the work, nor how to bring it to its end. They feel as if they had entered the dark where not a single light of inclination towards its performance has been set up to guide them. On the other hand - to take the more intelligent case - when a person of this type has to tackle such a great task, he feels as if he were lifted up to the summit of his intellect, whereupon he discerns whence to start and whither to end. He also knows what advantage and blessing will accrue to him from its performance. He invents many devices for its easy accomplishment. He continues on with the work for a long time, and so on and so forth. The rest should be explained in the same manner as the dominant effort--only inserting the words 'with an enormous amount of investigation' in place of 'unswerving efforts'.

Thus, when there arise great and difficult manly enterprises, these four dominants become predominant among the means of their accomplishment. Owing to the existence of these four dominants there exist distinguished or dignified persons (personages) such as the Omniscient Buddhas, the *Pacceka* Buddhas,[12] the most eminent disciples, the great disciples and the ordinary disciples. Owing to the appearance of such personages, there also appear, for the general prosperity and welfare of mankind numerous[13] arts and sciences, as well as general articles of furniture to suit and serve human needs and wants under the canopy of civilization.

End of the *Adhipati*-Relation.

4. *Anantara-Paccaya* or the Relation of Contiguity

What is the *Anantara-paccaya*? All classes of consciousness and their mental concomitants, which have just ceased, (in the immediately preceding instant), are *anantara-paccayas*. Which are those that are related by this *paccaya*? All classes of consciousness and their mental concomitants, which have just arisen, (in the immediately succeeding instant), are related by this *paccaya*.

In one existence of a being, the rebirth-consciousness is related to the first life-continuum by way of contiguity, and the first life-continuum is again related to the second life-continuum; and so on with the rest.

Now with reference to the Text, "When the second unmoral consciousness arises to the Pure (those of Pure abode, i.e.), etc.," which is expounded in the *Dhamma-Yamaka*, the ninth chapter of the Sixth Book of Abhidhamma, we understand that, as he becomes aware of his new body, the first process of thought which occurs to a being in his new life is the process of unmoral thought accompanied by a strong desire to live the new life, with the idea: 'This is mine; this am I; this is Myself.' When this process is about to occur, the life-continuum vibrates first for two moments. Next comes the mind-door apprehension, and then follows a series of seven apperceptives, accompanied by a strong desire to live the new life. Thereafter, life-continua begin to flow again.

In fact, this being [14] does not know anything of his present new life. He lives, reflecting on what he had experienced in the previous existence. The basis of mind, however, is too weak, so that the object also cannot be clearly reflected. The object being thus indistinct, there generally arise only such classes of consciousness as are conjoined with perplexity.

After two months or so from the time of impregnation, during which period the individual is gradually developing, the controlling powers of the eyes, ears, etc., complete their full development. But there being no light, and so on, in the womb of the mother, the four classes of cognition--visual, auditory, and so on--do not arise. Only the tactile cognition and the mind-cognition arise. The child suffers much pain and distress at every change of the mother's bodily posture, and much more so while he is being born. Even after he has come into the outer world, he has to lie very feebly on his back till the

delicate body becomes strong enough (lit., reaches the state of maturity) to bear itself. During this period, he cannot cognize present objects, but his mind generally turns towards the objects of his previous existence. If he comes from the hell-world, he generally presents an unpleasant face, for he still feels what he had experienced in the hell-world. If he comes from the abode of devas, his pleasant face not only shines with smiles, but in its joyous expression of laugh, as it were, he shows his happiness at some thought of the objects of the Deva-world.

Furthermore, the members of his body steadily become stronger, and his sense-impressions clearer. So he is soon able to play joyfully in his own dear little ways. A happy life is thus begun for him; and he begins to take an interest in his new life. He takes to and imitates his mother's speech. He prattles with her. Thus his senses almost entirely turn to the present world, and all his reflections of the previous life fade away. That is to say, he forgets his previous existence.

Do all beings forget their previous existences only at this period of life? No, not all beings. Some who are very much oppressed with the pain of conception, forget their previous existences during the period of pregnancy, some at the time of birth, some at the aforesaid period; some during the period of youth, and some in old age. Some extraordinary men do not forget for the whole of their lifetime, and there are even some who are able to reflect two or three previous existences. They are called *Jatissarasatta*, those gifted with the memory of their previous existences.

Now, to return to our subject. Though the six-door processes of thought begin to work after the child has been born, yet the six-door processes work themselves out in full action only when the child is able to take up present objects. Thus, in every process of thought, every preceding consciousness that has just ceased is related to every succeeding consciousness that has immediately arisen, by way of contiguity. And this relation of contiguity prevails throughout the whole span of the recurring existences of an individual, right from the untraceable beginning, with unbroken continuity. But only after he has attained the Path of Arahantship and has entered the *Khandha-Parinibbana* (i.e. the final extinction of the Five Aggregates), does this continuum break, or, more strictly speaking, cease forever.

Why is *anantara* so called, and why *paccaya*? *Anantara* is so called because it causes such states of phenomena as are similar to its own to succeed in the immediately following instant. *Paccaya* is so called because it renders help. In the phrase 'similar to its own,' the word 'similar' is meant to express similarity in respect of having the faculty of being conscious of an object. And *Sammanta* means a phenomenon which does not occur without the presence of an object. So it has been rendered as 'similar in respect of having the faculty,' and so forth.

Also the phrase "*Dhammantarassa-uppadanatthena*" expresses the following meaning: "Though the preceding thought ceases, the conscious faculty of it does not become extinct until it has caused the succeeding thought to arise."

Here it should be borne in mind that the series of *paccaya-dhammas* of this relation resembles a series of preceding mothers, and the series of *paccayuppanna-dhamma* resembles a series of succeeding daughters. This being so, the last dying-thought of an Arahant should also cause the arising of a rebirth-consciousness. But it does not do so, for, at the close of the evolution of existence, all activities of volitions and defilements (*Kamma-kilesa*) have entirely ceased, and the last dying-thought has reached the final, ultimate quiescence.

End of the *Anantara*-Relation.

5. *Samanantara-Paccaya* or the Relation of Immediate Contiguity

The classifications of the *paccaya-dhammas* and *paccayuppanna-dhamma* of this relation, are, all of them, the same as those of the *anantarapaccaya*.

In what sense is *samanantara* to be understood? *Samanantara* is to be understood in the sense of 'thorough immediateness.' How? In a stone pillar, though the groups of matter therein seem to unite into one mass, they are not without the material quality of limitation or space which intervenes between them, for matter is substantial and formative. That is to say, there exists an element of space,

called mediary or cavity, between any two units of matter. But it is not so with immaterial qualities. There does not exist any space, mediary or cavity, between the two consecutive groups of mind and mental concomitants. That is to say, they (groups of mind and mental concomitants) are entirely without any mediacy, because the mental state is not substantial and formative. The mediacy between two consecutive groups of mind and mental concomitants is also not known to the world. So it is thought that mind is permanent, stable, stationary, and immutable. Hence, '*samanantara*' is to be understood in the sense of '*thorough immediateness*'.

Anantaratta has also been explained in the foregoing relation as *Attano anantare attasadisassa dhammantarassa uppadanatthena*; that is because it causes such states of phenomena as are similar to its own to succeed in the immediately following instant. This being so, some such suggestion as follows might be put forward: at the time of 'sustained cessation'[15] (*nirodhasamapatti*), the preceding consciousness is that of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness, and the succeeding consciousness is that of the Ariyan Fruit. Between these two classes of consciousness, the total suspension of thought occurs either for one day, or for two, or three... or even for seven days. Also in the abode of unconscious beings, the preceding consciousness is that of decease (*cuticitta*, the dying-thought) from the previous *Kamaloka*; and the succeeding one is that of rebirth (*patisandhicitta*) in the following *Kamaloka*. Between these two classes of consciousness, the total suspension of thought of the unconscious being occurs for the whole term of life amounting to five hundred *kappas* or great aeons.

Hence, is it not correct to say that the two classes of preceding consciousness are without the faculty of causing to arise something similar to themselves in an immediately following instant? The reply to this is: "No, they are not without this faculty. The faculty has only been retarded in its operation for a certain extended period, through certain highly cultivated contemplations and resolutions made. When the preceding thoughts cease, they cease together with the power, which they possess, of causing something to arise similar to themselves. And the succeeding thoughts, being unable to arise in continuity at that immediate instant, arise only after the lapse of the aforesaid extent of time. It cannot be rightly said that they (the preceding thoughts) do not possess the faculty of causing to arise something similar to themselves, or that they are not *anantara*-relations only because of a suspension of operation of the faculty. For, we do not speak of a king's armies when they are not actually in a battle or in the very act of fighting, or while they are roaming about, not being required to fight by the king, who at such times may say, 'My men, it is not the proper time for you yet to fight. But you shall fight at such and such a time.' We do not then say that they are not armies or that they have no fighting qualities. In precisely the same way, the relation between the two aforesaid preceding thoughts is to be understood."

Here some might say: "It has just been said in this relation that both the relating and the related things, being incorporeal qualities having no form whatever and having nothing to do with any material quality of limitation (space) intervening between, are entirely without mediacy or cavity. If this be so, how shall we believe the occurrence at every moment, of the arising and ceasing of consciousness, which has been explained in the *arammana-paccaya* by the illustration of the sound of a gong and of a violin?" We may answer this question by asserting the fact, which is quite obvious in the psychical world, that the various classes of consciousness are in a state of continual flux, i.e., in a continuous succession of change. It has also been explained, in detail, in the essays on *Citta Yamaka*.

End of the *Samanantara*-Relations.

6. *Sahajata-Paccaya* or the Relation of coexistence

The classifications of the *paccaya* and *paccayuppanna-dhammas* of this relation will now be dealt with. All coexistent classes of consciousness and their mental concomitants are each mutually termed *paccaya* and *paccayuppanna-dhammas*. So also are the mental aggregates of rebirth and the basis of mind, which coexist with rebirth; and so also are the Great Essentials, mutually among themselves. All the material qualities born of Kamma at the moment of rebirth and all the material qualities which are born of mind, during life, at the nascent instant of each momentary state of consciousness (which is capable of producing material quality), are merely termed the *paccayuppanna-dhammas*, of that coexistent consciousness. All the material qualities derived from the Great Essentials are, however, termed the *paccayuppanna-dhammas* of the Great Essentials.

In what sense is *sahajata* to be understood, and in what sense *paccaya*? *Sahajata* is to be understood in the sense of coexistence, and *paccaya* in the sense of rendering help. Here, coexistence means that *when a phenomenon arises, it arises together with its effect; or, in other words, also causes its effect to arise simultaneously*. Such is the meaning of coexistence implied here. For example, when the sun rises, it rises together with its heat and light. And when a candle is burning, it burns together with its heat and light. So also, this relating thing, in arising, arises together with related things.

In this example, the sun is like each of the mental states; the sun's heat like the coexisting mental states; and the sun's light is like the coexisting material qualities. Similarly, the sun is like each of the Great Essentials; its heat, the coexisting Great Essentials; and its light, the coexisting material qualities derived from them. In the example of the candle, it should be understood in a similar way.

End of the *Sahajata-Relation*.

7. *Annamanna-Paccaya* or the Relation of Reciprocity

What has been spoken of the *paccaya-dhammas* in the classifications of the relation of coexistence is here (in this relation) the *paccaya* as well as the *paccayuppanna-dhammas*. All states of consciousness and their mental concomitants are, reciprocally, the *paccaya* and the *paccayuppanna-dhammas*; so are the coexisting Great Essentials; so are the mental aggregates of rebirth; and so is the basis of mind or heart-base which coexists with the mental aggregates of rebirth.

As to the sense implied here, it is easy to understand. However, an illustration will not be uninteresting. When three sticks are set upright leaning against one another at their upper ends, each of them depends on, and is depended on by, the other two. As long as one of them remains in such an upright position, so long will all remain in the same position. And, if one of them falls, all will fall at the same time. Exactly so should this relation of reciprocity be understood.

Here, if any one should assert that the mental properties are not able to arise without consciousness rendering them service as their base, we would acknowledge that this is so. Why? Because the function of knowing is predominant among the functions of contact, and so forth, of the mental properties, and, in the *Dhammapada*, as expounded by the Omniscient Buddha, 'mind is predominant' (*Manopubbangama Dhamma*, etc.) And again if anyone holds that consciousness also is not able to arise without the mental properties as a correlative, we will support this view. They (mental properties) are concomitant factors of consciousness; therefore, consciousness also is not able to arise without its accompanying mental properties. In a similar way are the four Great Essentials to be understood. But the mental qualities derived from them should not be counted as concomitant factors, for they are only derivatives. Then are the material qualities of life and those born of food not concomitant factors, seeing that they can exercise, individually, the causal relation of control and that of food? No, they are not. They may be taken as concomitant factors only when the development is in full swing, but not when things are only at the state of genesis. In this relation of reciprocity, the arising of concomitants at the stage of genesis is a necessary factor.

End of the *Annamanna-Relation*.

8. *Nissaya Paccaya* or the Relation of Dependence

The relation of dependence is of three kinds: coexistent dependence, basic pre-existent dependence, and basic objective pre-existent dependence.

Of these, what is the relation of coexistent dependence? The relation of coexistent dependence embraces all those that are already comprised in the relation of coexistence. Hence the classifications of relation and related things ought here to be understood in the same way as those that have already been set out in the section on the relation of coexistence.

And what is the relation of basic pre-existent dependence? There are six bases--eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and heart. These six bases, during life, are causally related, by way of basic pre-existent dependence, to the seven elements of cognition. The material base itself pre-exists and serves as a standing ground or substratum, and it is therefore called 'basic pre-existent dependence'. Here 'basic' is so called because of its being a standing ground or substratum for mind and mental properties. 'To pre-exist' means to exist beforehand--one thought-moment earlier than its related thing.

Here the rebirth consciousness arises in dependence upon the heart-basis[16] that coexists with it, for there is no pre-existent physical base at that moment. And the first life-continuum arises in dependence upon the same heart-basis which coexists with the rebirth-consciousness. The second life-continuum arises also in dependence upon the heart-basis which coexists with the first life-continuum, and so on with the rest, that is, the third life-continuum arises in dependence upon the heart-basis that coexists with the second life-continuum, and so on and on, until comes the moment of death. Thus should be understood the 'basic pre-existent dependence' which relates to the two elements of cognition, the element of apprehension and the element of comprehension.

Just as a violin sounds only when the violin-bow moves across its strings, and not otherwise, so also the five senses awake only when the five kinds of sense-objects enter the five avenues known as 'five bases', and not otherwise.

The impression is possible only at the static period of the object and of the basis. On account of the impression, the life-continuum vibrates for two moments. And, on account of the vibration of the life-continuum, apprehension occurs. On account of apprehension, the five sense-cognitions are able to arise. Therefore, the five sense-bases (eye, ear, etc.) which have arisen at the nascent instant of the past sub-consciousness, are the 'basic pre-existent dependences' of the five elements of sense-cognition.

Now, at the time of death all the six bases come into being only at the nascent instant of the seventeenth sub-consciousness, reckoned backward from the dying-consciousness. No new bases occur after that seventeenth sub-consciousness. So, at the time of death, all sub-consciousness, all six-door-process-cognitions and consciousness of decease arise in dependence upon these, their respective bases that came into being together with the seventeenth sub-consciousness which has arisen previously to them. This is the causal relation of 'basic pre-existent dependence.'

What is the causal relation of 'basic objective pre-existent dependence'? When one is reflecting and holding the view: 'my mind locates itself in dependence upon the matter which is mine, or myself, or my *atta*,' through craving, conceit, and error; or when one is reasoning or speculating thus: 'my mind locates itself in dependence upon matter which is Impermanence, Ill, and No-soul,' there arise mind-door cognitions, such as determining, and so forth. During that time, each of the material bases becomes the standing ground for, and also the object of, each of the mind-door cognitions. Therefore, such and such a heart-basis is causally related to such and such a consciousness and its concomitants, by way of basic objective pre-existent dependence. This is the causal relation of 'basic objective pre-existent dependence.' Hence the relation of dependence is of three different kinds.

Here, the dependence by way of *Suttanta* should also be mentioned. We know that men, animals, trees, and so forth, stand or rest on the earth; the earth in turn, on the great mass of air; and the air, on the limitless empty space underneath. We also know that men establish themselves in houses; bhikkhus, in *viharas* or monasteries; devas in celestial mansions; and so on with the whole universe. Thus should we understand that everything is causally related to something else by way of dependence.

End of *Nissaya*-Relation.

9. *Upanissaya-Paccaya* or the Relation of Sufficing Condition

The relation of sufficing condition is of three kinds: objective sufficing condition, contiguous sufficing condition and natural sufficing condition. Of these three, the first is the same as objective dominance, and the second as contiguity.

What is 'natural sufficing condition'? All past, present and future, internal and external, classes of consciousness together with their concomitants, all material qualities, Nibbana and concepts (*pannatti*), are natural sufficing conditions, severally related, as the case may be, to all the present classes of consciousness and their concomitants.

Here, the Buddha who passed away and has entered Nibbana, His Dhamma, the Fraternity of His sanctified disciples, and the successions of the recognized Fraternity, are causally related to us, of later generations, by way of natural sufficing condition, for the cultivation of good. In the same way, our forefathers, in their respective capacities as parents, teachers, wise monks and brahmins, eminent philosophers, and powerful and august kings, are also causally related to the succeeding generations by way of natural sufficing condition, either for the cultivation of good or of evil, or for the experience of pleasure or of pain. For which reason, they established or propounded various laws and sayings, moral and immoral, and also worldly institutions--both for the welfare and otherwise of the succeeding generations. The future generations also follow their paths and adopt their customs by doing acts of charity, by observing the precepts, and so forth, by practising the moral and social laws of the world, by adhering to various religious beliefs, by taking up various kinds of occupations, by studying various branches of arts and science, by governing hamlets, villages and towns, by being agriculturists in the field and on the farm, by digging lakes, ponds and wells, by building houses, by making carriages and carts, by building boats, steamers and ships, and by seeking for and accumulating wealth, such as silver, gold, precious stones, pearls and so forth and so on. Thus the world has developed unceasingly.

The future Buddha (*Metteyya*), His Dhamma and His Fraternity are natural sufficing conditions, being causally related to the present generation, for the acquirement of virtues, and the gaining of merit. Supremacy, wealth, power, prosperity--which are to be gained in the future--are also natural sufficing conditions, related to the present generation for the putting forth of efforts of all sorts. The acquirement of happy existence and wealth and the attainment of Path, Fruition and Nibbana, which are to be enjoyed in the future, are also natural sufficing conditions, related to the present generation of men for the development of such forms of merit as charity, virtue and so on.

With the hope of reaping crops in winter, men till the soil and sow seeds in the rainy season, or they do various kinds of work, which incur labour and intellect, with the hope of getting money upon their completion of the work. Now, the crops to be reaped and the money to be got are future natural sufficing conditions, related to the acquisition of crops and money. In the same manner, most people in the present life do many good deeds, realizing that they will reap the fruits of their deeds in some life hereafter. In this case, the fruits which will be reaped in future are future natural sufficing conditions, related to the deeds done in the present life. Deeds done before are also past natural sufficing conditions, related to the fruits which are to be reaped in the future. Thus we see that the future natural sufficing condition is as large and wide as the past.

The living Buddha, His Dhamma, and so on, are present natural sufficing conditions, being related to the present living men, Devas and Brahmas, and so are living parents to living sons and daughters, and so on. The present natural sufficing condition is thus obvious and easy to understand.

Internal natural sufficing conditions are those that exist in an animate person, such as the Buddha, and so forth. External natural sufficing conditions are conditions, such as lands, mountains, rivers, oceans and so on, which serve as resting places for the existence of life (sentient beings); or such as forests, woods, trees, grasses, grains, beans and so forth; or such as the moon, the sun, the planets, the stars and so on; or such as rain, fire, wind, cold, heat, and so forth, which are useful and advantageous to life in one way or another. All these are the more powerful sufficing conditions, either for the accomplishment of good or for the spreading of evil; either for the enjoyment of pleasures or for the suffering of pains.

Those with an earnest desire to enter Nibbana in the present life work-out the factors of enlightenment. Those with an ardent hope to enter Nibbana in the lives to come when Buddhas will appear [and] fulfil the perfections. Here, Nibbana is the more powerful sufficing condition for the cultivation of these tasks.

A large variety of concepts or names-and-notions, commonly employed or found in the *Tipitakas* of the Buddha are also sufficing-conditions for the understanding of many things.

In fact, all conditioned things here come to be only when there are present causes or conditions for the same, and not otherwise. And they stand only if there are present causes for their standing; otherwise they do not. Therefore, causes or conditions are needed for their arising as well as for their maintenance. However, Nibbana and concepts are things, unconditioned, without birth and genesis, everlasting and eternal. Therefore, no causes are needed for their arising and maintenance.[17]

The Moral is causally related to that which is moral by way of sufficing condition. A clear exposition of this is given in the *Patthana*, where it is said: "Through faith one gives charity, observes the precepts and so on." Similarly, that moral is causally related to immoral--and unspecified[18] or unmoral to unmoral--by way of sufficing condition is made clear by these expositions: "Through lust one commits murder, theft and so on," and "Through suitable climate and food, one enjoys physical health and so forth." The Moral is also causally related to that which is immoral by way of more powerful sufficing condition. This is to be understood from the following exposition: "One may give charity, and thereupon exalt oneself and revile others. In the same manner, having observed the precepts, having attained concentration of mind, and having acquired learning, one may exalt oneself and belittle others."

