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John S. Guagliardo, Ph.D., Executive Director
World eBook Library Consortia
P.O. Box 22687
Honolulu, Hawaii 96823
(808) 292-2068
Guagliardo@netlibrary.net

FREEDOM AND BONDAGE:

an exploration of interdependent arising and the interdependently arisen in early Buddhism.

by Patrick Kearney

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"Who sees interdependent arising sees the dhamma;
who sees the dhamma sees interdependent arising.(1)

Who sees the dhamma sees me;
who sees me sees the dhamma.(2)"

ABBREVIATIONS

A Anguttara Nikaya
D Digha Nikaya
M Majjhima Nikaya
S Samyutta Nikaya
Sn Sutta Nipata
Vin Vinaya Pitaka
Vism Visuddhimagga

All translations from the Pali are by the writer

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
 2. The middle way
 3. The arising of the psycho-physical person
 4. The person in bondage
 5. Interdependent cessation
 6. Interdependency
 7. Causation over time
 8. Conclusion
- Bibliography

1. INTRODUCTION

The natural order

The doctrine of interdependent arising points to the structure of reality as experienced. The Buddha discovered this structure of reality under the Bodhi tree, and it was this discovery that turned Siddhattha Gotama into a buddha. Buddhism is a wisdom tradition. Buddha comes from the root budh, "know, wake". A buddha is one who knows, one who is awake; one who knows the nature of things as they are, who has awakened to reality. Where Christianity seeks to overcome the problem of original sin, Buddhism seeks to overcome the problem of original ignorance.

Referring to interdependent arising, the Buddha said:

Whether Tathagatas appear or do not appear this fact of nature remains, this fixed state of nature, this natural order, the conditionality-of-this [idappaccayata].

This is what the Tathagata awakens to, this is what he realises. After

awakening to and realising it he explains, teaches, declares, lays it out, reveals, analyses and clarifies it, saying: "Look!".(3)

Interdependent arising is the "fixed state of nature", the "natural order", which reveals the regularity and pattern in the cosmos as experienced. It is not a description of objectively perceived entities out there in the universe, but concerns one's own consciousness and its interaction with the world(4). Because one's interaction with the cosmos is experienced as orderly, and functions according to laws which are discoverable, liberation from suffering is possible. If events occurred simply according to chance or by inevitable decree of fate, there would be nothing we could do to change our lives; we would be hapless victims of circumstances beyond our control.

As the Buddha, looking back to his awakening(5), explained:

Before awakening, Bhikkhus, when I was a bodhisatta and not a fully awakened one, I thought: "Alas, this world has fallen into misery! One is born, ages and dies; one falls [from one existence] and rises [into another]. And yet escape from this suffering, this ageing and death, is not known. Surely escape from this suffering, this ageing and death, will be discovered!"...

"Arising!" Vision arose in me, Bhikkhus, regarding dhammas previously unheard of; insight, wisdom, knowledge and intuition arose...

"Cessation!" Vision arose in me, Bhikkhus, regarding dhammas previously unheard of; insight, wisdom and knowledge and intuition arose.(6)

The "fixed state of nature" that the Buddha discovered is one of ceaseless change; nothing is fixed, all is shifting. That is, what is fixed is the fact of change, and moreover the fact that things change according to certain patterns of relationship. Everything is subject to arising and cessation according to certain specific conditions. The path of practice consists in living in accordance with these natural conditions in