The Moral is also causally related to that which is unmoral by way of more powerful sufficing condition. All good deeds done in the four planes (these four planes are the spheres of *Kama*, *Rupa*, *Arupa* and *Lokuttara*), and all actions connected with doing good, are related, by way of more powerful sufficing condition, to unmorals of the resultant kind, producible at a remote period. Those who practise for the Perfection of charity, suffer much physical and mental pain. Similarly, those who practise for such other Perfections (*Paramita*) as of morality, abnegation, wisdom, perseverance, patience, sincerity, resolution, love, and resignation, suffer the same. It is likewise with those who practise the course of *Jhana* and *Magga* ("supernormal thought" and the Path).

Immorals are also causally related, by way of more powerful sufficing condition, to morals. For instance, some on this earth, having done wrong, repent their deeds and better themselves to shun all such evil deeds, by cultivating such moral acts as giving charity, observing the precepts, practising *Jhanas* and *Maggas*. Thus the evil deeds they have done are related, by way of stronger sufficing condition, to the moral acts they cultivate later.

Immorals are also causally related, by way of more powerful sufficing condition, to unmorals. For instance, many people in this world, having been guilty of evil deeds, are destined to fall into one of the four planes of misery, and undergo pains of suffering which prevail there. Even in the present life, some, through their own misdeeds or the misdeeds of others, have to bear a great deal of distress. Some, however, enjoy a large variety of pleasures with the money they earn by their misconduct. There are also many who suffer much on account of lust, hate, error, conceit, and so forth.

Unmorals are also causally related by way of more powerful sufficing condition to morals. Having become possessed of great wealth, one gives charity, practises for the perfection of good morals, fosters wisdom, and practises the religious exercises in a suitable place, such as a monastery, a hollow place, a cave, a tree, a forest, a hill, or a village where the climate is agreeable and food is available. Unmorals are also causally related by way of more powerful sufficing conditions to immorals. Being equipped with eyes, many evils are born of sight within oneself. A similar explanation applies to our equipment with ears, etc.; so also as regards hands, legs, swords, arms, etc. It is thus that sufficing condition is of three kinds.

Sufficing condition by way of *Suttanta*,[19] may also be mentioned here. It is found in many such passages in the *Pitakas* as, "through intercourse with virtuous friends," "through association with sinful companions," "by living in the village," "by dwelling in the forest," and so forth. In short, the five cosmic orders (*Panca-niyamadhamma*) are the stronger sufficing conditions relating to the three worlds--the animate world, the inanimate world, and the world of space, to go on unceasingly through aeons of time. This also has been expounded at length by us in the *Niyamadipani*[20].

Why is *arammanupanissaya* so called? It is so called because the dominant object acts as a main basis for subjects (*arammanika*).

Why is *anatarupanissaya* so called? It is so called because the preceding consciousness acts as a main basis for the arising of its immediate succeeding consciousness. The preceding consciousness is just like the mother, and the succeeding one, the son. Here, just as the mother gives birth to the son who owes his existence to her in particular, so also the preceding consciousness gives birth to the succeeding one which owes its existence particularly to its predecessor.

Why is *pakatupanissaya* so called? It is so called because it is naturally known to the wise as a distinct sufficing condition. Here, something further requires to be said. The influence of a sufficing condition in contiguity pervades only its immediate successor, but that of a natural sufficing condition can pervade many remote ones. Therefore, what in this present life has been seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched and experienced in days, months, years, long gone by, takes form again at the mind-door, even after a lapse of a hundred years, if a sufficient cause is available. And so people remember their past, and can utter such expressions as "I saw it before," "I heard it before," and so on. These beings, whose birth is apparitional[21], also remember their former existences; likewise, some among men, who are gifted with the memory of their former existences, can do so. If one out of a hundred thousand objects experienced before be met with afterwards, many or, it may be, all of them reappear in the process of thought.

End of the *Upanissaya*-Relation.

10. *Purejata-Paccaya* or the Relation of Pre-Existence

The relation of pre-existence is of three kinds: basic pre-existence, objective pre-existence and basic objective pre-existence.

Of these, the first and the last have already been dealt with under the heading of *Nissaya* in the foregoing section on the *Nissaya*-relation.

Objective pre-existence is the name given to the present eighteen, kinds of material qualities of the determined class (*nipphanna*). Of these, the present five objects (visible form, sound, and so forth) are causally related, always by way of objective pre-existence, to those thoughts which are capable of taking part in the five-door processes.

Just as the sound of the violin only arises when it is played with a bow, and the sounding necessitates the pre-existence of both the violin strings and the violin bow, so also those thoughts, which take part in the five-door processes, spring into being owing to the presentation of the five objects of sense at the five doors, which are no other than the five bases.

The presentation is possible only when the door and the object are in their static stages. Those five objects not only present themselves at the five doors of the five senses at that static period, but they also present themselves at the mind-door. On this account, the life-continuum vibrates for two moments, and then ceases; and the cessation of the life-continuum gives rise to a consciousness-series. This being so, the consciousness-series in any process cannot arise without the pre-existence of the objects and of the bases. The eighteen kinds of determined material qualities are either past, because they have ceased, or future, because they have not yet arisen, or present, inasmuch as they are still existing. All of them, without distinction, may be objects of the mind-door cognitions. But, among them, only the present objects act as objective pre-existence. And if a thing in any distant place, or concealed from sight, itself existing, becomes an object of mind, it also may be called a present object.

End of the *Purejata*-Relation.

11. *Pacchajata-Paccaya* or the Relation of Post-Existence

Every posterior consciousness that springs into being, causally relates to the still existing group of prior corporeal qualities born of the Four Origins[22] (*kamma, citta, utu, ahara*), by way of post-existence, in helping them to develop and thrive. For example, the rainwater that falls every

subsequent year, renders service by way of post-existence to such vegetation as has grown up in previous years, in promoting its growth and development.

Here, by "every posterior consciousness" are meant all classes of consciousness beginning from the first life-continuum to the final dying-thought. And, by "prior corporeal qualities" are meant all corporeal qualities born of Four Origins starting from the group of material qualities born of kamma, which coexist with the rebirth-conception.

The fifteen states of the life-continuum starting serially from the first life-continuum which has arisen after the rebirth-conception, causally relate by way of post-existence to the group of material qualities born of kamma, which coexist with the rebirth-conception. As to the rebirth-conception, it cannot be a causal relation by way of post-existence, for it coexists with the group of corporeal qualities born of kamma. Similarly, the sixteenth life-continuum cannot become a causal relation by way of post-existence, for it comes into existence only when that group of material qualities reaches the stage of dissolution. Therefore, these are "the fifteen states of the life-continuum" which causally relate as above.

At the static moment of the rebirth-conception, there spring up two groups of material qualities, born of kamma, and born of temperature;[23] and the same at the arrested moment. But at the nascent moment of the first life-continuum, three groups spring up: that born of kamma, that born of temperature, and that born of mind. When *oja* (the nutritive essence) of the food eaten, spreads all through the body, the corporeal nutritive essence absorbs the stimulant, and produces a group of material qualities. From that time onward, the groups produced by the Four Origins spring up incessantly, like the flame of a burning lamp. Leaving out the nascent moment, so long as these groups stand at their static stage, every one of the posterior fifteen classes of consciousness renders them help by way of post-existence.

Vuddhivirulhiya means "for the gradual development and progress of the series of corporeal qualities born of the Four Origins." Therefore, if they, the four kinds of corporeal groups, are repeatedly related by (lit., do repeatedly obtain) the causal relation of post-existence, then they leave behind them, when their physical life-term has expired, *a powerful energy--an energy adequate to produce the development, progress and prosperity of the subsequent series of groups.*

End of the Pacchajata-Relation.

12. *Asevana-Paccaya* or the Relation of Habitual Recurrence

The forty-seven kinds of mundane apperceptions comprising the twelve classes of immoral consciousness, the seventeen mundane classes of moral consciousness, and the eighteen classes of inoperative consciousness (obtained by excluding the two classes of consciousness, called "turning towards," *avajjana*, from the twenty), are here termed the causal relation of habitual recurrence. When any one of these arrives at the apperceptual process (i.e., the sequence of seven similar states of consciousness in a process of thought) every preceding apperception causally relates itself by way of habitual recurrence to every succeeding apperception. The related things, *paccayuppanna-dhammas*, comprise the succeeding apperceptions as stated above, as well as the Four Paths.

In what sense is the term *asevana* to be understood? It is to be understood in the sense of habituating by constant repetition or of causing in its *paccayuppanna-dhamma* to accept its inspiration, for them to gain greater and greater proficiency, energy and force. Here *Pagunabhava* means proficiency of the succeeding apperceptual thoughts in their apperceptive functions and stages; just as one who reads a lesson many times becomes more proficient with each new reading.

Parivaso literally means perfuming, or inspiring. Just as a silk cloth is perfumed with sweet scents, so also is the body of thought, so to speak, perfumed, or inspired, with lust, hate, and so forth; or with disinterestedness (*arajjana*), amity (*adussana*), and so on. Although the preceding apperception ceases, its apperceptual force does not cease; that is, its force pervades the succeeding thought. Therefore, every succeeding apperception, on coming into existence, becomes more vigorous on account of the former's habituation. Thus the immediate preceding thought habituates or causes its immediate successor to accept its habituation. However, the process of habitual recurrence usually

ceases at the seventh thought, after which, either resultant thought-moments of retention follow, or subsidence into the life-continuum takes place.

Here, habitual recurrence, as dealt with in the *Suttanta*, ought to be mentioned also. Many passages are to be found in several parts of the *Sutta Pitaka*. Such are: *Satipatthanam bhaveti*: "one cultivates the earnest applications in mindfulness"; *Sammappadhanam bhaveti*: "one cultivates the supreme effort," *Sati-sambojjhangam bhaveti*: "one cultivates mindfulness, a factor of Enlightenment"; *Dhammavicaya-sambojjhangam bhaveti*: "one cultivates the "investigation of truth," a factor of Enlightenment"; *Sammaditthim bhaveti*: "one cultivates the right view"; *Sammasankappam bhaveti*: "one cultivates right aspiration" and so on. In these passages, by "*bhaveti*" is meant, to repeat the effort either for one day, or for seven days, or for one month, or for seven months, or for one year, or for seven years.

Moral and immoral actions, which have been repeatedly performed or cultivated, or many times done in former existences, causally relate by way of habitual recurrence to moral and immoral actions of the present existence for their greater improvement and worsening respectively.

The relation which effects the improvement and the worsening respectively of such moral and immoral actions, at some other distant time or in some future existence, is called sufficing condition, but the one which effects this only during the apperceptual process is called habitual recurrence.

In this world, there are clearly to be seen always many incidental results or consequences following upon great achievements in art, science, literature, and so forth, which have been carried out in thought, word, and deed, continuously, repeatedly and incessantly.

As such a relation of habitual recurrence is found among all transient phenomena, manly zeal and effort, exerted for a long period of time, have developed to such a high degree that many great and difficult labours have reached complete accomplishment and that even Buddhahood has been attained.

End of Asevana-Relation.

13. *Kamma-Paccaya* or the Relationship of Kamma

The relation of kamma is of two kinds: coexistent kamma and asynchronous kamma.

Of these two, all volitions, moral, immoral, and unmoral, which consist of three time-phases, constitute the causal relation of coexistent kamma. Their related things are: All classes of consciousness and their mental concomitants in coexistence with volition; material qualities born of kamma, which arise simultaneously with the rebirth-conception, and material qualities produced by mind during the term of life.

Past moral and immoral volitions constitute the causal relation of asynchronous kamma. Their related things are the thirty-seven classes of mundane resultant consciousness and their mental concomitants, and all the material qualities born of kamma.

Why is kamma so called? It is so called on account of its peculiar function. This peculiar function is nothing but volition (or will) itself, and it dominates every action. When any action of thought, word, or body, takes place, volition (or will) determines, fashions, or causes its concomitants to perform their respective functions simultaneously. For this reason, volition is said to be predominant in all actions. Thus kamma is so called on account of its peculiar function. Or, to define it in another way, kamma is that by which creatures do (or act). What do they do then? They do physical work, vocal work, and mental work. Here, by "physical work" is meant standing, sitting, and so forth; stepping forward and backward, and so on; and even the opening and the shutting of the eye-lids. Vocal work means producing vocal sounds. Mental work means thinking wisely or badly, and, in short, the functions of seeing, hearing, and so forth, with the five senses. Thus all the actions of beings are determined by this volition. Therefore it is called kamma.

Sahajata is that which comes into being simultaneously with its related things. *Sahajatakamma* is a coexistent thing as well as a kamma. *Sahajatakamma-paccaya* is a causal relation standing (to its effects) by way of coexistent kamma.

Nanakkhanikam is a thing differing in point of time from its effects. That is to say, the time when the volition arises is one, and the time when its effects take place is another; or, in other words, the volition is asynchronous. Hence asynchronous volition is a volition that differs in point of time from its effects. So *Nanakkhanikakammappaccaya* is a causal relation standing (to its effects) by way of asynchronous kamma. The volition which coexists with the Ariyan Path, only at the moment of its ceasing, immediately produces its effect, and so it also is asynchronous.

Here, a moral volition such as predominates in charity, for instance, is causally related to its coexistent mind and mental qualities, together with the material qualities produced by the same mind, by way of coexistent kamma. It is also causally related, by way of asynchronous kamma, to the resultant aggregates of mind and material qualities born of that kamma, which will be brought into existence at a distant period in the future. Thus a volition, which is transmuted into a course of action entailing moral and immoral consequences, is causally related to its related things by way of two such different relations at two different times.

In this *asynchronous kamma* relation, the kamma signifies *quite a peculiar energy. It does not cease though the volition ceases, but latently follows the sequences of mind. As soon as it obtains a favourable opportunity, it takes effect immediately after the dying-thought has ceased, by transmuting itself into the form of an individual in the immediately following existence.* But, if it does not obtain any favourable opportunity, it remains in the same latent mode for many hundreds of existences. If it obtains a favourable opportunity, then what is called "sublime kamma" takes effect, upon the next existence in the *Brahma-loka*, by transmuting itself into the form of a *Brahma-deva*, and it is so matured that it exhausts itself at the end of this second existence, and does not go any further.

End of Kamma-Relation.

14. *Vipaka-Paccaya* or the Relation of Effect

Thirty-six classes of resultant consciousness and their concomitants are the relation of effect. As they are mutually related to one another, the related things embrace all of them, as well as the material qualities born of kamma at the time of conception, and those produced by the resultant consciousness during life.

In what sense is *vipaka* applied? It is applied in the sense of *vipaccana*, which means a change of state from infancy or youth to maturity. Whose tenderness and maturity are meant? What is meant of the former is the infancy of the past volition, which is known as asynchronous kamma. By maturity, also, is meant the maturity of the same kamma.

Here, it should be understood that every volition has four *avattas*, or time-phases--*cetanavattā*, or the genesis of volition; *kammavattā*, or the continuance of volition; *nimittavattā*, or the representation of volition, and *vipakavattā*, or the final result. Here, although the volition itself ceases, its peculiar function does not cease, but latently follows the series of thought. This is called *kammavattā*, or the continuance of volition.

When it obtains a favourable opportunity for fruition, the kamma represents itself to the person about to die. That is to say, he himself feels as if he were giving charity, or observing the precepts, or perhaps killing some creatures. If this kamma fails to represent itself, a symbol of it is represented. That is to say, he himself feels as if he were in possession of the offerings, the gifts, the weapons, and so on; or any thing with which he had committed such kamma in the past. Or, sometimes, there is represented to him the sign of the next existence where he is destined to open his new life. That is to say, such objects as the abodes or palaces of the Devas, or the fires of the *Niraya*-worlds, or what-not, which--as it will be his lot to obtain, or to experience, such in the existence immediately following--enter the fields of presentation through the six doors. These are called *nimittavattā*, the representation, of the volition.

Now, how are we to understand the *vipakavattā*? If a person dies with his attention fixed upon one of these three classes of objects, either on the kamma itself or on the sign of it, or on the sign of destiny, it is said that kamma has effected itself, or has come to fruition, in the immediately new existence. It has

transmuted itself into a personality, and appears, so to speak, in the form of a being in the new existence. This is called the *vipakavattha*, or the final result. Here, in the first three *avatthas*, the volition is said to be in the state of infancy or youth.[24] The last one shows that the volition has arrived in maturity, and can effect itself. Therefore, as has been said, *vipaccana* means a change of state from infancy or youth to maturity. Thus *vipaka* is the name assigned to the states of consciousness and their concomitants, which are the results of the volitions, or to the matured volitions themselves.

Just as mangoes are very soft and delicate when they are ripe, so also the resultant states are very tranquil, since they are inactive and have no stimulus. They are so tranquil that the objects of subconsciousness are always dim and obscure. On reviving from subconsciousness, one has no consciousness of what its object was. For this reason, there is no possibility of occurrence of a process of thought, which can reflect the object of the sub-consciousness thus: "Such and such an object has been met with in the past existence"--although, in sleep at night, the sub-consciousness takes for its object one of the three classes of objects (*kamma*, the symbols of *kamma*, and the symbols of one's future destiny), which had been experienced before, at the time of approaching death, in the immediately preceding existence. Hence, it is that one knows nothing about any object from a past existence, either in sleep or in waking. Thus the mutual relationship by way of inactivity, non-stimulation, and tranquillity, is termed the function of *vipaka*.

End of Vipaka-Relation.

15. *Ahara-Paccaya* or the Relation of Food

The relation of food is of two kinds: material and immaterial. Of these, material food connotes the nutritive essence (or what is called edible food), which again is subdivided into two kinds: internal and external.

All the natural qualities born of the Four Causes,[25] pertaining to those creatures who live on edible food, are here the *paccayuppanna-dhammas* related to the two kinds of material food.

As to immaterial food, it is of three different kinds: contact, volitional activity of mind, and consciousness. These kinds of immaterial food, or *paccaya dhammas*, are causally related to the coexistent properties, both mental and material, which are their corresponding *paccayuppanna-dhamma*.

In what sense is *ahara* to be understood? *Ahara* is to be understood in the sense of 'holding up strongly,' which means "causing to exist firmly." That is to say, a relating thing nourishes its related thing so as to enable it to endure long, to develop, to flourish, and to thrive, by means of support. Though the causal relation of food possesses a producing power, the power of support is predominant here.

Here, the two material foods are called *ahara*, because they strongly hold up the group of internal material qualities born of the Four Causes, by nourishing them so that they may exist firmly, endure long, and reach uncurtailed the bounds (or limits) of their life-term.

Contact is an *ahara* also, because it strongly holds up its coexistent things, and enables them to stand firmly and endure long by nourishing them with the essence extracted from desirable and undesirable objects. Volitional activity of mind, or (in a word) will, is an *ahara* in that it furnishes courage for the execution of deeds, words, and thoughts. And consciousness is an *ahara* also, inasmuch as it predominates in all thinking about an object. These three immaterial foods, in supplying nourishment to the coexistent mentals, also affect the coexistent materials.

Ahara here may also be explained after the *Suttanta* method. Just as birds, ascertaining where their quarters are, fly with their wings through the air from tree to tree and from wood to wood, and peck at fruits with their beaks, thus sustaining themselves through their whole life, so also beings--with the six classes of consciousness, ascertaining objects; with the six kinds of volitional activity of mind, persevering to get something as an object; and with the six kinds of contact, making the essence of objects appear--either enjoy pleasure or suffer pain. Or, solely with the six classes of consciousness,

comprehending objects, they avail themselves of forming, or becoming, body and mind. Or, solely with the contacts, making objects appear in order that feelings may be aroused through the same, they cultivate craving. Or, committing various kinds of deeds through craving accompanied by volitions, they migrate (so to speak) from existence to existence. Thus should be understood how extensive the functioning of the different foods is.

End of the Ahara-Relation.

16. *Indriya-Paccaya* or the Relation of Control

The relation of control is of three kinds, namely coexistence, pre-existence and physical life. Of these, the *paccaya-dhammas* of the first kind[26] are the fifteen coexistent controls, namely, psychic life, consciousness, pleasure, pain, joy, grief, hedonic indifference, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, reason, the thought: "I-shall-come-to-know-the-unknown (Nibbana)," the thought: "I-know," and the thought: "I-have-known." The *paccayuppanna-dhammas* are their coexistent properties, both mental and material.

The *paccaya-dhammas* of the second kind are the five sentient organs: the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the body. The *paccayuppanna-dhammas* are the five senses together with their concomitants.

The *paccaya-dhammas* of the third kind is only one, namely, physical life itself. And all kamma-born material qualities, with the exception of physical life itself, are its *paccayuppanna-dhammas*.

In what sense is *indriya* to be understood? It is to be understood in the sense of "exercising control over." Over what does it exercise control? It exercises control over its *paccayuppanna-dhammas*. In what function? In their respective functions. Psychic life exercises control over its coexistent mental properties in infusing life, that is, in the matter of their prolongation by continuity. Consciousness exercises control in the matter of thinking about an object. The functioning of the rest has been explained in our recent *Indriya-Yamaka-Dipani*.

Here, some may put a question like this: "Why are the two sexes[27] --the female and the male--which are comprised in the category of controls, not taken in this relation as *paccaya-dhammas*?" The answer is: "Because they have none of the functions of a *paccaya*. A *paccaya* has three kinds of functioning, namely, producing, supporting and maintaining. Here, if A is causally related to B in B's arising, A's functioning is said to be that of producing, for had A not occurred, the arising of B would have been impossible. The functioning of *anantara* may be instanced here. Again, if A is causally related to B in B's existence, development and prosperity, A's functioning is said to be that of supporting, for if A did not happen B would not stand, develop and flourish. The relation of *pacchajata* will serve here as an example. And, if A is causally related to B in B's prolongation by continuity, A's functioning is said to be that of maintaining, for if A did not exist, B's prolongation would be hampered, and its continuity would also be broken. The functioning of physical life will illustrate this."

Now, the two sexes do not execute any one of the said three functions. Therefore, they are not taken as a *paccaya-dhamma* in this relation of control. If this be so, must they still be called controls? Yes, they must be called controls. Why? Because they have something of controlling power. They control the body in its sexual structure (*linga*), in its appearance (*nimitta*), in its characters (*kutta*), and in its outward dispositions (*akappa*). Therefore, at the period of conception, if the female sex is produced in a being, all its personality, i.e. the five aggregates produced by the Four Causes (kamma, and so forth), tends towards femininity. The whole body, indeed, displays nothing but the feminine structure, the feminine appearance, the feminine character, and the feminine outward disposition. Here, neither does the female-sex produce those qualities, nor support, nor maintain them. But, in fact, when the body (i.e. the five aggregates) has come into existence, the sex exercises control over it as if it (sex) were giving it the order to become so and so. All the aggregates also become in conformity with the sex, and not out of conformity. Such is the controlling power of the female sex in the feminine structure. In the same manner the male sex exercises control in the masculine structure. Thus the two sexes have controlling functions in the structures; hence, they may be called controls.

With regard to the heart-basis, though it acts as a basis for the two elements of mind-cognition, it does not control them in any way. For, whether the heart is limpid or not, the elements of mind-cognition in a person of well-trained mind never conform to it.

End of the *Indriya-Relation*.

17. *Jhana-Paccaya* or the Relation of *Jhana*

The seven constituents of *jhana* are the *paccaya-dhammas* in the relation of *jhana*. They are: *vitakka* (initial application), *vicara* (sustained application), *piti* (pleasurable interest), *somanassa* (joy), *domanassa* (grief), *upekkha* (hedonic indifference) and *ekaggata* (concentration in the sense of capacity to individualise). All classes of consciousness (with the exception of the five senses), their concomitants and material qualities in coexistence with the seven constituents, are the *paccayuppanna-dhammas* here.

In what sense is *jhana* to be understood? *Jhana* is to be understood in the sense of closely viewing or actively looking at; that is to say, going close to the object and looking at it mentally. Just as an archer, who from a distance is able to send or thrust an arrow into the bull's eye of a small target: holding the arrow firmly in his hand, making it steady, directing it towards the mark, keeping the target in view, and attentively looking, or rather aiming at it, sends the arrow through the bull's eye or thrusts it into the latter, so also, in speaking of a yogi or one who practises *jhana*, we must say that he, directing his mind towards the object, making it steadfast, and keeping the *kasina*-object in view, thrusts his mind into it by means of these seven constituents of *jhana*. Thus, by closely viewing them, a person carries out his action of body, of word, and mind, without failure. Here, "action of body" means going forward and backward and so forth; "action of word" means making vocal expressions, such as the sounds of alphabets, words and so forth; action of mind" means being conscious of objects of any kind. So no deed, such as giving charity or taking life can be executed by a feeble mind lacking the necessary constituents of *jhana*. It is the same with all moral and immoral deeds

To have a clear understanding of its meaning the salient characteristic mark of each constituent of *jhana* should be separately explained. *Vitakka* has the characteristic mark of directing the concomitant properties towards the object, and it, therefore, fixes the mind firmly to the object. *Vicara* has the characteristic mark of reviewing the object over and over, and it attaches the mind firmly to the object. *Piti* has the characteristic mark of creating interest in the object, and makes the mind happy and content with it. The three kinds of *vedana*, i.e. joy, grief and indifference, have the characteristic marks of feeling the object, and they also fasten the mind as regards experiencing the essence of desirable, undesirable and neutral objects. *Ekaggata* has the characteristic mark of concentration and it also keeps the mind steadfastly fixed on the object.

End of the *Jhana-Relation*.

18. *Magga-Paccaya* or the Relation of Path

The twelve path-constituents are the *paccaya-dhammas* in this relation of *Magga*. They are: Right Views, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, Wrong Views, Wrong Aspiration, Wrong Endeavour, and Wrong Concentration. There are, however, no distinct mental properties to which to assign the terms Wrong Speech, Wrong Action and Wrong Livelihood. These are but other names for the four immoral aggregates (*akusala-khandha*) which appear under the names of lying and so forth. Therefore they are not taken as distinct path-constituents. All classes of consciousness and mental concomitants conditioned by *hetu*, and all material qualities in coexistence with the *hetu*-conditioned mind are *paccayuppanna-dhammas*.

In what sense is *magga* to be understood? It is to be understood in the sense of path, that is, as the means of reaching the realm of misfortune or the realm of Nibbana. The eight path-constituents (Right Views, and so on) lead to Nibbana. The four wrong path-constituents lead to the realm of misfortune.

Now the functioning of *jhana* is to make the mind straight, steadfast, and ecstatic[28] in the object. "Ecstatic mind" means mind that sinks into the *kasina*-object, and so forth, like a fish in deep water.

The functioning of *magga* is to make kammic volition in the "way-in" to the circle of existence and *bhavanic* volition in the "way-out" of the circle, straight and steadfast, issue in a course of action, develop, flourish and prosper, and reach a higher plane. This is the distinction between the two relations.

Here, the kammic volition which can produce a rebirth--since it has worked out in moral and immoral acts such as taking life, and so forth is spoken of as *kammapathapatta*. And the *bhavanic* volition, which arrives at the higher stages, that is, proceeds from the sensuous stage to the transcendental one, through a succession of higher and higher stages, by the power of an orderly succession of training-practices (*bhavananukamma*), even within the brief period occupied by one bodily posture, is spoken of as *bhummantarapatta*.

To understand this relation, the characteristic mark of each of the path-constituents should also be separately explained in the manner shown in the Relation of *Jhana*.

End of the *Magga*-Relation.

19. *Sampayutta*-Relation or the Relation of Association

The relations of association and dissociation form a pair. So also do the relations of presence and absence, and of abeyance and continuance. These three pairs of relations are not special ones. They are only mentioned to show that, in the foregoing relations, some *paccaya-dhammas* causally relate themselves to their *paccayuppanna-dhammas*, by association, and others by dissociation; some by presence and others by absence; some by abeyance and others by continuance.

Here also in such passages as: "*Atthi ti kho, kaccana, ayam eko anto; natthi ti kho dutiyo anto ti*,"[29] the words *atthi* and *natthi* are meant to indicate the heretical views of eternalism and annihilationism. Therefore, in order to prevent such interpretations, the last pair of relations is mentioned.

All classes of consciousness and mental properties mutually relate themselves to one another by way of association. In what sense is "*sampayutta*" to be understood? "*Sampayutta*" is to be understood in the sense of association, or through coalescence, by the four associative means, namely, simultaneous arising, synchronous cessation, mono-basic, and mono-object. Here, by *ekibhavam gato* (or coalescence), it is meant that the consciousness of sight coalesces with its seven mental properties so thoroughly that they all are unitedly spoken of as sight. These eight mental states are no longer spoken of by their special names, for it is indeed a difficult matter to know them separately. The same explanation applies to the other classes of consciousness.

End of the *Sampayutta*-Relation.

20. *Vipayutta-Paccaya* or the Relation of Dissociation

The relation of dissociation is of four different kinds, namely coexistence, basic pre-existence, basic objective pre-existence, and post-existence. Of these four, the *paccaya* and *paccayuppanna-dhammas* of the coexistent dissociation may be either mental or physical in accordance with what has been shown in the relation of coexistence. Therefore a mental is causally related to a physical by way of coexistent dissociation, and vice versa. A "mental" here, when spoken of as a *paccaya*, means the four mental aggregates, namely, sensation, perception, mental functionings and, consciousness, during life; and a "physical" when spoken of as *paccayuppanna*, means material qualities produced by mind. Again a "physical" when spoken of as a *paccaya*, means the heart-basis at the moment of conception, and a "mental," when spoken of as *paccayuppanna* means the four mental aggregates belonging to rebirth.

The remaining three kinds of dissociation have already been explained.

End of the *Vipayutta*-Relation.

21. *Atthi-Paccaya* or the Relation of Presence

The relation of presence is of seven different kinds, namely coexistence, basic pre-existence, objective pre-existence, basic objective pre-existence, post-existence, material food, and physical life-control.

Of these, the relation of coexistent presence is that of mere coexistence. A similar interpretation should be made for the remaining six, for which the equivalent relations that have already been explained are to be referred to. The classifications of relating and related things have already been dealt with above in each of the relations concerned.

Why is *atthi-paccaya* so called? *Atthi-paccaya* is so called because it causally relates itself to its effect by being present in the three phases of time called *khana*.

End of the *Atthi-Relation*.

22. *Natthi-Paccaya* or the Relation of Abeyance

23. *Vigata-Paccaya* or the Relation of Absence

24. *Avigata-Paccaya* or the Relation of Continuance

The relation of absence is entirely the relation of contiguity; so is the relation of abeyance. The relation of continuance is also the same as the relation of presence. The words "*atthi*" and "*avigata*" have the same meaning; so also the words "*natthi*" and "*vigata*."

End of the *Natthi*-, the *Vigata*-, and the *Avigata-Relation*.

25. *Paccaya-Sabhago* or the Sythesis of Relations

The synthesis of relations will now be stated.

The relation of *sahajata* (coexistence) may be specified as being of fifteen kinds, i.e. four superior *sahajatas*, four medium *sahajatas*, and seven inferior *sahajatas*. The four superior *sahajatas* comprise ordinary *sahajata*, *sahajatanissaya* (dependence-in-coexistence), *sahajatatthi* (coexistent presence), and *sahajata-avigata* (coexistent continuance). The four medium *sahajatas* comprise *annamanna* (reciprocity), *vipaka* (effect), *sampayutta* (association), and *sahajata-vippayutta* (coexistent dissociation). The seven inferior *sahajata* comprise *hetu* (condition), *sahajata-dhipati* (coexistent dominance), *sahajata-kamma* (coexistent kamma), *sahajathara* (coexistent food), *sahajatindriya* (coexistent control), *jhana*, and *magga* (way).

Rupahara, or material food is of three kinds: *rupahara* (ordinary material food), *rupaharatthi*, and *rupaharavigata*.

Rupa-jivitindriya, or physical life-control is of three kinds: *rupa-jivitindriya*, *jivitindriyatthi*, and *rupa-jivitindriya-avigata*.

The relation of *purejata* (pre-existence) may be specified as seventeen kinds: six *vatthu-purejatas* (basic pre-existence), six *arammana-purejatas* (objective pre-existence), and five *vattharammana-purejatas* (basic objective pre-existence). Of these, the six *vatthu-purejatas* are *vatthu-purejata*, *vatthupurejatanissaya*, *vatthu-purejatindriya*, *vatthu-purejata-vippayutta*, *vatthu-purejatatthi*, and *vatthu-purejata-avigata*. The six *arammana-purejatas* are: *arammana-purejata*, some *arammana*, some *arammanadhipati*, some *arammana-arammanupanissaya*, *arammana-purejatatthi*, and *arammana-purejata-avigata*. The words "*kinici*" and "*koci*" in *kinici arammanam* and so forth are used in order to take in only the present *nipphanna-rupas* (material qualities determined by kamma and environments).

The five *vattharammana-purejata* are *vattharammana-purejata*, *vattharammanapurejata-nissaya*, *vattharammana-purejata-vippayutta*, *vattharammana-purejatatthi*, and *vattharammana-purejata-avigata*.

The relation of *pacchajata* or post-existence may be specified as four kinds: *pacchajata*, *pacchajata-vippayutta*, *pacchajatatthi*, and *pacchajata-avigata*.

The relation of *anantara* (contiguity) is of seven kinds: *anantara*, *samanantara*, *anantarapanissaya*, *asevana*, *anantara-kamma*, *natthi*, and *vigata*. Of these, *anantara* kamma is the volition which appertains to the Ariyan Path. It produces its effect, i.e. the Ariyan Fruit, immediately after it ceases. There are five relations which do not enter into any specification. These are: the remaining *arammana*,

the remaining *arammanadhipati*, the remaining *arammanupanissaya*, all *pakatupanissaya*, and the remaining kind of kamma which is asynchronous kamma.

Thus, the relations expounded in the Great Treatise (*Patthana*) are altogether fifty-four kinds in all. Of these relations, all species of *purejata*, all species of *pacchajata*, material food, and physical life-control are present relations. All species of *anantara* and of *nanakkhanika* kamma are past relations. Omitting Nibbana and term-and-concept, *pannatti*--the relations of *arammana* and *pakatupanissaya* may be classified under the three periods of time: past, present and future. But Nibbana and term-and-concept are always outside time.

These two Dhammas--Nibbana and *pannatti* (concept)--are both termed *appaccaya* (void of causal relation), *asankhata* (unconditioned).[30] Why? Because they are absolutely void of Becoming. Those things or phenomena which have birth or genesis are termed *sappaccaya* (related things), *sankhata* (conditioned things), and *paticcasamuppannas* (things arising from a conjuncture of circumstances). Hence those two dhammas, being void of becoming and happening, are truly to be termed *appaccayas* and *asankhatas*.

Among things related and conditioned, there is not a single phenomenon which is permanent, lasting, eternal and unchangeable. In fact, all are impermanent, since they are liable to dissolution. Why? Because, in coming into existence, they are related to some causes, and their causes are also not permanent.

Are not Nibbana and concept *paccaya-dhammas* or relating things? Are they not permanent and lasting? Yes, they are so, but no phenomenon happens entirely through Nibbana or concept alone as sole cause. *Phenomena happen through, or are produced by, many causes which are not permanent and lasting.*

Those things which are not permanent are always distressing and hurtful to beings with the three kinds of afflictions. Therefore, they are looked upon as ill by reason of their being dreadful. Here the three kinds of afflictions are "dukkha-dukkhata" (ill due to suffering), "sankhara-dukkhata" (ill due to conditioning), and "viparinama-dukkhata" (ill due to changeability). All things are impermanent, and are dissolving at every moment, even while occupying one posture.[31] Therefore, how can there be any essential self or core in creatures and persons, even though, all their life through, they imagine themselves to be permanent? Everything is also subject to ill. Therefore, how can there be any essential self or core in creatures and persons who are under the oppression of ills, and who nevertheless yearn for happiness? Hence all things are void of self by reason of the absence of a core. To sum up. By expounding the twenty-four relations, the Buddha reveals the following facts: all conditioned things owe their happenings and becomings or existence to causes and conditions, and none to the mere desire or will or command of creatures. And among all the things subject to causes and conditions, there is not one that comes into being through few causes; they arise, indeed, only through many. Therefore, this exposition reaches its culminating point in revealing the doctrine of No-self or No-soul.

End of the Synthesis of Relations.

26. *Paccaya-Ghatananaya* or the Synchrony of Relations

The synchrony of relations will now be stated.

The concurrence of causal relations in one related thing is called synchrony of relations or *paccaya-ghatana*. All phenomena are called *sa-paccaya* (related to causes), *sankhata* (conditioned by causes), and *paticcasamuppanna* (arising from a conjuncture of circumstances), because in arising and in standing they coexist with, or have, or are conditioned by, these twenty-four causal relations. *What then are those phenomena? They are: one hundred and twenty-one classes of consciousness, fifty-two kinds of mental properties, and twenty-eight kinds of material qualities.*

Of these, the one hundred and twenty-one classes of consciousness may be classified into seven, under the category of dhatu (elements):

element of visual cognition
element of auditory cognition
element of olfactory cognition
element of gustatory cognition
element of tactile cognition
element of apprehension
element of comprehension.

Of these:

the two-fold classes of sight-consciousness are called the elements of visual cognition;
the two-fold classes of sound-consciousness are called the elements of auditory cognition;
the two-fold classes of smell-consciousness are called the elements of olfactory cognition;
the two-fold classes of taste-consciousness are called the elements of gustatory cognition;
the two-fold classes of touch-consciousness are called the elements of tactile cognition;
"the adverting of mind towards any of the five doors" (*pancadvaravajjana*) and the two-fold classes of "acceptance of impressions" (*sampaticchana*) are called the elements of apprehension;
the remaining one hundred and eight classes of consciousness are called the elements of comprehension.

The fifty-two kinds of mental properties are also divided into groups:

seven universals
six particulars
fourteen immorals
twenty-five radiants.

Of the twenty-four relations:

fifteen relations are common to all the mental states: *arammana*, *anantara*, *samanantara*, *sahajata*, *annamanna*, *nissaya*, *upanissaya*, *kamma*, *ahara*, *indriya*, *sampayutta*, *atthi*, *natthi*, *vigata* and *avigata*.

There is not a single class of consciousness or mental property which arises without the causal relation of arammana (object). The same holds good as regards the remaining causal relations of anantara, samanantara, sahajata and so on.

Eight relations only--*hetu*, *adhipati*, *purejata*, *asevana*, *vipaka*, *jhana*, *magga* and *vippayutta*--are common to some mental states. Of these, the relation of *hetu* is common only to the classes of consciousness conditioned by *hetu*; the relation of *adhipati* is also common only to the apperceptions (*jvanas*) coexisting with dominance (*adhipati*); the relation of *purejata* is common only to some classes of mind; the relation of *asevana* is common only to apperceptive classes of moral, immoral, and inoperative consciousness; the relation of *vipaka* is also common only to the resultant classes of mind; the relation of *jhana* is common to those classes of consciousness and mental concomitants which come under the name of elements of apprehension and comprehension; the relation of *magga* is common to the classes of mind conditioned by *hetu*; the relation of *vippayutta* is not common to the classes of mind in *arupaloka*. Only one particular relation of *pacchajata* is common to material qualities.

Here is the exposition in detail. The seven universal, mental properties are: *phassa* (contact), *vedana* (sensation), *sanna* (perception), *cetana* (volition), *ekaggata* (concentration in its capacity to individualise), *jivita* (psychic life) and *manasikara* (attention).

Of these, consciousness may be the relation of *adhipati*; it may be the relation of *ahara*, and it may also be the relation of *indriya*; contact is the relation of *ahara* alone; sensation may be the relation of *indriya*, and may also be the relation of *jhana*; volition may be the relation of kamma, and may be the relation of *ahara*; *ekaggata* may be the relation of *indriya*; it may be the relation of *jhana*; and it may be the relation of *magga* also; psychic life is the relation of *indriya* alone; the two remaining states--perception and attention--do not become any particular relation.

Consciousness by way of sight, obtains seven universal mental concomitants, and so they make up eight mental states. All of them are mutually related to one another by way of the seven relations: four superior *sahajata* and three of the medium *sahajatas* excluding the relation of dissociation. Among these eight mental states, consciousness causally relates itself to the other seven by way of *ahara* and *indriya*. Contact causally relates itself to the other seven by way of *ahara*; feeling to the rest by way of *indriya* alone; volition, by way of kamma and *ahara*; *ekaggata*, by way of *indriya* alone; and psychic life to the other seven, by way of *indriya*. The basis of eye causally relates itself to these eight states by way of six species of *vatthupurejata*. The present visual objects, which enter the avenue of that eye-base, causally relate themselves to those eight by way of four species of *arammana purejata*. Consciousness, which is called turning-towards-the-five-doors at the moment of cessation, just before the arising of sight consciousness, causally relates itself to these eight mental states by way of five species of *anantara*. Moral and immoral deeds which were done in former births, causally relate themselves to these eight resultant states of good and evil respectively, by way of asynchronous kamma. Nescience (*avijja*), craving (*tanha*) and grasping (*upadana*)--which co-operated with volition (*kamma*) in the past existence, and dwellings, persons, seasons, foods and so forth, of this present life, causally relate themselves to these eight states by way of *pakatupanissaya* (natural sufficing condition). The six relations--*hetu*, *adhipati*, *pacchajata*, *asevana*, *jhana* and *magga*--do not take part in this class of consciousness, but only the remaining eighteen relations take part. Just as the six relations do not take part--and only the eighteen relations do--in consciousness by way of sight, so do they in consciousness by way of hearing, smell, and so on.

End of the Synchrony of Relations in the Five Senses.

27. Synchrony of Relations in Consciousness not Accompanied by *Hetu*

There are six mental properties termed Particulars (*pakinnaka*),-- *vitakka* (initial application), *vicara* (sustained application), *adhimokkha* (deciding), *viriyā* (effort), *pīti* (pleasurable interest), *chanda* (desire-to-do). Of these, initial application takes part in the relation of *jhana* and in the relation of *magga*. Sustained application takes part in that of *jhana* alone. Effort takes part in the relation of *adhipati*, in the relation of *indriya*, and in the relation of *magga*. Pleasurable interest takes part in the relation of *jhana*. Desire-to-do takes part in the relation of *adhipati*. Deciding does not take part in any particular relation.

The ten concomitants, namely, seven universals, initial application, sustained application, and deciding from the particulars--obtain in the five classes of consciousness, i.e. turning-towards-the-five-doors, the twofold class of acceptance, and the twofold class of investigation accompanied by hedonic indifference. They form eleven mental states in one combination. *Jhanic* function obtains in these three classes of consciousness. Sensation, *ekaggata*, initial application, and sustained application perform the function of *jhana* relation. Consciousness (turning-towards-the-five-doors) belongs to the inoperative class, and so does not obtain in the relation of *vipaka*. Asynchronous kamma serves in place of *upanissaya*. So, leaving out *jhana* from, and inserting *vipaka* in, the relations which have been shown above as not obtainable in the five senses, there are also six unobtainable and eighteen obtainable in the consciousness, turning-towards-the-five-doors. As for the remaining four resultant classes of consciousness, by omitting *vipaka*, five relations are unobtainable, and, by adding *vipaka* and *jhana*, nineteen are obtainable.

Investigating consciousness accompanied by joy, obtains eleven mental concomitants, namely, the above ten together with pleasurable interest. With the consciousness (turning-towards-the-mind-door),

eleven concomitants coexist, and they are accompanied by effort. They make up twelve mental states together with the consciousness. Twelve concomitants, i.e. the above ten together with pleasurable interest and effort, coexist with the consciousness of aesthetic pleasure. They make up thirteen mental states in combination with the consciousness. Of the three classes of investigating consciousness, the one accompanied by joy has one more mental property (i.e. pleasurable interest) than the other two, in respect of the *jhana* factors: therefore, the unobtainable five and the obtainable nineteen relations are the same as in the two classes of investigating consciousness accompanied by hedonic indifference. In the consciousness (turning-towards-the-mind-door), the predominant property is merely "effort," which performs the functions of *indriya* and *jhana*, but not the functions of *adhipati* and *maggā*. This consciousness, being of the inoperative class, does not obtain the *vipaka* relation. Therefore, the unobtainable six including *vipaka*, and the obtainable eighteen including *jhana*, are the same as in the consciousness (turning-towards-the-five-doors). The relation of *vipaka* is also not obtained in the consciousness of aesthetic pleasure, since it belongs to the inoperative class. But being an apperceptive class, it obtains in the relation of *asevana*. Therefore, five relations, including *vipaka*, are not obtainable, and nineteen relations including *asevana*, are obtainable.

End of the Synchrony of Relations in Consciousness not Accompanied by *Hetu*.

Synchrony of Relations in the Immoral Class of Consciousness

There are twelve classes of immoral consciousness: two rooted in nescience, eight rooted in appetite, and two rooted in hate. There are fourteen immoral mental properties: *moha* (dullness), *ahirika* (shamelessness), *anottappa* (recklessness of consequences), and *uddhacca* (distraction)--these four are termed the *moha*-quadruple; *lobha* (greed), *ditthi* (error), and *mana* (conceit)--these three are termed the *lobha*-triple; *dosa* (hate), *issa* (envy), *macchhariya* (selfishness), and *kukkucca* (worry)--these four are termed the *dosa*-quadruple; *thina* (sloth), *middha* (torpor), and *vicikiccha* (perplexity)--these three are termed the *pakinnaka* triple. Of these, the three roots--greed, hate, and dullness--are *hetu* relations. Error is a *maggā* relation. The remaining ten mental properties do not become any particular relation.

Here, the two classes of consciousness rooted in dullness are: consciousness conjoined with perplexity, and consciousness conjoined with distraction. With the first of these two, fifteen mental concomitants coexist. There are the seven universals, initial application, sustained application, effort (from the particulars), the *moha*-quadruple, and perplexity (from the immorals). They make up sixteen mental states in combination with consciousness. In this consciousness, i.e. the consciousness conjoined with perplexity, the relations of *hetu* and *maggā* are also obtained. That is, dullness acts as the *hetu* relation; initial application and effort as the *maggā*; and, as to *ekaggata*, as its function would be interferred with by perplexity, it does not perform the functions of *indriya* and *maggā*, but it does the function of *jhana*. Therefore, the three relations (*adhipati*, *pacchajata*, *vipaka*) are not obtainable; and the remaining twenty-one are obtainable in this consciousness which is conjoined with perplexity.

In consciousness conjoined with distraction, there are also fifteen mental properties--omitting "perplexity" and adding "deciding." They also make up sixteen mental states together with the consciousness. In this consciousness, *ekaggata* performs the functions of *indriya*, *jhana* and *maggā*. Therefore, three relations are not obtainable, whereas twenty-one are obtainable.

Seven universals, six particulars, the *moha*-quadruple, the *lobha*-triple, sloth and torpor--altogether twenty-two in number, severally coexist with the eight classes of consciousness rooted in appetite. Among these, the two roots--greed and dullness--are *hetu* relations; and the three mental states--desire-to-do, consciousness itself and effort--are *adhipati* relations. *Arammanadhipati* is also obtained here. Volition is the relation of *kamma*. The three foods are the relations of *ahara*. The five mental states: mind, sensation, *ekaggata*, psychic life and effort--are relations of *indriya*. The five *jhana* factors, i.e. initial application, sustained application, pleasurable interest, sensation, concentration, are *jhana* relations. The four *maggā* constituents, i.e. initial application, concentration, error, and effort, are *maggā* relations. Therefore only the two relations (*pacchajata* and *vipaka*) are not obtained. The remaining twenty-two are obtained.

End of the Synchrony of Relations in the Immoral Class of Consciousness.

Synchrony of Relations in the States of Mind

There are ninety-one "radiant" classes of consciousness. They are: twenty four "radiant" classes of kama-consciousness, fifteen classes of *rupa*-consciousness, twelve classes of *arupa*-consciousness and forty classes of transcendental consciousness. Of these the twenty-four "radiant" classes of kama-consciousness are: eight classes of moral consciousness, eight classes of "radiant" resultant kind, and another eight classes of "radiant" inoperative kind.

There are twenty-five kinds of *sobhana* ("radiant") mental properties: *alobha* (disinterestedness), *adosa* (amity), (intelligence)--these three are termed moral *hetus--saddha* (faith), *sati* (mindfulness), *hiri* (prudence), *ottappa* (discretion), *tatramajhattata* (balance of mind), *kayapassaddhi* (composure of mental properties), *cittapassaddhi* (composure, of mind), *kaya-lahuta* (buoyancy of mental properties), *citta-lahuta* (buoyancy of mind), *kayamuduta* (pliancy of mental properties), *citta-muduta* (pliancy of mind), (fitness of work of mental properties), *citta-kammannata* (fitness of work of mind), *kaya-pagunnata* (proficiency of mental properties), *citta-pagunnata* (proficiency of mind), *kayujukata* (rectitude of mental properties), *cittujukata*, (rectitude of mind), *samma-vaca* (right speech), *samma-kammanta* (right action), *samma-ajiva* (right livelihood)--the last three are called the three abstinences; *karuna* (compassion) and *mudita* (sympathetic appreciation)--these last two are called the two illimitables.

Of these, the three moral *hetu* are *hetupaccayas*. Intelligence appears under the name of *vimamsa* in the *adhipati* relation; under the name of *panna* in the *indriya* relation; and under the name of *sammaditthi* in the *magga* relation. *Saddha* or faith is the *indriya* relation. *Sati* or mindfulness is a *satindriya* in the *indriya* relation, and a *sammāsati* in the *magga* relation. The three abstinences (right speech, right action, right livelihood) are *magga* relations. The remaining seventeen mental states are not particular relations.

Thirty-eight mental properties enter into combination with the eight moral classes of kama-consciousness (kama-sense desires). They are: seven universals, six particulars, and twenty-five *sobhana*. Of these, pleasurable interest enters into combination only with the four classes of consciousness accompanied by joy. Intelligence also enters into combination with the four classes connected with knowledge. The three abstinences enter into combination only when moral rules or precepts are observed. The two illimitables arise only when sympathising with the suffering, or sharing in the happiness, of living beings. In these eight classes of consciousness, the dual or triple roots are *hetu* relations. Among the four kinds of *adhipati*, i.e. desire-to-do, mind, effort, and investigation, each is an *adhipati* in turn. Volition is the relation of *kamma*. The three foods are the relations of *ahara*. The eight mental states, i.e. mind, sensation, concentration, psychic life, faith, mindfulness, effort and intelligence are relations of *indriya*. The five *jhana* factors, i.e. initial application, sustained application, pleasurable interest, sensation and concentration are relations of *jhana*. The eight path-constituents, i.e. investigation, initial application, the three abstinences, mindfulness, effort and concentration are relations of *magga*. Therefore, only the two relations (*pacchajata* and *vipaka*) are not obtained in these eight classes of consciousness, and the remaining twenty-two are obtained. The three abstinences do not obtain in the eight *sobhana* classes of inoperative consciousness. As in the moral consciousness, two relations are unobtainable and twenty-two are obtainable here. The three abstinences and the two illimitables also do not obtain in the eight beautiful classes of resultant consciousness. The relations unobtainable are three in number, namely, *adhipati*, *pacchajata* and *asevana*; and the remaining twenty-one are obtainable.

The higher classes of *rupa*, *arupa* and transcendental consciousness, do not obtain more than twenty-two relations. The synchrony of relations should be understood as existing in the four moral classes of kama-consciousness connected with knowledge. If this be so, then why are those classes of consciousness more supreme and transcendental than the kama-consciousness? Because of the greatness of *asevana*. They are fashioned by marked exercises, and so *asevana* is superior to them; for this reason, *indriya*, *jhana*, *magga* and other relations also become superior. When these relations become supreme--each higher and higher than the other--those classes of consciousness also become more supreme and transcendental than kama-consciousness. .

End of the Synchrony of Relations in the States of Mind.

Synchrony of Relations in the Groups of Material Qualities

The synchrony of relations in the groups of material qualities will now be stated. There are twenty-eight kinds of material qualities:

- A. Four essential material qualities:
 1. the element of solidity (*pathavi*)
 2. the element of cohesion (*apo*)
 3. the element of kinetic energy (*tejo*)
 4. the element of motion (*vayo*); the tangible (*photthabba*): this material quality is composed of three essentials, namely, the element of extension, the element of kinetic energy and the element of motion.
- B. Five sensitive material qualities:
 1. the eye (*cakkhu*)
 2. the ear (*sota*)
 3. the nose (*gana*)
 4. the tongue (*jivha*)
 5. the body (*kaya*).
- C. Five material qualities of sense-fields:
 1. visible form (*rupa*)
 2. sound (*sadda*)
 3. odour (*gandha*)
 4. sapid (*rasa*).
- D. Two material qualities of sex:
 1. female sex (*itthibhava*)
 2. male sex (*pumbhava*).
- E. One material quality of life (*jivita*).
- F. One material quality of heart-base (*hadaya-vatthu*).
- G. One material quality of nutrition (*ahara*).
- H. One material quality of limitation (*akasa-dhatu*).
- I. Two material qualities of communication:
 1. intimation by the body (*kayavinnatti*)
 2. intimation by speech (*vacivinnatti*).
- J. Three material qualities of plasticity:
 1. lightness (*lahuta*)
 2. pliancy (*muduta*)

3. adaptability (*kammannata*).
- K. Four material qualities of salient features:
 1. integration (*upacaya*)
 2. continuance (*santati*)
 3. decay (*jarata*)
 4. impermanence (*aniccata*).

Of these, six kinds of material qualities--viz., the four essentials, the material quality of life, and the material quality of nutrition--causally relate themselves to the material qualities. Here also the four essentials are mutually related among themselves by way of five relations: *sahajata*, *annamanna*, *nissaya*, *atthi*, and *avigata*; and they are related to the coexistent material qualities derived from the latter by way of four relations (i.e. excluding *annamanna* in the above five). The material quality of life causally relates itself to the coexistent material qualities produced by kamma by way of *indriya*. The material quality of nutrition causally relates itself to both the coexistent and the non-coexistent material qualities which are corporeal by way of *ahara*.

Again, thirteen kinds of material qualities causally relate themselves to the mental states by some particular relations. These material qualities are: the five kinds of sensitive material qualities, the seven kinds of sense-fields, and the heart-basis. Of these, just as a mother is related to her son, so also the five kinds of sensitive material qualities are causally related to the five sense-cognitions by way of *vatthu-purejata*, by way of *vatthu-purejatindriya*, and by way of *vatthupurejata-vippayutta*. And just as a father is related to his son, so also the seven sense-fields are causally related to the five sense-cognitions and the three elements of apprehension by way of *arammanapurejata*. In the same way, just as a tree is related to the deva who inhabits it, so also the heart-basis causally relates itself to the two elements of apprehension and comprehension by way of *sahajatanissaya* at the time of rebirth, and by way of *vatthupurejata* and of *vatthu-purejata-vippayutta* during life.

There are twenty-three groups of material qualities. They are called groups because they are tied up with the material quality of production (*jati-rupa*) into groups, just as hair or hay is tied up with a string.[32] Of these, the eight kinds of material qualities, such as, the Four Essentials, colour, odour, taste, and nutritive essence, make up the primary octad of all material qualities.

There are nine groups produced by kamma: the vital nonad, the basic-decad, the body-decad, the female-decad, the male-decad, the eye-decad, the ear-decad, the nose-decad, and the tongue-decad. Of these, the primary octad together with the material quality of vitality, is called the vital nonad. This primary nonad together with each of the eight material qualities, i.e. heart-basis and so forth, makes up analogously the other eight decads, i.e. base-decad, and so forth. Here the four groups: vital nonad, body-decad, and twofold sex-decad, locate themselves in a creature, pervading the whole body. Here vital-nonad is the name of the maturative fire (*pacakaggi*) and of the bodily fire (*kayaggi*). *Pacakaggi*, or maturative fire, is that which locates itself in the stomach and matures or digests the food that has been eaten, drunk, chewed and licked. *Kayaggi*, or the bodily fire, is that which locates itself by pervading the whole body, and it refines the impure bile, phlegm and blood. Through the inharmonious action of these two elements, creatures become unhealthy, and by their harmonious action they become healthy. It is this dual fire (or that vital-nonad) that gives life and good complexion to creatures.

The body-decad makes available pleasurable and painful contact. The twofold sex-decads make available all the feminine characteristics to females and all the masculine characteristics to males. The remaining five decads are termed partial decads. Of these, the heart-decad, locating itself in the cavity of the heart, makes available many various kinds of moral and immoral thoughts. The four decads, i.e. eye-decad and so forth, locating themselves respectively in the eye-ball, in the interior of the ear, in the interior of the nose, and on the surface of the tongue, make available sight, hearing, smell, and taste.

There are eight groups produced by mind: the primary octad, the sound-nonad, the nonad of body-communication, the sound-decad of speech-communication. Taking these four together with lightness, pliancy and adaptability, they make up another four: the undecad of plasticity, the sound-dodecad of plasticity, the dodecad of body-communication together with plasticity, and the sound-tre-decad of speech-communication together with plasticity. The last four are termed plastic groups, and the first four are termed primary groups.

Of these, when the elements of the body are not working harmoniously, only the four primary groups occur to a sick person, whose material qualities then become heavy, coarse and inadaptably, and consequently it becomes difficult for him to maintain the bodily postures as he would wish, to move the members of the body, and even to make a vocal reply. But when the elements of the body are working harmoniously--there being no defects of the body, such as heaviness and so on, in a healthy person--the four plastic groups come into existence. Among these four, two groups of body-communication occur by means of mind or by moving any part of the body. The other two groups of speech-communication occur also on account of mind, when wishing to speak: but when non-verbal sound is produced through laughing or crying, only the two ordinary sound-groups occur. At other times the first two groups, the primary octad and the sound nonad, occur according to circumstances.

There are four groups produced by physical change: the two primary groups (i.e. the primary octad and the sound nonad) and the two plastic groups, i.e. the undecad of plasticity and the sound dodecad of plasticity). Now this body of ours maintains itself right on throughout the whole life, through a long course of bodily postures. Hence, at every moment, there occur in this body the harmonious and inharmonious workings of the elements, through changes in the postures; through changes in its temperature, through changes of food, air, and heat; through changes of the disposition of the members of the body; and through changes of one's own exertion and of others. Here also, when working harmoniously, two plastic groups occur; and when working inharmoniously, the other two primary groups occur. Of the four groups, two sound-groups arise when there occur various kinds of sound other than that produced by mind.

There are two groups produced by food: the primary octad and the undecad of plasticity. These two groups should be understood as the harmonious and inharmonious occurrence of material qualities produced respectively by suitable and unsuitable food.

The five material qualities, namely, the element of space and the four salient features of matter, lie outside the grouping. Of these, the element of space lies outside the grouping because it is the boundary of the groups. As to the material qualities of the salient features, they are left aside from grouping, because they are merely the marks or signs of conditioned things, through which we clearly know them to be really conditioned things.

These twenty-three groups are available in an individual. The groups available in external things are only two, which are no other than those produced by physical change. There are two locations of material qualities, the internal and the external. Of these two, the internal location means the location of a sentient being and the external location means the earth, hills, rivers, oceans, trees, and so forth. Therefore, have we said that, in an individual, twenty-three groups, or all the twenty-eight kinds of material qualities, are available.

Now the rebirth-conception and its mental concomitants are causally related to the groups produced by kamma at the moment of conception, by way of six different relations: the four superior *sahajatas*, the *vipakas*, and *vippayutta*. But to the heart-basis alone, they are causally related by seven relations, that is, the above together with the relation of *annamanna*. Among the mental states at the moment of rebirth, the roots are causally related by way of the *hetu* relation; the volition, by way of *ahara*; the controls, by way of *indriya*; the *jhana* constituents, by way of *jhana*; and the path-constituents, by way of Path to the kamma-produced groups. The past moral and immoral volitions are causally related by way of kamma alone. The first posterior life-continuum, the second, the third, and so on and so forth, are causally related to the prior material qualities produced by kamma, by way of *pacchajata*. By *pacchajata* are meant all the species of *pacchajata*. The past volitions are causally related by way of kamma alone. Thus, the mental states are causally related to the material qualities produced by

kamma, by fourteen different relations. Here, ten relations are not obtained, i.e. *arammana*, *adhipati*, *anantara*, *samanantara*, *upanissaya*, *purejata*, *asevana*, *sampayutta*, *natthi* and *vigata*.

During the term of life, mental states which are capable of producing material qualities, are causally related to the coexistent material qualities produced by them, by five different relations: the four superior *sahajatas*, and *vippayutta*. Among these mental states,--the *hetus* are causally related by way of *hetu*, the dominances by way of *adhipati*, the volition by way of kamma, the resultants by way of *vipaka*, the foods by way of *ahara*, the controls by way of *indriya*, the *jhana* factors by way of *jhana*, the path-constituents by way of *magga*, to the mind-produced material qualities. All the posterior mental states are causally related to the prior material qualities produced by mind, by way of *pacchajata*. Thus the mental states are causally related to the material groups produced by mind, by fourteen different relations. Here also ten relations are not obtainable: *arammana*, *anantara*, *samanantara*, *annamanna*, *upanissaya*, *purejata*, *asevana*, *sampayutta*, *natthi*, and *vigata*.

During a lifetime, starting from the static phase of conception, all mental states are causally related both to the material groups produced by food and to those produced by physical change solely by way of pacchajata. Here again, by pacchajata are meant all the four species of pacchajata. The remaining twenty relations are not obtainable.

Among the twenty-three groups of material qualities, the four essentials are mutually related among themselves by way of five different relations, namely, four superior *sahajatas* and one *annamanna*; but to the coexistent derivative material qualities by way of the four superior *sahajatas* only. The material quality of nutritive essence is causally related by way of *ahara*, both to the coexistent and the non-coexistent material qualities which are corporeal. The material quality of physical life in the nine groups produced by kamma is causally related only to the coexistent material qualities by way of *indriya*. Thus the corporeal material qualities are causally related to the corporeals by seven different relations. As for the external material qualities, they are mutually related to two external groups produced by physical change, by way of five different relations.

End of the Synchrony of Relations in the Groups of Material Qualities.

The meaning of the term '*Patthana*' also will now be explained.

"Padhanam thanam ti Patthanam": *Patthana* is the pre-eminent or principal cause. In this definition '*Padhana*' means 'pre-eminent' and the word '*thana*' means 'condition' or 'cause.' Hence the whole expression means the "pre-eminent cause," "the actual cause" or "the ineluctable cause." This is said having reference to its ineluctable effect or result.[33] There are two kinds of effect, namely the direct and the indirect. By "the direct" is meant the primary or actual effect, and by "the indirect" is meant the consequent or incidental effect. Of these two kinds, only the direct effect is here referred to as ineluctable, and for this reason: that it never fails to arise when its proper cause is established or brought into play. And the indirect effect is to be understood as "eluctable," since it may or may not arise even though its cause is fully established. Thus the ineluctable cause is so named with reference to the ineluctable effect. Hence the ineluctable or principal cause alone is meant to be expounded in this "Great Treatise." For this reason the name '*Patthana*' is assigned to the entire collection of the twenty-four relations, and also to the "Great Treatise."

And now, to make the matter more clear and simple,

Say that greed springs into being within a man who desires to get money and grain. Under the influence of greed, he goes to a forest where he clears a piece of land and establishes fields, yards and gardens, and starts to work very hard. Eventually he obtains plenty of money and grain by reason of his strenuous labours. So he takes his gains, looks after his family, and performs many virtuous deeds, from which also he will reap rewards in his future existences. In this illustration, all the mental and material states coexisting with greed, are called direct effects. Apart from these, all the outcomes, results and rewards, which are to be enjoyed later on in his future existences, are called indirect effects. Of these two kinds of effects, only the former is dealt with in the *Patthana*. However, the latter kind finds its place in the *Suttanta* discourses. *If this exists, then that happens; or, because of the occurrence of this, that also takes place.* Such an exposition is called "expounding by way of

Suttanta." In fact, the three states (greed, hate, and ignorance) are called the *hetus* or conditions, because they are the roots whence spring the defilements of the whole animate world, of the whole inanimate world and of the world of space. The three other opposite states (disinterestedness, amity, and knowledge) are also called *hetus* or conditions, since they are the roots whence springs purification. In the same manner the remainder of the *Patthana* relations are to be understood in their various senses. *Thus must we understand that all things that happen, occur, take place, or produce changes, are solely the direct and indirect effects, results, outcomes, or products of these twenty-four Patthana relations or causes.*"

Thus ends the *Patthanuddesa-dipani*, or The Concise Exposition of the *Patthana* Relations, in these three sections: The *Paccayatthadipani* (The Analytical Exposition of Relations), the *Paccayasabhaga-sangaha* (The Synthesis of Relations), and the *Paccayaghatananaya* (The Synchrony of Relations). This concise exposition of relations, "The *Patthanuddesa Dipani*", was written by The Most Venerable Ledi Arannaviharavasi Maha Thera of Monywa, Burma.

FOOTNOTES:

- Note: Whenever the verb "relate" is used as "relates to" etc, it should be understood in the sense of "is related to," "are related to," etc., respectively.
- [1] See *Compendium of Philosophy* by S.Z. Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, Page 190.
- [2] See *Compendium of Philosophy*, page 108, n. 3.
- [3] In this relation, "*Paccaya*" is generally known as "*arammana*" = "hanger" (as a pot-hook) = "object"; and "*paccayuppanna*" is known as "*arammanika*" = "hanger-on" = "subject." (Translator.)
- [4] The six doors of the senses--mind, in Buddhist Philosophy, making the sixth "sense."
- [5] See *Compendium of Philosophy*, page 83.
- [6] Note by Translator. *Dhammato* is equal to *vatthuto* or *sarupato* or *pabhedato*. *Cittuppada* has three aspects of meaning. Firstly, it means "consciousness," as in:
Tesam cittaviyuttanam yathiiyogam ito param,
Cittuppadesu paccekam sampayogo pavuccati."
 (See Part II, Sangaha).
 Secondly, it means "genesis of thought", as in:
Vithicittani satt'eva: Cittuppada catuddasa:
Catupannasa vitthhara Pancadvare Yatharaham"
 (See Part IV, Sangaha.)
 Thirdly, it means "mind and its concomitants," as in:
"Cittuppadanam" icc'evam Katva sangaham" uttaram,
Bhumipuggalabhedena Pubbaparaniyamitam."
 (See Part IV, Sangaha.)
- In each of these instances, the construction of the compound "*cittuppada*" should also be noted. In the first instance, it is constructed as follows: *Uppajjati uppado. Cittam"eva uppado cittupado*; in the second instance, *Cittassa uppado cittupado*: in the third instance, *Uppajjati etena'ti uppado dhammasamuho. Cittanca uppado ca cittupado*.
- [7] Note by Translator *Lokuttaradhammas* are here meant, i e., the four pairs made up of the four stages of the Path with the Fruit of the same and Nibbana.
- [8] Sights, sounds, odours, savours, contacts, ideas.
- [9] Truth here means the sincerity of the promise he had given. Translator.
- [10] Mind, here refers to one of the apperceptions which are usually fifty-five in all, but in this connection we must exclude the two classes of dull consciousness as well as aesthetic pleasure. The other three dominants are their own concomitants. Translator.
- [11] In no mass of earth, water, fire, or air, do these "elements" exist in a state of absolute purity. The other "elements" are

- always present, but in a very subordinate proportion.
- [12] That is one who attains Nibbana unaided.
- [13] Here, Science, Arts, and Handicrafts are meant.
- [14] Ledi Sayadaw here seems to explain the life term of a womb-born being.
- [15] Has been rendered as "sustained cessation." Here the cessation is that not only of consciousness but also of mental concomitants and mental qualities, born of mind. (Translator)
- [16] Here (*hadayam*) is the seat of (*citta*) thought.
- [17] That is to say, Nibbana and concepts (or more properly, concept-terms) do not enter time, and therefore are not subject to time's nature, change. They do not "arise"; therefore they do not "cease." They are "everlasting and eternal" in the sense of being extra-temporal, not in the vulgar sense of being endlessly continuous in time.
- [18] Here *abyakata* is rendered as "unspecified" or "unmoral." It is explained in the commentary as *Kusala-akusalabhavena akathita, annabhavena kathita*; i.e., not to be called as moral or immoral, but to be called as "apart-from-both", i.e., unmoral or unspecified. The *abyakatadhammas* are--All classes of resultant and inoperative consciousness and all material qualities, as well as well as Nibbana. Translator.
- [19] That is "sufficing condition" as set forth in the manner of the Suttas or general discourses of the Buddha, as distinguished from the manner in which it is dealt with in the *Abhidhamma* section of the Scriptures.
- [20] *Niyamadipani* was written by the late Ven. Ledi Sayadaw and translated into English by Ven. U Nyana and Dr. Barua.
- [21] Beings whose coming into existence takes place in any other mode than the ordinary one of birth from parents; what occidentals might call "supernatural beings" though not all of them are to be understood as superior to man in any vital respect. Many are inferior to man, in power and faculty, as well as in the opportunities open to them of winning Nibbana. Translator.
- [22] Here, the origins of material qualities are meant. The word "origin" is used in the sense of Darwin as in the "Origin of the Species."
- [23] Here, *utu* (lit., season) has been rendered as "temperature." It may also be rendered by popular acceptance, as "physical change," "caloric energy," "heat and cold," etc.
- [24] Ledi Sayadaw has not explained the *cetanavatta*. But it is easy enough to understand, since it is the commission of the initial volition or kamma.
- [25] The Four Causes are (1) *kamma*, (2) *citta* (consciousness), (3) *utu* (temperature) and (4) *ahara* (nutriment).
- [26] Of these, the last three are confined to *lokuttara* alone. And of these three, the first is the knowledge pertaining to the First Path, the second that pertaining to the last three Paths and the first three Fruitions, and the third pertaining to the last Fruition only.
- [27] See *Compendium*, Part VII.
- [28] Standing out of, or going beyond, its normal mode.
- [29] "Certainly O *Kaccana*, (the soul) exists is the one extreme, and (the soul) does not exist, is the second extreme."
This is a passage where the problem of soul, self or ego is discussed as to its existence or non-existence as a real personal entity.
- [30] Here, the word *appaccaya* is not a *kammadharaya* compound but of the *bahubbihi* class--thus: *natthi paccaya etesam ti appaccaya*. *Asankhata* is a *kammadharaya* compound--thus: *sankariyante ti sankhata; na sankhata ti asankhata*.
- [31] There are four postures for all beings: sitting, standing, walking and lying down.
- [32] Ledi Sayadaw here makes the number of groups twenty-three instead of twenty-one, as in the *Compendium*. (Cf. *Compendium*, page 164.)

He also makes the groups of material qualities produced by thought number eight instead of six, as in the *Compendium*; thus they are here increased by two. (Cf. *Paramatthadipani*, page 273.) Translator.

[33] Elsewhere I have rendered the word "*paccayuppana*" as "related Things."

Before we conclude, it will, certainly, also be also be beneficial, (for the sake of further illuminating how cause and effect works within arising phenomena concomitant with the process of human thought moments), to cite from the erudite explications contained within the **Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi's** BPS Wheel Publication No. 277/278:

Transcendental Dependent Arising

Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of the *Upanisa Sutta* reads as follows:

While staying at Savatthi the Exalted One said:

"The destruction of the cankers, monks, is for one who knows and sees, I say, not for one who does not know and does not see. Knowing what, seeing what does the destruction of the cankers occur?

Such is material form, such is the arising of material form; such is the passing away of material form. Such is feeling... perception... mental formations... consciousness; such is the arising of consciousness, such is the passing away of consciousness' — for one who knows and sees this, monks, the destruction of the cankers occurs.

"The knowledge of destruction with respect to destruction has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for the knowledge of destruction? 'Emancipation' should be the reply.

"Emancipation, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for emancipation? 'Dispassion' should be the reply.

"Dispassion, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for dispassion? 'Disenchantment' should be the reply.

"Disenchantment, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for disenchantment? 'The knowledge and vision of things as they really are' should be the reply.

"The knowledge and vision of things as they really are, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are? 'Concentration' should be the reply.

"Concentration, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for concentration? 'Happiness' should be the reply.

"Happiness, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for happiness? 'Tranquillity' should be the reply.

"Tranquillity, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for tranquillity? 'Rapture' should be the reply.

"Rapture, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for rapture? 'Joy' should be the reply.

“Joy, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for joy? ‘Faith’ should be the reply.
 “Faith, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for faith? ‘Suffering’ should be the reply.
 “Suffering, monks, also has a supporting condition, I say, it does not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for suffering? ‘Birth’ should be the reply.
 “And what is the supporting condition for birth? ‘Existence’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for existence? ‘Clinging’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for clinging? ‘Craving’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for craving? ‘Feeling’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for feeling? ‘Contact’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for contact? ‘The sixfold sense base’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for the sixfold sense base? ‘Mentality-materiality.’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for mentality-materiality? ‘Consciousness.’ should be the reply.
 “What is the supporting condition for consciousness? ‘Kamma formations’ should be the reply.
 “Kamma formations, monks, also have a supporting condition, I say, they do not lack a supporting condition. And what is the supporting condition for kamma formations? ‘Ignorance’ should be the reply.

“Thus, monks, ignorance is the supporting condition for kamma formations, kamma formations are the supporting condition for consciousness, consciousness is the supporting condition for mentality-materiality, mentality-materiality is the supporting condition for the sixfold sense base, the sixfold sense base is the supporting condition for contact, contact is the supporting condition for feeling, feeling is the supporting condition for craving, craving is the supporting condition for clinging, clinging is the supporting condition for existence, existence is the supporting condition for birth, birth is the supporting condition for suffering, suffering is the supporting condition for faith, faith is the supporting condition for joy, joy is the supporting condition for rapture, rapture is the supporting condition for tranquillity, tranquillity is the supporting condition for happiness, happiness is the supporting condition for concentration, concentration is the supporting condition for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are is the supporting condition for disenchantment, disenchantment is the supporting condition for dispassion, dispassion is the supporting condition for emancipation, and emancipation is the supporting condition for the knowledge of the destruction (of the cankers).

“Just as, monks, when rain descends heavily upon some mountaintop, the water flows down along with the slope, and fills the clefts, gullies, and creeks; these being filled fill up the pools; these being filled fill up the ponds; these being filled fill up the streams; these being filled fill up the rivers; and the rivers being filled fill up the great ocean — in the same way, monks, ignorance is the supporting condition for kamma formations, kamma formations are the supporting condition for consciousness, consciousness is the supporting condition for mentality-materiality, mentality-materiality is the supporting condition for the sixfold sense base, the sixfold sense base is the supporting condition for contact, contact is the supporting condition for feeling, feeling is the supporting condition for craving, craving is the supporting condition for clinging, clinging is the supporting condition for existence, existence is the supporting condition for birth, birth is the supporting condition for suffering, suffering is the supporting condition for faith, faith is the supporting condition for joy, joy is the supporting condition for rapture, rapture is the supporting condition for tranquillity, tranquillity is the supporting condition for happiness, happiness is the supporting condition for concentration, concentration is the supporting condition for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are is the supporting condition for disenchantment, disenchantment is the supporting condition for dispassion, dispassion is the supporting condition for emancipation, and emancipation is the supporting condition for the knowledge of the destruction (of the cankers).”

Transcendental Dependent Arising

An Exposition of the *Upanisa Suttay*

By Bhikkhu Bodhi

Dependent Arising (*paticcasamuppada*) is the central principle of the Buddha's teaching, constituting both the objective content of its liberating insight and the germinative source for its vast network of doctrines and disciplines. As the frame behind the four noble truths, the key to the perspective of the middle way, and the conduit to the realization of selflessness, it is the unifying theme running through the teaching's multifarious expressions, binding them together as diversified formulations of a single coherent vision. The earliest *suttas* equate dependent arising with the unique discovery of the Buddha's enlightenment, so profound and difficult to grasp that he at first hesitated to announce it to the world. A simple exposition of the principle sparks off the liberating wisdom in the minds of his foremost disciples, while skill in explaining its workings is made a qualification of an adroit expounder of the Dhamma. So crucial is this principle to the body of the Buddha's doctrine that *an insight into dependent arising is held to be sufficient to yield an understanding of the entire teaching*. In the words of the Buddha: "He who sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma; he who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising." (MN 28.7)

The Pali texts present dependent arising in a double form. It appears both as an abstract statement of universal law and as the particular application of that law to the specific problem which is the doctrine's focal concern, namely, the problem of suffering. In its abstract form the principle of dependent arising is equivalent to *the law of the conditioned genesis of phenomena. It expresses the invariable concomitance between the arising and ceasing of any given phenomenon and the functional efficacy of its originative conditions*.

Its phrasing, as terse as any formulation of modern logic, recurs in the ancient texts thus: "*This being, that exists; through the arising of this that arises. This not being, that does not exist; through the ceasing of this that ceases.*" (*Imasmim sati idam hoti, imass, uppada idam uppajjati. Imasmim asati idam na hoti, imassa nirodha idam nirujjati.* MN 79, MN 115, etc)

When applied to the problem of suffering, the abstract principle becomes encapsulated in a twelve-term formula disclosing the causal nexus responsible for the origination of suffering. It begins with ignorance, the primary root of the series though not a first cause, conditioning the arising of ethically determinate volitions, which in turn condition the arising of consciousness, and so on through the salient occasions of sentient becoming down to their conclusion in old age and death:

"With ignorance as condition, the kamma formations; with kamma formations as condition consciousness; with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality; with mentality-materiality as condition the sixfold sense base; with the sixfold sense base as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise. Such is the origination of this entire mass of suffering. (SN XII, passim)

The corollary of this formula, which constantly accompanies it, describes the conditioned cessation of suffering. It shows how, *when ignorance ceases, all the following conditions successively cease*, down to the cessation of the "entire mass of suffering."

Bhikkhu Bodhi also states that:

"The principle of dependent arising is applicable to *any situation where an origination of phenomena takes place*, the Pali Buddhist tradition has focused upon the doctrine almost exclusively in terms of its twelvefold formulation. ... The aim of the Buddha's teaching is liberation from suffering, understood in its deepest sense as the unsatisfactoriness of sentient existence indefinitely repeated in the wheel of becoming, the cycle of births and deaths, called samsara. The twelve-term nexus contributes to this

liberative thrust by bringing the principle of dependent arising to bear directly on the condition which it is the doctrine's over-riding concern to ameliorate. If suffering is produced by causes, these causes and the way they can be stopped must be uncovered and exposed. The twelvefold application accomplishes precisely this. *In its positive or direct cessation of suffering, showing that when ignorance is eliminated by the rise of true knowledge all the factors dependent on ignorance likewise draw to a close ... it makes known the causal chain behind suffering, demonstrating how the round of existence arises and turns through the impulsions of craving, clinging, and karma, working freely behind the shielding screen of ignorance. ...* However, as a consequence of this [twelve point] constriction of attention, sight has tended to be lost of the broader range of exemplifications the principle of dependent arising might have, even within the limits of ... of the teaching.

... Above and beyond its specific instances, dependent arising remains an expression of the invariable structural relatedness of phenomena. It is a principle to which all phenomena conform by the very nature of their being, the principle that whatever comes into existence does so in dependence on conditions. From the perspective this teaching affords, things are seen to arise, not from some intrinsic nature of their own, from necessity, chance or accident, but from their causal correlations with other things to which they are connected as part of the fixed order obtaining between phenomena. Each transient entity, emerging into the present out of the stream of events bearing down from the past, absorbs into itself the causal influx of the past, to which it must be responsive. During its phase of presence it exercises its own distinctive function with the support of its conditions, expressing thereby its own immediacy of being. And then, with the completion of its actuality, it is swept away by the universal impermanence to become itself a condition determinant of the future.

When this law of inter-connected becoming, of conditionality and relatedness, is extracted from its usual exemplifications and explored for further doctrinal bearings, it can be found to have other ramifications equally relevant to the realization of the teaching's fundamental aim. One particular exemplification of dependent arising, found with minor variations in a number of *suttas*, shows the basic principle to serve as the scaffolding for the course of spiritual development issuing in final emancipation. (SN XII.23; AN X.3-5.11)

It figures in these *suttas* as the architectonic underlying the gradual training, governing the process by which one phase of practice conditions the arising of the following phase all the way from the commencement of the path to the realization of the ultimate goal. To be sure, the application of dependent arising to the achievement of deliverance is already covered from one angle by the reverse or cessation side of the twelvefold formula, according to which the cessation of ignorance sets off a series of cessations culminating in the cessation of suffering. Thence in itself such an application is not a unique feature of these *suttas*. What gives these *suttas* their distinctive quality and value is the positive form in which they cast the sequential pattern of the liberative venture. Whereas the series of cessations presents the achievement of liberation logically, in strict doctrinal terms as the consequence following upon the annulment of *samsaric* bondage, the present sequence views the same chain of events dynamically, from the inner perspective of living experience.

As living experience, the advance to emancipation cannot be tied down to a series of mere negations, for such a mode of treatment omits precisely what is most essential to the spiritual quest — the immediacy of inner striving, growth, and transformation. Parallel to the demolition of old barriers there occurs, in the quest for deliverance, a widening of vistas characterized by an evolving sense of maturation, enrichment, and fulfillment; the departure from bondage, anxiety, and suffering at the same time means the move towards freedom and peace.

This expansion and enrichment is made possible by the structure of the gradual training, which is not so much a succession of discrete steps one following the other as a locking together of overlapping components in a union at once augmentative, consummative, and projective. Each pair of stages intertwines in a mutually vitalizing bond wherein the lower, antecedent member nurtures its successor by serving as its generative base, and the higher, consequent member completes its predecessor by absorbing its energies and directing them on to the next phase in the series. Each link thus performs a double function: while rewarding the efforts expended in the accomplishment of the antecedent stage, it provides

the incentive for the commencement of the consequent stage. In this way the graduated training unfolds organically in a fluid progression in which, as the Buddha says, “stage flows over into stage; stage fulfills stage, for crossing over from the hither shore to the beyond.” (AN X.2.12)

All the factors comprised in this sequence come into being in strict subjection to the law of conditioned genesis. The accidental, the compulsory, and the mysterious are equally excluded by the lawful regularity governing the series. The stages of the path do not emerge fortuitously or through the operation of some inscrutable power but originate conditionally appearing spontaneously in the course of training when their requisite operations are complete.

Thus the course of spiritual development these *suttas* reveal is a *dependent arising* – a coming into being in dependence on conditions. But this dependent arising differs significantly from its mundane counterpart. The mundane version with its twelve links describes the mundane version of *samsara*, which revolves in a virtually self-perpetuating circle leading from beginning to end. Only to find the end lead back to the beginning.

The mechanism of this process by which the defilements and renewed existence mutually kindle each other, is fuelled by the hope that somehow, some solution may yet emerge within the framework of laws set for turning the wheel, a hope perpetually disappointed. The present version of dependent arising delineates a type of development that only becomes possible when this hope has been dispensed with. It hinges on the prior recognition that any attempt to eliminate suffering through the gratification of suffering is doomed to failure and the only way to stop it is to cut through the vicious nexus at its base.

Though the movement it describes is still cyclic, it is not the circular revolution of it is concerned with but a different kind of rotation that only comes into play when the essentially defective nature of the ordinary human consequence depicts the movement towards release. It sets forth a pattern in which each turn supports and strengthens its successor’s capacity for liberation, enabling the series as a whole to pick up the momentum needed to break the gravitational pull of the mundane sphere. Since all the phases in this progression arise in dependence on their antecedents, the series of dependent arising, the present version leads, not back to the round of becoming, but to the overcoming of *samsara* and all its attendant sufferings. Hence, the *Nettipakarana* calls this sequence “transcendental dependent arising” (*lokuttara paticcasamuppada*) — a dependent arising that leads to the transcendence of the world. (Sec. 388, See Ñanamoli, transl., *The Guide, Nettipakaranam*, London: Pali Text Society, 1962, p. 97.)

The *sutta* we will investigate here, for an account of “transcendental dependent arising, is the *Upanisa Sutta* of the *Nidanasmayutta* (SN XII.23). In addition to giving a clear, explicit account of the conditional structure of the liberative progression, this *sutta* has the further advantage of bringing the supramundane form of dependent arising into immediate connection with its familiar samsaric counterpart. By making this connection it brings into prominence the comprehensive character of the principle of conditionality — its ability to support and explain both the process of compulsive involvement which is the origin of suffering and the process of disengagement which leads to deliverance from suffering. Thereby it reveals dependent arising to be the key to the unity and coherence of the Buddha’s teaching. When the Buddha declares, “I teach only suffering and the cessation of suffering,” (MN 22, SN XXII.86.14), the bond which unites these two terminals of the doctrine as complementary sides of a single, internally consistent system is simply the law of dependent arising.

The *Upanisa Sutta* gives three expositions of “transcendental dependent arising.” The first expounds the sequence in reverse order, beginning with the last link in the series, the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (*asavakkhaye ñana*), and tracing the chain backwards to the first link in the liberative sequence, namely, faith. At this point it crosses over to the mundane order, explaining faith as arising through suffering, suffering as conditioned by birth, birth as conditioned by existence, and so on back through the familiar links to ignorance as the first member of the chain. After completing the reverse exposition, the Buddha then expounds the same series in forward order, beginning with ignorance and following through to the knowledge of destruction. This he does twice, in exactly the same way, once before and once after the striking simile comparing the sequential origination of the factors to the gradual descent of rainfall from a mountain, through the graded ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers to the great ocean at the mountain’s base. Thus the series of conditions presented in the *sutta* can be mapped out in the abstract as follows:

Mundane Order

Ignorance (*avijja*)

Kamma formations (*sankhara*)

Consciousness (*viññana*)

Mentality-materiality (*namarupa*)

Sixfold sense base (*salayatana*)

Contact (*phassa*)

Feeling (*vedana*)

Craving (*tanha*)

Clinging (*upadana*)

Existence (*bhava*)

Birth (*jati*) Suffering (*dukkha*)

Transcendental Order

Faith (*saddha*)

Joy (*pamojja*)

Rapture (*piti*)

Tranquillity (*passaddhi*)

Happiness (*sukha*)

Concentration (*samadhi*)

Knowledge and vision of things as they are (*yathabhutañānadassana*)

Disenchantment (*nibbida*)

Dispassion (*viraga*)

Emancipation (*vimutti*)

Knowledge of destruction of the cankers (*asavakkhaye ñāna*)

For ease of explanation we will examine the links of transcendental dependent arising in direct order. However, before doing so, it is instructive to note that there is special significance in the initial presentation of the series in reverse. Such a presentation serves to throw an important spotlight on the nature of the causal relation obtaining between the path to liberation and its goal. It shows that the type of causal development displayed by this progression is quite different from the pattern of blind efficient causality which involves the incidental emergence of an effect out of its causal matrix, as for example when a series of geological changes triggers off an earthquake or a number of atoms combine to form some new molecule.

The relationship between the path and the goal belongs to a more complex order of causality, one which can perhaps be pictured as a set of prior causes giving rise to an effect but can never be adequately and correctly comprehended in terms of this model. What we have here is not an instance of simple, one-directional causality proceeding forward unmodified in a straight line; we have, rather, a species of teleological causality involving purpose, intelligence, and planned striving simultaneously projected towards and refracted from the aimed at effect in a process of reciprocal determination. In the workings of this relationship not only does the path facilitate the achievement of the goal, but the goal as well, already present from the outset as the envisaged aim of striving, itself bends back to participate in the shaping of the path. Starting from man's awareness of the painful inadequacies of his existence, and his intuitive groping towards a condition where these are allayed, the formula proceeds to trace back, in terms derivative from and constantly checked against the goal, the series of alterations he must induce in his cognitive and emotive makeup to bring the goal into his reach.

We see this pattern illustrated in the traditional account of prince Siddhartha's great renunciation. (MN 26.17) When the future Buddha leaves his palace, he goes forth in the confidence that beyond the perishable, defective, and substanceless things of the world there is accessible to man an unperishable and self-sufficient state which makes possible deliverance from suffering. What he needs to discover, as the objective of his "holy quest," is the path bridging the two domains. This he does by pursuing backwards from the goal of striving the obstructions to its attainment and the steps to be taken to remove those obstructions. One line of exploration begins with aging and on through the counter-conditions down to the gain of faith in the true Dhamma, death as the fundamental manifestation of the suffering which weighs upon the world, and follows its chain of conditions back to ignorance as the underlying root. (See SN XII.4-10.)

Another, complementary line starts with the defilements as the principal obstruction to emancipation. It then finds the defilements to be sustained by ignorance, ignorance by the distracted mind, and the distracted mind by a causal nexus going back to lack of faith in the true Dhamma. (See AN X.61,6218)

From this the conclusion follows, as shown in the *Upanisa Sutta*, that to achieve deliverance the defilements must be removed through dispassion, to reach dispassion ignorance must be overcome by correct understanding, to arouse understanding the mind must be concentrated, and so in both cases the reverse

direction of the sequential logic reveals the peculiar nature of the path-goal relationship. The two stand together in a bond of reciprocal determination, the path leading to the achievement of the goal and the goal giving form and content to the path. In addition to the forward thrust of the path, there is thus a basic feedback emanating from the goal, so that the goal can, in a sense, generate out of itself through the circuit system of man's constitutional capacities the series of measures needed to bring about its actualization.

This relationship is analogous to the relation between a guided missile and its mobile target. The missile does not reach its target merely through its own initial thrust and direction. It finds it precisely because it is being controlled by signals the target is itself emitting.

Faith (*Saddha*)

“Suffering is the Supporting Condition for Faith”: After asserting as the last step in the mundane sequence that birth is the supporting condition for suffering, the *sutta* switches over to the transcendental series with the pronouncement that suffering is the supporting condition for faith. With respect to both assertions the present formulation diverges from the usual version of twelve-factored dependent arising. In the usual version the forward sequence ends with the statement that birth is the condition for aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. With this it concludes, leaving unstated the implied aftermath — that this “mass of suffering” will generate anew the fundamental ignorance at the head of the whole series, thus beginning another run through the cycle. The fact that suffering here replaces aging-and-death as the last member of the *samsaric* part of the series therefore has a special importance. It cautions us to the impending change, signaling that we are about to witness, in the progression of links to follow, not just one more turn of the wheel but an interruption of its forward spin and a struggle to reverse its natural direction of movement.

The Buddha's declaration that suffering is the supporting condition for faith points to the essential backdrop to the awakening of the religious consciousness. It reveals that spiritual awareness and the quest for enlightenment do not arise spontaneously in harmony with our natural modes of world-engagement, but require a turn “against the current” a break away from our instinctual urges for expansion and enjoyment and the embarkation in a different direction. This break is precipitated by the encounter with suffering. Suffering spurs the awakening of the religious consciousness in that it is the experience of suffering which first tears us out of our blind absorption in the immediacy of temporal being and sets us in search of a way to its transcendence.

Whether in the form of pain, frustration, or distress, suffering reveals the basic insecurity of the human condition, shattering our naive optimism and unquestioned trust in the goodness of the given order of things. It throws before our awareness, in a way we cannot evade, the vast gulf stretching between our ingrained expectations and the possibilities for their fulfillment in a world never fully susceptible to domination by our wills. It makes us call into question our schemes of values built upon the bedrock of personal expedience. It leads to a revaluation of all values and a new scale of worth indifferent to the claims of self-concern. And it opens us to confidence in an unseen order of relations and inter-connections, an order in which the values that emerge, so often in forceful opposition to the old, will find their proper justification and reward.

Yet for suffering to become an effective spur to spiritual awakening it is not enough merely to encounter it. For the religious consciousness to be aroused suffering must be not only met as a constant liability of our existence, but confronted and grappled with in the arena of thematic reflection. As long as we engage suffering simply in its superficial modes, as felt pain and sorrow, we will react to it in one of two ways, both of which operate at a purely psychological level.

In the first case we will react to suffering in an unhealthy manner, as when we arouse resentment against the source of our displeasure and seek relief by annihilating it, ignoring it, or running away in pursuit of some easy escape.

In the second case we will react to suffering in a mentally healthy way, as when we fortify our come to see that the breeding ground of suffering lies not so much in the outside world as at the base of our own being, and that any cure that is to be permanently effective must uproot it at this inward source, minds with patience and courage, strengthen our capacities for endurance, and seek to resolve the problem in a realistic manner. But though the second approach is definitely to be preferred to the first, in neither case does that inward revolution take place which awakens us to our extreme need for deliverance and compels us to set off in a new direction previously unknown and unexplored.

The urge for liberation can only set in when pain and sorrow have been confronted with reflective awareness and recognized as symptoms of a deeper *ailment demanding a radical therapy*. The quest for a conclusive solution to the problem of suffering begins with an act of understanding, not with mere tribulation. It starts from the realization that suffering is more than a chance encroachment upon a state of affairs otherwise felicitous, that it is a malady which infects our being upwards from its very root. We must come to see that the breeding ground of suffering lies not so much in the outside world as at the base of our own being, and that any cure that is to permanently effective must uproot it at its inward source.

The arising of such a realization depends upon the adoption of a new perspective from which the fact of suffering can be faced in its full range and universality. Though single in its essence, suffering or *dukkha* yet divides into three stages or tiers in accordance with the level of understanding from which it is viewed. (See Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, London, 1969, pp. 49-52.21)

At the most elementary level suffering appears as physical pain and oppression, manifest most clearly in the events of birth, sickness, aging and death, as well as in hunger, thirst, privation, and bodily discomfort. At a higher level it comes to be seen as a psychological fact — as the sorrow and frustration from our separation from what is desired, our meeting with what is disliked, and the disappointment of our expectations. And at the third and highest level, suffering becomes manifest in its essential form, as the inherent unsatisfactoriness of the *samsaric* round in which we turn without purpose on account of our ignorance and attachments. In each case the lower level serves as a basis for the higher by which it is absorbed and comprehended.

Thus through the penetration of the highest stage — the essential suffering comprised in ‘the five clinging aggregates’ (*pañcupadanakkhandha*) represents the climax of understanding, this realization comes as the fruit of a long period of preparation grounded upon the first flash of insight into the basic inadequacy of the human condition. Such an insight usually dawns through a particular experience typical of the first two stages of suffering — through sudden pain, loss or disappointment or through chronic anxiety, confusion and distress. But in order to become the stimulus to a higher course of development, our vision must be capable of rising from the particular to the universal.

It is only when we see clearly for sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, sunk in suffering, overcome by suffering” (MN 29), that we are really ready for the means to bring this unsatisfactory condition to an end frustration springing from our separation from what is desired, our meeting with what is disliked, and the disappointment of our expectations. And at the third and highest level suffering becomes manifest in its essential form, as the inherent unsatisfactoriness of the *samsaric* round in which we turn without purpose on account of our ignorance and attachments.

These three tiers are not mutually exclusive. In each case the lower level serves as basis for the higher, by which it is absorbed and comprehended. Thus, though the penetration of the highest stage, the essential suffering comprised in the “five clinging aggregates” (*pañcupadanakkhandha*), represents the climax of understanding, this realization comes as the fruit of a long period of preparation grounded upon the first flash of insight into the basic inadequacy of the human condition.

Such an insight usually dawns through particular experiences typical of the first two stages of suffering — through sudden pain, loss or disappointment, or through chronic anxiety, confusion, and distress. But in order to become the stimulus to a higher course of development, our vision must be capable of rising from the ourselves that we are “sunk in birth, aging, and death, in sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, sunk in suffering, overcome by suffering (MN, 29) that we are really ready for the means to bring this unsatisfactory condition to an end.

Since it is suffering that impels us to seek the way to liberation, suffering is called the supporting condition for faith. By itself, however, the confrontation with suffering even at the level of mature reflection is not sufficient to generate faith. For faith to arise, two conditions are required: the first is the awareness of suffering, which makes us recognize the need for a liberative path; the second is the encounter with a teaching scriptural

records, faith becomes settled in the Buddha as the to deliverance; in the Dhamma as his teaching and the path leading to deliverance; and in the *Sangha* as the community of the Buddha's disciples who have verified his teaching through their own direct experience, and hence may be relied upon for guidance in our own pursuit of the goal that proclaims a liberative path. Thence the Buddha says that faith has for its nutriment hearing the exposition of the true Dhamma. (AN X.61. *Ko caharo saddhaya? Saddhammassavananti'ssa vacaniyam.*)

Saddha, the faith that comes into being as a result of hearing the exposition of the true Dhamma, is essentially an attitude of trust and commitment directed to ultimate emancipation. In order for such faith to arise and become a driving force of spiritual development, it must meet with an objective ground capable of eliciting its forward leap into the unknown and of prompting its inner urge towards liberation. From the Buddhist perspective this objective ground is provided by the three objects of refuge — the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, that is, the enlightened Teacher, his teaching, and his community of noble disciples. The faith to be placed in them must not be blind and uncritical. Though initially requiring consent born out of trust, it also must be based on critical scrutiny — the Teacher tested to determine his trustworthiness, his doctrine examined to decide on its cogency, and his disciples interrogated to ascertain their reliability. (See MN 47, MN 95.23)

As a result of such examination, conducted either through personal confrontation whenever possible or through scrutiny of the Perfectly Enlightened One, the unerring guide on the path As the first requisite of spiritual development, faith is compared to a hand in that it is needed to take hold of beneficial practices, and to a seed in that it is the vitalizing germ for the growth of the higher virtues.

Beneath its seeming simplicity *it is a complex phenomenon combining intellectual, emotional, and conative elements*. Intellectually faith implies a willingness to accept on trust propositions beyond our present capacity for verification, propositions relating to the basic tenets of the doctrine. Through practice this assent will be translated from belief into knowledge, but at the outset there is required an acceptance which cannot be fully corroborated by objective evidence. Emotionally faith issues in feelings of confidence and serene joy, coupled with an attitude of devotion directed to the objects of refuge. And at the level of volition faith reinforces the readiness to implement certain lines of conduct in the conviction they will lead to the desired goal. It is the mobilizing force of action, stirring up the energy to actualize the ideal.

Joy (*Pamojja*)

“Faith Is the Supporting Condition for Joy”: Faith functions as a support for the next link in the series, joy or gladness (*pamojja*), by permitting an outlet from the *pent-up tensions of an existential impasse* brought on by the reflective encounter with the problem of suffering. Prior to the discovery of the true Dhamma two alternatives present themselves to the thoughtful individual as he struggles to work out a viable solution to the problem of suffering once it has emerged into the open in its full depth and universality. One alternative is compliant submission to a justification of suffering developed along traditional theological lines — that is, a theodicy which sees evil and suffering as detracting from the goodness of the created order only superficially, while ultimately contributing to the total perfection of the whole. This solution, though generally aligned with the higher ethical values, still appears to the sensitive thinker to be a facile answer constantly provocative of a gnawing sense of doubt and disbelief.

The other alternative is resignation to suffering as a brute fact unintelligible to man's moral sense, an incidental offshoot of a universe totally indifferent to any structure of spiritual or ethical values. This solution, though not internally inconsistent, clashes with our basic moral intuitions so sharply that the result, for the sensitive thinker, is often a turn to nihilism in one of its two forms — as *reckless license or ineffectual despair*.

Neither the theological nor the materialistic answers can show the way to an actual escape from suffering. Both, in the last analysis, can only hold out a choice between resignation and rebellion. The gain of faith in the true Dhamma spells the end to this quandary by pointing to a solution which can admit the pervasive reality of suffering without needing to justify it yet can give this suffering a cogent explanation and indicate an escape. Suffering, from this perspective, is traceable to distinct causes endowed with ethical significance; it is the inevitable result of our own immoral actions returning to ourselves. Our actions, when viewed from the standpoint of the Dhamma, are neither threads in some invisible handiwork of divine perfection, nor meaningless pulsations of nerves and brain, but expressions of ethically significant decisions having an integral place in a morally intelligible world. They are seen as choices for which we bear full responsibility before an

impersonal universal law that ensures the preservation of an equilibrium between deeds and their results, so that virtuous deeds bring forth happiness and evil deeds suffering.

The round of becoming in which we are immersed — where we are born, grow old, suffer, and die — this round is created by ourselves, fashioned out of our own blindness and craving. *We build the round ourselves and we can bring it to an end by ourselves*, by eradicating this world-sustaining ignorance and desire. The path to liberation is revealed in all its practical details with full precision and clarity. It is a path of conduct and insight each man must tread for himself, [with] success being dependent entirely on his own diligence, sincerity and energy, and on his capacities for renunciation and understanding.

The gain of faith in the true Dhamma thus points to an outlet from the contention of opposed alternatives, neither of which can be happily embraced. It exhausts the pressures of an apparent dead-end, and as the stress and tension fall away there springs up a surge of joy conditioned by the acquisition of faith. This incipient swell of joy grows by degrees as the aspirant's contemplation focuses more sharply upon the objects in which confidence has been reposed. Sustained reflection on the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha gradually dispels the darkness of doubt and indecision. It issues in an effusion of light, of peace and inner clarity, when as a result of such reflection the defilements are attenuated and the mind's impulsion towards the elevating qualities the refuges represent gains in forward momentum.

For this reason faith is compared to a miraculous water-clearing gem. According to Indian legend, there is a special gem possessed by the mythic universal monarch which, when thrown into a stream of turbid water, immediately causes it to become clear. The strands of vegetation float away, the mud settles, and the water becomes pure, serene, and sweet-tasting, fit to be drunk by the monarch. Similarly, it is said, when the gem of faith is set up in the heart it causes the hindrances to disappear, the defilements to settle, and the mind to become clear, lucid, and serene. (*Milindapañha*. See Edward Conze, *The Way of Wisdom The Wheel No. 65/66*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, pp. 30-31.)

The strengthening of confidence in the objects of refuge becomes the incentive for a firmer dedication to the practice of the teaching. Thence the texts ascribe to faith the characteristic of “leaping forward.” (Ibid. *Pakkhandanalakkhan Saddha*). Faith leaps forward in that “when the yogin sees that the hearts of others have been set free, he leaps forward, by way of aspiration, to the various fruits of a holy life, and he makes efforts to attain the yet unattained, to find the unfound, to realize the unrealized.” (Ibid., p.31.) This aspect of faith is illustrated by a courageous hero who lunges across a turbulent river to escape from danger, saving himself thereby and inspiring others by his example.

At this stage, in particular, the aspirant's faith creates a readiness to undertake the basic rules of moral training. Through his settled faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha he is prepared to enter the path of practice, which requires at the start that he train in the foundation of the path, the observance of moral discipline (*Sila*). For this reason the acceptance of moral restraint is said to be undertaken out of faith. (Visuddhimagga, I.98. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*, 3rd ed., Kandy, 1975. Buddhist Publication Society, p.36.27)

Moral restraint is taken up by accepting rules of discipline designed to inculcate an inner disposition of virtue by controlling bodily and verbal actions. The codes of rules vary in scope from the five basic precepts of the Buddhist layman to the more than 227 training rules undertaken by the Bhikkhu or the fully-ordained monk, but all share the common characteristic of disciplining behavior. Each of the basic precepts involves an explicit principle of abstinence requiring to be observed and an implicit mental attitude to be cultivated through such absence. The former consists in abstentions from unwholesome actions of taking life, stealing, sexual abuse, false speech and taking of intoxicants; the latter calls for a persistent effort to develop a mind of compassion, honesty, purity, ease of conscience and “bliss of blamelessness” set in born of the knowledge that one's actions are beyond reproach. Thence the Buddha declares wholesome rules of conduct to have freedom from remorse as their benefit and reward which comes through realizing one's purity confirms the confidence originally placed in the teaching. Thereby it arouses still stronger faith and a desire for further application. The immediate result of living in

conformity with these guidelines to right action is the arising of a sense of freedom from remorse (*avippatisara*). Remorse, a feeling of regret over moral transgression and neglect, tends to provoke guilt, agitation, and self-recrimination. When, through close adherence to the precepts, the mind is freed from remorse, and the joy practice. (AN X.128)

Rapture (*Piti*)

“Joy is the Supporting Condition for Rapture”: Though for certain individuals serene faith in the objects of refuge and a clear conscience are sufficient to transform joy into rapture, such cases are the exception rather than the rule. Generally, in order for the emotional tone of the spiritual life to be lifted to that pitch of intensity suggested by the term “rapture” (*piti*) a further commitment to the training is necessary. This commitment takes the form of deliberate application to the practice of meditation.

Methods of meditation contributing to the attainment of liberation are classified into two systems — serenity meditation (*samathabhavana*) and insight meditation (*vipassanabhavana*). Serenity meditation aims at the creation of a state of calm concentration by unifying the mind in focus on a single object. *Insight meditation aims at insight into the nature of phenomena* by directly contemplating the bodily and mental processes as they occur on the successive moments of experience.

Though there is a system which employs mindfulness as a direct means to the awakening of insight, in the usual pattern serenity is cultivated first as a preliminary measure, since the unification and purification of consciousness effected by concentration facilitate correct penetration of the nature of things through contemplative insight. This is the sequence utilized by the present *sutta*, the stages from “rapture” through “concentration” covering the systematic development of serenity, the two following stages the development of insight.

Serenity meditation is cultivated on the basis of a single object selected from a standard set of objects reserved exclusively for the development of concentration. These objects, traditionally numbered at forty, include the colored and elemental circles called *kasinas*, the cemetery contemplations, the recollections of the three refuge objects, meditation on the sublime abodes of love and compassion, mindfulness of breathing, etc. After taking up one of these objects as his field of work, the yogin strives to unify his mind by fixing his attention on his object to the exclusion of all sense data, concepts, thoughts, memories, projections, fantasies, and associative thinking. His aim is to make his mind one-pointed, and this forbids at once its dispersal among a multiplicity of concerns. Success in the practice depends on the harmonization of the mental faculties in the work of concentration. Through mindfulness (*sati*) the yogin bears the object in his field of awareness and prevents it from slipping away; through discernment (*sampajañña*) he maintains a cautious watch upon the mind, noting its tendencies to stray and swiftly correcting them; and through energy (*viriya*) he strives to dispel the impediments to mental unification, and to maintain his awareness at a pitch which is simultaneously taut but relaxed.

The impediments to meditation are classified into a group of five factors called the “five hindrances” (*pañcanivarana*). These are sensual desire, ill-will, stiffness and torpor, restlessness and regret, and doubt. The Buddha calls these five hindrances “corruptions of the mind” and “weakeners of wisdom.” He says they are conducive to pain, blindness, and ignorance, and compares them respectively to a debt, a disease, imprisonment, slavery, and the dangers of a desert journey. Their removal by unremitting exertion is the first task facing the meditator. As he proceeds in his practice, striving with patience and diligence, there come suddenly momentary breaks in the course of his efforts when the hindrances fall away, the flow of inner verbalization stops, and the mind abides one-pointedly on the object. The achievement of this momentary concentration, brief as it is, gives immense satisfaction. It is a powerful experience unleashing spurts of mental energy which flood up to the surface of consciousness and inundate the mind with waves of joyous refreshment. It brings an elating thrill bordering on ecstasy, crowning the yogin’s previous endeavors and inspiring further effort.

This experience marks the arising of rapture. The distinguishing feature of rapture is a strong interest and delight directed to the object of attention. Its function is to give refreshment to the body and mind. It can assume both wholesome and unwholesome forms, depending on whether it is motivated by attachment or

detachment with respect to its object, but on occasions of meditative consciousness it is always wholesome. The commentaries distinguish five degrees of rapture which make their appearance in the successive stages of mental unification. (Vism. IV.94-98, Ñanamoli, pp. 149-150.31)

“Minor rapture,” the lowest on the scale, is said to be able to raise the hairs of the body. “Momentary rapture,” the next degree of development, rushes through the body with an intensity likened to streaks of lightning flashing forth in the sky at different moments. “Showering rapture,” the third degree, breaks over the body again and again with considerable force, like the waves on the seashore breaking upon the beach. “Uplifting rapture” is so-called because it is credited with the ability to cause the body to levitate, and the *Visuddhimagga* cites several cases where this literally occurs. And “pervading rapture,” the highest on the scale, is said to completely fill the whole body as a huge inundation fills a rock cavern.

Since the commentary to our *sutta* defines joy (*pamojja*), the prior link in our sequence, as weak rapture, we may assume this to signify the delightful interest preceding the deliberate development of meditation, that is, in the stages when faith in the Dhamma was just acquired and the purification of moral discipline commenced. The five degrees of rapture presented here would then pertain exclusively to the rapture found in meditative consciousness. And since the last degree of rapture only gains ascendancy with the attainment of full absorption, which does not come until later, it seems that the degrees of are the four beginning with minor rapture and reaching their peak with uplifting rapture.

Tranquillity (*Passaddhi*)

“Rapture is the Supporting Condition for Tranquillity”: While the appearance of rapture indicates a definite advance in the work of concentration, its *coarser modes still contain an element of exuberance which is in constant danger of slipping out of control and spilling over into unwholesome states of mind* dominated by restlessness and agitation. For rapture involves an intense delight in the object coupled with an anticipation of even greater delight to come. The experience of present delight can often be accompanied by an underlying worry that this pleasure will disappear, while the expectation of further delight can stimulate a subtle grasping at the future. Both states, the anxiety and the grasping, bring along an excitation inimical to the centering of the mind in one-pointed calm. For this reason, as the yogin progresses in his practice a point is reached where the ecstatic exultation sparked-off by rapture becomes felt as an obstruction to the development of mental unification, a corruption of the training which must be pacified and stilled.

Rapture itself will remain as a factor of meditative development up to the third absorption, but to permit further progress its detrimental tendencies have to be sublimated. Through continued application to the practice rapture becomes more refined, shedding the heated zest of its initial forms. With its refinement it increasingly evokes along with itself another quality called “tranquillity” (*passaddhi*). Tranquillity is characterized by the quieting down of mental disturbances. It removes agitation and restlessness, imparting to the mind a soothing calm comparable to the cool shade offered by a tree to travelers oppressed by the sun’s heat. Tranquillity operates in two co-occurrent forms, “tranquillity of body” and “tranquillity of mind,” where “mind” signifies the aggregate of consciousness and “body,” not the physical organism, but the group of consciousness-adjuncts included in the aggregates of feeling, perception, and mental formations. (Vism. XIV.144, Ñanamoli, p. 525.) Thence the arising of tranquillity results in the subsiding of disturbances throughout the full extent of the psycho-dynamic system. It allays the propensity towards excitement, soothes the innervations brought on by rapture, and casts over the meditative endeavor a profound stillness paving the way for deeper states of concentration to follow.

The “five aggregates” (*pañcakkhandha*) are the basic categories into which Buddhism analyzes the sentient organism. The aggregate of material form covers the physical body; the aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness cover the mind. Of these four, the first three are considered the adjuncts or concomitants of consciousness, the primary factor of mental life.

Tranquillity further induces in both consciousness and its adjuncts the qualitative factors of lightness, malleability, wieldiness, proficiency, and rectitude. These factors, present to some extent in every wholesome state of consciousness, perform the respective tasks of eliminating sluggishness, rigidity,

unwieldiness, disability, and insincerity. By holding at bay these mental corruptions destructive to moral and spiritual progress, they enhance the functional efficiency of the mind, rendering it a more tractable instrument for application to the higher stages of the path.

Happiness (Sukha)

“Tranquillity is the Supporting Condition for Happiness”: As the yogin’s psycho-somatic system is brought to a state of tranquil composure, a feeling of inner happiness or bliss (*sukha*), unobtrusively present from the start, gains in prominence until it emerges in its own right as a salient feature of the training. Though closely associated with rapture, happiness is not identical with the latter and can arise in its absence.

Rapture denotes a mental factor belonging to the fourth of the five aggregates into which Buddhism classifies the psycho-physical organism, namely, the aggregate of mental formations (*sankharakkhandha*). It is a conative rather than affective phenomenon, which fuses zestful interest with a sense of joyous delight. Happiness, on the other hand, is a purely hedonic factor belonging to the second aggregate, the aggregate of feelings (*vedanakkhandha*). It is pleasurable feeling, here, as the happiness conditioned by tranquillity, the pleasure which springs up in meditation as disturbances subside. Rapture is relatively coarse in quality and happiness subtle. Thence, though rapture is always accompanied by happiness, in the higher meditative attainment of the third *jhana* happiness can remain even after rapture has faded away. The *Atthasalini*, a commentary to the *Abhidhamma-pitaka*, illustrates the difference between them with a vivid simile:

“A man who, traveling along the path through a great desert and overcome by the heat is thirsty and desirous of drink, if he saw a man on the way, would ask, ‘Where is water?’ The other would say, ‘Beyond the wood is a dense forest with a natural lake. Go there, and you will get some.’ He hearing these words would be glad and delighted. Going onwards, he would see men with wet clothes and hair, hear the sound of wild fowl and pea-fowl, etc., see the dense forest of green like a net of jewels by the edge of the natural lake, he would see the water lily, the lotus, the white lily, etc., growing in the lake, he would see the clear transparent water, he would be all the more glad and delighted, would descend into the natural lake, bathe and drink at pleasure and, his oppression being allayed, he would eat the fibers and stalks of the lilies, adorn himself with the blue lotus, carry on his shoulders the roots of the mandalaka, ascend from the lake, put on his clothes, dry the bathing cloth in the sun, and in the cool shade where the breeze blew ever so gently lay himself down and say: ‘O bliss! O bliss!’ Thus should this illustration be applied: — The time of gladness and delight from when he heard of the natural lake and the dense forest till he saw the water is like *piti* having the manner of gladness and delight at the object in view. The time when, after his bath and drink he laid himself down in the cool shade, saying, ‘O bliss! O bliss!’ etc., is the sense of *sukha* grown strong, established in that mode of enjoying the taste of the object.’ (Maung Tin, trans. The Expositor, *Atthasalini*, London 1920, Vol. I, pp 157-58.)

Despite the simile’s suggestion, rapture and happiness are not necessarily asynchronous, and are in fact only sundered with the attainment of the third *jhana*. The presentation of happiness as arising subsequent to rapture only means that happiness becomes the salient feature of the path after rapture has already made its own distinctive contribution and settled back to a subsidiary place. In the present stage rapture still persists, only its exuberance has now been toned down by the prevailing quiescence developed in the stage of tranquillity.

The subcommentary to the *Upanisa Sutta* explains *sukha* as the happiness of the access to absorption. The term “access” (*upacara*) denotes the stage in the cultivation of serenity immediately preceding full absorption, the intended goal of serenity meditation. Access is characterized by the abandonment of the five hindrances and the arising of the “counterpart sign,” the self-luminous object of interior perception which is the focal point for the higher stages of concentration. The abandoning of the hindrances began already with the gain of faith, which conferred a serene lucency suspending their turbulence, and each ascending rung along the path marked their attenuation to a further degree. Since the hindrances are the principal obstructions to both serenity and insight, the early stages of the path are primarily concerned with their debilitation and elimination.

The elimination of the hindrances prior to attaining access is brought about by means of two methods, one specifically directed to each hindrance separately, the other applicable to all at once. The former is to be employed when a particular hindrance obtrudes itself with persistent force, the latter on other occasions when no one hindrance seems especially conspicuous.

The specific method involves the reversing of the causal situation out of which the hindrance develops. *Since each defiling factor is a conditioned phenomenon coming into existence through distinct causes, the key to its elimination lies in applying the appropriate antidote to its causal base.* Thus sensual desire arises on account of unskillful attention to the attractive features of things, to alluring objects and physical bodies. It is attenuated by considering the impermanence of the objects of attachment, and by reflecting on the repulsive nature underlying the attractive appearance of the bodies which arouse desire.

Ill-will or anger also springs up from unskillful attention, in this case to the unpleasant aspects of persons and things; it is reversed by developing loving kindness towards disagreeable people and patience in the face of unfavorable circumstances. Stiffness and torpor become prominent by submitting to moods of sloth and drowsiness; they are dispelled by the arousal of energy. Restlessness and regret arise from attending to disturbing thoughts and are eliminated by directing the mind to an object conducive to inner peace. And doubt, grounded upon unclarity with regard to fundamental points of doctrine, is dispelled by clear thinking and precise analysis of the issues shrouded in obscurity.

In contrast to these techniques, which counter the hindrances separately, the practice of concentration on one of the prescribed objects of serenity meditation inhibits them all simultaneously. Though only affective so long as no particular hindrance impedes the meditative progress, this method, drawing upon the power of mental unification, is capable of bringing tremendous force to bear upon the struggle against their supremacy. Since the latent defilements can crop up into the open only so long as the mind is driven by discursive thinking, the unification of the mind upon a single object closes off the portal through which they emerge. As the mind descends to increasingly deeper levels of concentration, the hindrances are gradually made to subside until, with the attainment of access, their suppression becomes complete. *Held at bay in the base of the mental continuum, the latent defilements are no longer capable of rising to the surface of consciousness.* For as long as the suppressive force of concentration prevails, their activity is suspended, and the mind remains secure in its one-pointed stabilization, safe from their disruptive influence. This abandonment of the hindrances through the power of suppression brings a feeling of profound relief accompanied by a blissful effusion born from the newly accomplished purification. The Buddha compares the happiness of abandoning the hindrances to the happiness a man would experience if he were unexpectedly freed from debt, cured of a serious illness, released from prison, set free from slavery, or led to safety at the end of a desert journey. DN 2.38

Concentration (*Samadhi*)

“Happiness is the Supporting Condition for Concentration”: The attainment of access signals a major breakthrough which spurs on further exertion. As a result of such exertion the bliss generated in the access stage is made to expand and to suffuse the mind so completely that the subtlest barriers to inner unification disappear. Along with their disappearance the mind passes beyond the stage of access and enters into absorption or full concentration (*samadhi*). Concentration itself denotes a mental factor present in both the attainments of access and absorption. Its salient feature is the wholesome unification of the mind on a single object, and it brings about a harmonization between consciousness and its concomitants to a degree sufficient to free them from the distraction, vacillation, and unsteadiness characterizing their normal operations. The mind in concentration, fixed firmly on its object, is like the flame of a candle shielded from the wind or the surface of a lake on which all the waves and ripples have been stilled.

However, although both access and absorption partake of the nature of concentration, an important difference still separates them, justifying the restriction of the term “full concentration” to absorption alone. This difference consists in the relative strength in the two attainments of certain mental concomitants called the “factors of absorption” or “jhana factors” (*jhanangani*) — namely, applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, happiness, and mental one-pointedness. These factors, aroused at the very

beginning of serenity meditation and gradually cultivated through the course of its progress, have the dual function of inhibiting the hindrances and unifying the mind on its object. According to the commentaries, the factors are aligned with the hindrances in a direct one-to-one relation of opposition, such that each *jhana* factor has the specific task of countering and occluding one hindrance. Thus applied thought counteracts stiffness and torpor, sustained thought doubt, rapture ill-will, happiness restlessness and regret, and one-pointedness sensual desire. (Vism. IV.86, Ñānamoli, p. 147.40)

At the same time the factors exercise a consolidating function with respect to the object, applied thought directing the mind to the object, sustained thought anchoring it there, rapture creating an interest in it, happiness experiencing its affective quality, and one-pointedness focusing the mind on the object.

In the access attainment the *jhana* factors are strong enough to keep the hindrances suppressed, but not yet strong enough to place the mind in absorption. They still stand in need of maturation. Maturation comes as a result of continued practice, which gives them the power to lift the mind beyond the threshold plane of access and plunge it into the object with the unshakable force of full absorption. In the state of absorption the mind fixes upon its object with such a high intensity of concentration that subjective discriminations between the two no longer occur. The waves of discursive thinking have at last subsided, and the mind abides without straying even the least from its base of stabilization. Nevertheless, even full concentration admits of degrees.

At the plane of absorption concentration is divided into four levels called the four *ghanas*. These are distinguished by the aggregation of factors present in each attainment, the order of the four being determined by the successive elimination of the comparatively coarser factors. In the first *jhana* all five *jhana* factors are present; in the second applied and sustained thought are eliminated, in the third rapture is made to fade away, and in the fourth the feeling of happiness is replaced by equanimity, the peaceful feeling-tone which veers neither toward pleasure nor toward pain. One-pointedness remains present in all four *ghanas*, the one constant in the series. To rise from the first *jhana* to the second, the yogin, after emerging from the first *jhana*, must reflect upon the coarseness of applied and sustained thought and the first *jhana*'s inadequacy due to the proximity of the hindrances. Then he must consider the second *jhana* as more peaceful and sublime, arouse the aspiration to attain it, and exert his energy to achieve a stronger degree of mental unification. Similarly, to rise from the second to the third *jhana* he must repeat the same procedure taking rapture as the coarse factor needing to be eliminated, and to rise from the third to the fourth *jhana* he must reflect on the coarseness of happiness and the superiority of neutral, equanimous feeling.

Beyond the fourth *jhana* lie four even subtler stages of concentration called the four formless attainments (*arupasamapatti*). In these attainments the luminous counterpart sign serving as the object of the *ghanas* is replaced by four successively more refined formless objects, which give their names to their respective attainments: — the base of infinite space, the base of infinite consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither perception nor non-perception. At the peak of this scale of meditative equipoise consciousness arrives at a point of unification so fine that, like the geometric point, it eludes detection, and its presence can be neither affirmed nor denied.

Knowledge and Vision (*Ñāna dassana*)

“Concentration is the Supporting Condition for the Knowledge and Vision of Things as they Really Are”: Despite the loftiness and sublimity of these exalted attainments, immersion in deep concentration is not the end of the Buddhist path. The unification of consciousness effected by serenity meditation is only a means to a further stage of practice. This stage, ushered in by the next link in the series, “the knowledge and vision of things as they really are” (*yathabhuta-ñānadassana*), is the development of insight (*vipassana bhavana*).

Through his deep concentration the yogin is able to suppress the defilements, to bring them to a state of quiescence where they no longer invade the active processes of thought. But beneath the surface stillness the defilements lie latent, ready to spring up again if provoked. As long as the defilements remain present, even if only in dormant form, release from suffering has yet to be achieved, *for the latencies of the*

defilements lying quietly in the mental continuum can still regenerate the samsaric round of continued birth and death. The latent tendencies are the seeds of renewed existence, which bring about a re-arising of the stream of consciousness and thence of all the remaining links in the samsaric chain. To end the round and attain deliverance the defilements must be completely destroyed; it is not enough merely to suppress them. The destruction of the defilements cannot be brought about by concentration alone, for concentration, even at its deepest levels, can only effect the suspension of their activity, not their eradication.

To destroy the defilements down to their bottom-most stratum of latency something more is needed — *pañña*, the wisdom which *penetrates the true mark of phenomena*. Concentration gains its place in the Buddhist discipline in so far as it induces the mental one-pointedness of at least the access level required as the support for wisdom. Thus the Buddha enjoins his disciples to develop concentration, not as an end in itself, but because “one who is concentrated understands things as they really are.” (SN XXII.5.43)

Only a mind which has been rendered pure and calm can comprehend things in accordance with actuality, and the discipline of concentration, by suppressing the hindrances, engenders the required purity and calm. The actual work, however, of extricating the defilements is performed exclusively by wisdom. Wisdom is “the one thing needed” to cut off the defilements because the most fundamental of all the mental depravities is ignorance (*avijja*). Ignorance is the kingpost upon which all the other defilements converge and the lynchpin which holds them all in place. While it remains the others remain, and for the others to be destroyed it must be destroyed. Doctrinally defined as nescience with regard to the four noble truths, *ignorance signifies not so much the lack of specific pieces of information as a basic non-comprehension regarding the true nature of things* as expressed in the four truths.

Since the eradication of the defilements depends upon the eradication of ignorance, the one factor capable of abolishing the defilements is the factor capable of abolishing their fundamental root, and that is the direct antithesis of ignorance — wisdom or “*the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.*” For this reason, at the beginning of our *sutta*, the Buddha proclaims: “The destruction of the cankers is for one who knows and sees, I say, not for one who does not know and does not see.” The defilements, epitomized in the “cankers,” are only destroyed for one who overcomes ignorance by the wisdom which knows and sees things as they are.

The compound expression “knowledge and vision,” indicates that the kind of knowledge to be developed is not mere conceptual understanding, but knowledge which in its directness and immediacy is akin to visual perception. *Conceptual understanding* is often needed to clear away the intellectual obstructions to a correct perspective, but it *must eventually yield to the light of direct experience*. To achieve this experiential understanding it is necessary to enter upon the practice of the second system of Buddhist meditation, the development of insight.

The practice of insight meditation aims at dislodging the defilements by eradicating the ignorance at their base. Ignorance is overcome by generating, through mindful-observation, a direct insight into things as they really are. *The material upon which insight works is precisely the sphere where ignorance is concealed, our own psycho-physical experience.* Its method is the application of mindfulness or discerning awareness to this sphere without interruption and in all activities.

In the discourse the Buddha states that what must be known and seen as they are is the five aggregates — their nature, their arising, and their passing away. The five aggregates — material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness — are the basic categories structuring the Buddha’s analysis of experience. *Each experiential occasion, from the Buddhist perspective, is a complex process involving a number of factors functioning in unison. To normal, non-analytical consciousness this unified complex appears as a uniform mass, a false appearance which, when accepted at face value, leads to the assumption of a simple solid self as the permanent subject of cognition.* The assumption of permanent selfhood Buddhism holds to be the basic conceptual error dominating our mental horizon. It is the outermost shell of egoistic projection shielding the pre-conceptual ignorance, and thus the first of the ten fetters to be broken along the path to liberation.

To dispel the illusion of independent selfhood the *experiential process must be submitted to searching scrutiny which rectifies the false perceptions contributing to its formation*. The first phase in this examination is the dissection of the cognitive fabric into the distinct threads entering into its make-up. These “threads” or components are the five aggregates. The aggregate of material form covers the physical side of experience, comprising both external material objects and the body together with its sense faculties. The other four aggregates constitute the mental side of experience. Feeling is the affective quality of pleasure or pain, or the neutral tone of neither pleasure nor pain, present on any occasion of mental activity. Perception is the selective faculty, which singles out the object’s distinctive marks as a basis for recognition. The formations aggregate is a comprehensive category incorporating all mental factors other than feeling and perception; its most conspicuous member is volition. And consciousness is the faculty of cognition itself, which sustains and coordinates all the other factors in the task of apprehending the object.

These five aggregates function in complete autonomy, entirely through their reciprocal support, without need for a self-subsistent unifying principle to be identified as a self or subject. In order to develop the knowledge and vision of things as they really are with respect to the aggregates, the yogin must first emerge from his state of deep concentration, for the analytical faculty — silenced in the folds of serenity — has to be brought into play to effect the required dissection. With his mind made clear and pliant *as a result of concentration, the yogin attends to the diverse phenomena coming into range of his awareness. The phenomena are attended to as they become manifest to determine their salient characteristics; then, on this basis, they are assigned to their appropriate place among the aggregates.*

Whatever is physical belongs to the aggregate of material form; whatever registers affective tone is feeling; whatever notices the object’s marks is perception; whatever wills is a mental formation; and whatever cognizes is consciousness. The aggregates may further be grouped into a simpler scheme by placing material form on one side and the four mental aggregates on the other, the two being coupled as mentality-materiality (*nama rupa*). They are then correlated with their causes and conditions to expose their dependently arisen nature.

The analytic procedure generates the realization that experience is just a double stream of material and mental events without a subsisting self. The synthetic procedure makes it clear that all these events are conditioned phenomena which arise when their conditions are present and cease when their conditions disappear.

This last realization becomes the portal to the next major stage in the development of understanding, the contemplation of rise and fall. *As the yogin attends to the states that appear, he sees how each undergoes the same process of coming into being, altering, and passing away: “Such is the arising of material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. Such is the passing away of material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness.”*

The contemplation of rise and fall brings into focus *three marks common to all conditioned phenomena — their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness*. Impermanence is generally the first characteristic to be discerned, as it becomes clear through the immediate attention given to rise and fall. The perception of impermanence leads directly to insight into the other marks, which follow naturally from the first. The notion of “happiness,” or “pleasure,” at the level of philosophical understanding rather than mere feeling, hinges upon an implicit notion of permanence. If something is to be truly a source of happiness it must be permanent. What is impermanent is incapable of yielding lasting happiness and security, and therefore turns out, under examination, to be really unsatisfactory, a potential source of suffering. The notion of selfhood in turn rests upon the two pillars of permanence and pleasure. What is impermanent and unsatisfactory cannot be identified as a self, for it lacks any solid unchanging core upon which the notion of selfhood can be grounded. Thus the impermanent, unsatisfactory phenomena comprised in the five aggregates turn out to have a third characteristic, the aspect of selflessness. The realization of these three characteristics — impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness — through unmediated insight is the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.

Disenchantment (*Nibbida*)

“The Knowledge and Vision of Things as they really are is the Supporting Condition for Disenchantment”: As the yogin contemplates the rise and fall of the five aggregates, his attention becomes

riveted to the final phase of the process, their dissolution and passing away. This insight into the instability of the aggregates at the same time reveals their basic unreliability. Far from being the ground of satisfaction we unreflectively take them to be, conditioned things are seen to be fraught with peril when adhered to with craving and wrong views. The growing realization of this fundamental insecurity brings a marked transformation in the mind's orientation towards conditioned existence. Whereas previously the mind was drawn to the world by the lure of promised gratification, now, with the exposure of the underlying danger, it draws away in the direction of a disengagement. The inward turning away from the procession of formations is called *nibbida*. Though sometimes translated as disgust or aversion, the term suggests, not emotional repugnance but a conscious act of detachment resulting from a profound neotic discovery.

Nibbida signifies in short the serene dignified *withdrawal from phenomena which supervenes when the illusion of their permanence, pleasure and selfhood have been shattered by the light of correct knowledge and vision of things as they are*. The commentaries explain *nibbida* as a powerful insight (*balava vipassana*) an explanation consonant with the word's literal meaning, 'finding out.' It indicated the sequel to the discoveries unveiled by the contemplative process, the mind's appropriate response to the discoveries unveiled by that contemplative process, the mind's appropriate response to the realizations thrust upon it by the growing experiences of insight. *Buddhaghosa* compares it to the revulsion a man would feel who, having grabbed hold of a snake in the belief it was a fish, would look at it closely and suddenly realize he was holding a snake. (Vism. XXI.49-50, *Ñanamoli*, p. 761.48)

As our rendering implies, disenchantment marks the dissipation of an "enchantment" or fascination with the *kaleidoscopic pleasures of conditioned existence*, whether in the form of sense enjoyments, emotions, or ideas. This *fascination, resting upon the distorted apprehension of things as permanent, pleasurable, and self*, is maintained at a deep un verbalized level by the hope of finding self identity in the conditioned. As the enchanted mind presses forward seeking explicit confirmation of the innate sense of selfhood, everything encountered is evaluated in terms of the notions "mine," "I," and "my self," the principal appropriative and identificatory devices with which the inherent sense of personal selfhood works. These three notions, imputed to *phenomena* on account of ignorance, *are in actuality conceptual fabrications woven by craving, conceit, and speculation, respectively*. The insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness cuts the ground out from underneath this threefold fabrication, reversing the mode in which phenomena can be viewed. Whereas before the development of insight the aggregates were regarded as being "mine," "I," and "self," now, when illuminated with the light of insight knowledge, they are seen in the opposite way as "not-mine," "not I," and "not self." Since the fascination with phenomenal existence is sustained by the assumption of underlying selfhood, the dispelling of this illusion through the penetration of the three marks brings about a de-identification with the aggregates and an end to their spell of enchantment. In place of the fascination and attraction a profound experience of estrangement sets in, engendered by the perception of selflessness in all conditioned being. The suttas present this sequence thus:

'Material form, monks, is impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are impermanent, suffering, and not-self. What is impermanent, suffering and non-self, which should be seen with correct wisdom as it really is: "This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self." So seeing, the instructed noble disciple becomes disenchanted with material form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with mental formations, and disenchanted with consciousness.' (SN XXII.15-17)

Dispassion (*Viraga*)

"Disenchantment is the Supporting Condition for Dispassion": In the trail of disenchantment there arises a deep yearning for deliverance from the round of samsaric becoming. Previously, prior to the arrival at correct knowledge and vision the mind moved freely under the control of the impulses of delight and attachment. But now, with the growth of insight and the consequent *disenchantment with conditioned existence*, these impulses *yield to a strong detachment and evolving capacity for renunciation*. Whatever tends to provoke grasping and adherence is immediately abandoned, whatever tends to create new involvement is left behind. The old urges towards outer extension and accumulation give way to a new urge towards relinquishment as the one clearly perceived way to release. Every motion of the will becomes subordinated to the newly ascendant desire for liberation: "Just as a fish in a net, a frog in a snake's jaws, a jungle fowl shut into a cage, ... — just as these are desirous of being delivered, of finding an escape from these things, so too this meditator's mind is desirous of being delivered from the whole field of formations and escaping from it." (Vism. XXI.46. *Ñanamoli*, p. 760.50)

The desire for deliverance leads to a quickening of insight. The capacity for comprehension picks up new speed, depth, and precision. *Like a sword the mind of insight-wisdom cuts through the net of illusions fabricated on account of ignorance; like a light it illuminates phenomena exactly as they are. As the power of insight mounts, driven by the longing for liberation, a point is eventually reached where a fundamental turn-about takes place in the seat of consciousness, effecting a radical restructuring of the mental life.* The beam-like radiance of insight expands into the full luminosity of enlightenment, and the mind descends upon the supramundane path leading directly and irreversibly to final deliverance.

This transformation, signified by *viraga* or dispassion, is the first strictly supramundane (*lokuttara*) stage in the progression of transcendental dependent arising. The earlier links in the sequence leading up to dispassion are all technically classified as mundane (*lokiya*). Though loosely called “transcendental” in the sense that they are directed to the unconditioned, they are still mundane in terms of their scope since they operate entirely within range of the conditioned world. Their objects of concern are still the five aggregates, or things derivative upon them. But with the attainment of dispassion consciousness passes clear beyond the mundane level, and for a fleeting moment realizes as its object the unconditioned state, nibbana.

The shift in standpoint comes about as the immediate consequence of the preceding stages of development. Through insight into the three marks the basic distortions covering over the true nature of phenomena were exposed; with the uncovering of their true nature there set in a disengagement from phenomena. This disengagement led to an attitude of relinquishment and a fading out of desire. Now, having released its grip on the conditioned, the mind turns to the unconditioned, the deathless element (amata dhatu), focusing upon it as the only state fully adequate to itself:

Whatever is there of material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness — he beholds these phenomena as impermanent, suffering, as a disease, a boil, a dart, a misfortune, an affliction, as alien, as decomposing, as empty, as selfless. He turns his mind away from these phenomena; and when he has turned his mind away from them, he focuses his mind on the deathless element, thinking: “This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of the foundations, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbana.” MN 6452

Though the realization of the unconditioned requires a turning away from the conditioned, it must be emphasized that this realization is achieved precisely through the understanding of the conditioned. Nibbana cannot be reached by backing off from a direct confrontation with samsara to lose oneself in a blissful oblivion to the world. The path to liberation is a path of understanding, of comprehension and transcendence, not of escapism or emotional self-indulgence. Nibbana can only be attained by turning one’s gaze towards samsara, and scrutinizing it in all its starkness. This principle — that the understanding of the conditioned is the way to the unconditioned — holds true not only in the general sense that an understanding of suffering is the spur to the quest for enlightenment, but in a deeper, more philosophical sense as well.

The path to nibbana lies through the understanding of contemplation of suffering is called the door to the wishless *samsara* for the reason that the *experiential realization of the unconditioned emerges from a prior penetration of the fundamental nature of the conditioned, without which it is impossible.* The states of mind which realize nibbana are called liberations (*vimokkha*), and these liberations are threefold according to the particular aspect of nibbana they fix upon — the signless (*animitta*), the wishless (*appanihita*), and emptiness (*suññata*). The signless liberation focuses upon nibbana as devoid of the “signs” determinative of a conditioned formation, the wishless liberation as free from the hankering of desire, and the emptiness liberation as devoid of a self or of any kind of substantial identity. Now these three liberations are each entered by a distinct gateway or door called “the three doors to liberation,” (*vimokkhamukha*). (See *Vism.* XX1.66-73, Ñanamoli, pp. 766-769.53)

These three doors signify precisely the contemplations of the three universal marks of the conditioned — impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. Insight into each mark is a different door leading into the realization of the unconditioned. The profound contemplation of impermanence is called the door to the signless liberation, since comprehension of impermanence strips away the “sign of formations” exposing the markless reality of the imperishable to the view of the contemplative vision. The liberation, since understanding of the suffering inherent in all formations dries up the desire that reaches out for them. And deep contemplation of selflessness is called the door to the emptiness liberation, since it exposes the voidness

of substantial identity in all phenomena and hence the unviability of the self-notion in relation to the unconditioned. In each case the understanding of the conditioned and the realization of the unconditioned are found to lock together in direct connection, so that by penetrating the conditioned to its very bottom and most universal features, the yogin passes through the door leading out of the conditioned to the supreme security of the unconditioned.

The supramundane consciousness that realizes nibbana directly penetrates the four noble truths, illuminating them all at once with startling clarity:

“Just, O monks, as a man in the gloom and darkness of the night, at the sudden flashing up of lightning, should with his eyes recognize the objects; just so the monk sees, according to reality: ‘This is suffering, this is the origin of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.’” (AN III.25.54)

The penetration of the truths simultaneously performs four functions, one with respect to each truth. It fully understands (*parijānati*) the first noble truth, the truth of suffering, since by taking nibbana as its object it acquires a perspective from which it can directly see that in contrast to the unconditioned every thing impermanent, defiled, and conditioned is marked with suffering. It abandons (*paṇahati*) the second noble truth, the truth of the origin, since it eradicates the craving and defilements which originate suffering so that they can never arise again. It realizes (*sacchikaroti*) the third noble truth, the truth of cessation, by apprehending nibbana in which all the suffering of *samsara* is permanently cut off. And it develops (*bhaveti*) the path, the fourth noble truth, since at the moment of penetration the eight mental factors comprised in the noble eightfold path concurrently arise performing the task of realization.

Right view sees the unconditioned; right thought directs the mind upon it; right speech, right action, and right livelihood eradicate their opposites; right effort invigorates the mind; right mindfulness fixes attention on the unconditioned, and right concentration unifies the mind in absorption on the unconditioned. The ancients compare the mind’s ability to the burning of a lamp. Just as a lamp simultaneously burns the wick, dispels darkness, creates light, and uses-up the oil, so the supramundane knowledge simultaneously understands suffering, abandons craving, realizes nibbana and develops the path. (Vism. XXII.92, Ñānamoli, p. 808.55)

The breakthrough to the unconditioned comes in four distinct stages called the four supramundane paths. Each momentary path-experience eradicates a determinate group of defilements ranked in degrees of coarseness and subtlety, so that the first path eliminates the coarsest defilements and the fourth path the most subtle. The defilements cut off by the paths are generally classified as ten “fetters” (*samyojana*), receiving this designation because they fetter sentient beings to *samsara*. With the first path the yogin eradicates the first three fetters — personality view, doubt, and misapprehension of rules and observances. Thereby he becomes a “stream-enterer” (*sotapanna*), one who has entered the stream of the Dhamma and is bound for final deliverance in a maximum of seven more lives passed in the human or heavenly worlds. The second path weakens all the remaining fetters to the point where they no longer arise frequently or obsessively, but cuts off none completely; with its attainment the yogin advances to the stage of a “once-returner” (*sakadagami*), one who is due to the state of perfect purification will return to the sense sphere world only one more time. By eliminating sensual desire and aversion by means of the third path, he attains the state of a non-returner (*anagami*), no longer bound to the sense sphere but heading for rebirth in a pure divine abode, where he will reach the final goal. The fourth path cuts off the remaining five fetters — desire for existence in the fine material and immaterial planes, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. With its attainment the yogin becomes an *arahat*, who has destroyed all the defilements and reached

Emancipation (*Vimutti*)

“Dispassion is the Supporting Condition for Emancipation”: *Each of the supramundane path-moments is immediately followed by several moments of a different kind of supramundane experience called “fruition” (*phala*). Fruition marks the enjoyment of the realized degree of release effected by the path’s work of eradicating defilements. Whereas the attainment of the path is an extremely intense exhilarating experience requiring the expenditure of a tremendous quantum of energy, the attainment of fruition is characterized by its peacefulness, relaxedness, and blissful quiescence. If the path-attainment be illustrated by a captive’s sudden bursting of the chains that hold him in captivity, fruition may be compared to his savoring the taste of freedom that lies beyond the captive state.*

The completion of the fourth path and fruition results in full emancipation (*vimutti*): “With the destruction of the cankers, he directly realizes for himself, enters, and abides in that emancipation of mind, emancipation of wisdom, which is cankerless.” (Vism. XXII.92, Ñanamoli, p. 808.55)

The subtlest and most tenacious fetters have been broken, and there is nothing now that makes for further bondage. Having destroyed the mental corruptions at their basic level of latency, the yogin has completed his task. There is nothing more to do, and nothing to add to what has been done. He abides in the living experience of deliverance.

The emancipation realized by the *arahat* has a twofold aspect. One aspect is the emancipation from ignorance and defilements experienced during the course of his lifetime, the other the emancipation from repeated existence attained with his passing away. Through his complete penetration of the four noble truths, the arahat has eradicated ignorance and released his mind from the grip of the passions. The fading away of the passions issues in a stainless purity called emancipation of mind (*cetovimutti*); the fading away of ignorance issues in a radiant awareness called emancipation of wisdom (*pannavimutti*). The mind of the arahat is at once impeccably pure through the absence of attachment and radiantly bright through the luminosity of wisdom. Endowed with this emancipation of mind and of wisdom, he can move and act in the world without being soiled by the mire of the world. He chooses, thinks, decides, and wills free from the compulsion of egoistic habits. The grasping of “I” and “mine” has ceased, the inclination to conceit can no more obsess him. *Having seen the egoless nature of all phenomena he has cut through the tangle of egoistic constructs and become “a sage who is at peace” (muni santo).* MN 6, MN 12, MN 40, etc.57

Since he has destroyed the defilements, whatever disturbances might assail a person on their account no longer assail him. Even though sublime and striking sense objects come into range of his perception they cannot overwhelm his mind: “His mind remains untouched, steadfast, unshakable, beholding the impermanency of everything.” (AN VI.55.)

In the *arahat* greed, hatred, and delusion, the unwholesome roots which underlie all evil, have been totally abandoned. They are not merely suppressed, but withered-up down to the level of their latencies, so that they are no longer able to spring up again in the future. This destruction of greed, hatred, and delusion is called the nibbana realizable during life-time; it is nibbana visible here and now. “In so far as the monk has realized the complete extinction of greed, hatred, and delusion, in so far as nibbana realizable, immediate, inviting, attractive, and comprehensible to the wise.” (AN III.55.)

Because in this attainment the five aggregates continue to function, sustained by bodily vitality, it is also called “the nibbana element with a residue remaining.” *Sa-upadisesa nibbanadhatu.* (See *Itivuttaka* 38.) But though for the *arahat* disturbances due to the defilements do not arise, he is still subject to “a measure of disturbance” conditioned by the body with its six sense faculties. (See MN 121.58)

Though he cannot be overcome by greed and aversion, he still experiences pleasure and pain; though he cannot generate kamma binding to *samsara* he must still choose and act within the limits set by his circumstances. Such experience, however, is for the arahat purely residual. It is merely the playing out of his stored-up kamma from the past, which can still fructify and call forth responses so long as the body acquired through prior craving stands. But because craving has now been inwardly exhausted, there lies ahead for him no renewal of the round of birth and death. *All feelings, being experienced with detachment, not being delighted in, will become cool. They arouse no new craving, provoke no new expectations,* lead to no new accumulations of kamma; they merely continue on devoid of fecundity until the end of the life span. With the break-up of the body at his passing away, the *arahat* makes an end to the beginningless process of becoming. This is the second stage of his emancipation — emancipation from renewed existence, from future birth, aging, and death: “The sage who is at peace is not born, does not age, does not die, does not tremble, does not yearn. For him there does not exist that on account of which he might be born. Not being born, how can he age? Not aging, how can he die?” (MN 140.)

Because, with the emancipation from continued existence, no residue of the aggregates persists, this attainment is called “the nibbana element without residue remaining.” *Anupadisesa nibbanadhatu.* (See *Itivuttaka* 38.59)

The Knowledge of Destruction (*Khaya Ñana*)

“Emancipation is the Supporting Condition for the Knowledge of Destruction”: Following each of the four paths and fruits there arises a retrospective cognition or “reviewing knowledge” (*paccavekkhana ñana*) which reviews the defilements that have been abandoned by the particular path and the defilements remaining to be eliminated. In the case of the last path and fruition, the path and fruition of *arahatship*, the reviewing knowledge ascertains that all defilements have been eradicated and that there are none left to be destroyed. This knowledge certifying the abandonment of the defilements arises immediately after the mind has been liberated from their grip by the full penetration of the four noble truths:

He understands as it really is:

“This is suffering, this is the origin of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the path to the cessation of suffering. These are the cankers, this is the origin of the cankers, this is the cessation of the cankers. This is the path to the cessation of the cankers.”

As he is knowing and seeing thus, his mind is liberated from the canker of sensuality, from the canker of existence, and from the canker of ignorance. When it is liberated, the knowledge arises in him: “It is liberated.” (MN 39)

As the text indicates, this cognizance of the mind’s liberation is direct and personal, without dependence on others. Just as a keen-sighted man can look into a pool of clear, limpid water and see for himself the shells, pebbles, gravel and shoals of fish. The liberated person can look into himself and see that his mind has been set free from the cankers. (Ibid.60)

The retrospective cognition of release involves two acts of ascertainment. The first, called the “knowledge of destruction” (*khaya ñana*), ascertains that all defilements have been abandoned at the root; the second, the “knowledge of non-arising” (*anuppade ñana*), ascertains that no defilement can ever arise again. The two together are also called the “knowledge and their reach, vision of emancipation” (*vimutti ñanadassana*), the use of the word “vision” again underscoring the perceptual immediacy of the cognition by which the mind verifies its own release from the defilements. By possessing this knowledge, one who has destroyed the defilements not only experiences the freedom that results from their destruction, but acquires as well an inner certitude with respect to their destruction.

If a liberated individual only enjoyed liberation from the defilements without also enjoying indubitable knowledge that he is liberated, his attainment would always be haunted by an inner suspicion that perhaps, after all, some area of vulnerability remains. Even though no defilement ever came to manifestation, the shadow of uncertainty would itself mar the attainment’s claim to completeness. However, because the attainment of arahatship automatically generates a retrospective cognition ascertaining the final abandonment of all defilements, there is no room for such a suspicion to arise.

Like a deer in a remote forest far from the reach of hunters, the one who has crossed over attachment to the world walks in confidence, stands in confidence, sits down in confidence, and sleeps in confidence. (MN 26.61) He is out of reach of the defilements, and knows he is out of their reach.

Though the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers is not always set up in the arahat’s awareness, it is permanently available to him, and awaits only his advertence to make itself present. Since the cankers have been eradicated, whenever the *arahat* looks into his mind he can see at once that they have been cut off. The *suttas* illustrate this with a bold simile:

“Sandaka, it is like a man whose hands and feet have been cut off; whether he is walking or standing still or asleep or awake, constantly and perpetually are his hands and feet as though cut off; and moreover while he is reflecting on it, he knows: ‘My hands and feet have been cut off.’ Even so, Sandaka, whatever monk is a perfected one, the cankers destroyed, who has lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained his own goal, the fetters of becoming utterly destroyed, freed by perfect profound knowledge, for him whether he is walking or standing still or asleep or awake, the cankers are as though destroyed; and moreover while he is reflecting on it, he knows: ‘My cankers are destroyed.’” (MN 76, trans, I.B.Horner)

The *arahat* understands that the defilements he has eradicated brought bondage to the round of existence. He sees them as

“defiling, conducive to renewed existence, afflictive, resulting in suffering, leading to future birth, aging, and death.” (MN 36.)

Thence, by witnessing their utter eradication in himself, he gains certainty of his emancipation from the round:

“Unshakable is my emancipation. This is my last birth. There is now no renewal of existence.” (MN 26.62)

Such knowledge remains an inalienable part of the *arahat*'s spiritual inheritance. It is the basis for his assurance of immunity from future becoming. By reason of this knowledge he sounds the lion's roar with which he seals his triumph over the cycle of repeated births:

“Destroyed is birth, lived is the holy life, the task has been completed, there is no returning to this state.”

Thus ends Bhikkhu Bodhi's explication.

In conclusion, we may, once again, quote **Venerable Piyadassi Thera**, to echo the sense of the introduction and leave us with a sense of final unity as follows:

“*Paticca-samuppāda* and the twenty-four conditioning relations (*paccaya*) shown in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the seventh and the last book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, clearly demonstrate how things are multiple-caused. (*anekahetuka*); and in stating that things are neither causeless nor due to one single cause, Buddhism antedated modern science by twenty-five centuries. We see a reign of natural law, beginningless causes and effects and naught else ruling the universe. Every effect becomes in turn a cause and it goes on forever (as long as ignorance and craving are allowed to continue). A coconut, for instance, is the principal cause or near cause of a coconut tree. “X” has two parents, four grandparents, and thus the law of cause and effect extends unbrokenly like the waves of the sea, *ad infinitum*.

It is just impossible to conceive of a first beginning. None can trace the ultimate origin of anything, not even of a grain of sand, let alone of human beings. *It is useless and meaningless to go in search of a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is not an identity, it is a becoming. It is a flux of psychological and physiological changes, a conflux of mind and body (nāma-rūpa).* ‘There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination.’ ...

Instead of a first cause, the Buddha speaks of conditionality. *The whole world is subject to the law of cause and effect, in other words, action and reaction. We cannot think of anything in this cosmos that is causeless and unconditioned.*

As Viscount Samuel says: ‘There is no such thing as chance. Every event is the consequence of previous events; everything that happens is the effect of a combination of multitude of prior causes; and like-causes always produce like-effects. The laws of causality and of the uniformity of nature prevail everywhere and always...’ Buddhism teaches that all compounded things come into being, presently exist, and cease (*uppāda, thiti, bhaṅga*) dependent on conditions and causes.”

Notes:

1. The varying Pali renderings and spellings used by individual authors and Pali scholars will be recognizable to the reader with some background in Theravada Studies. The renderings have not been standardized.
2. References are fortunately checkable because all of the documents quoted herein may be found in their entirety, under their authors and titles, downloadable from the Internet.

3. Grateful thanks are hereby given to the original website providers for access to those documents, above cited, (particularly the BPS), which are in the public domain and may be quoted and distributed for non-commercial purposes.
4. Internet sources usually do not have pagination, so it is unfortunately not always possible to put in the page numbers of the original texts.
5. Any fault caused by editing excerpts and perhaps leaving out related but relevant points is entirely the fault of the editor of these pages.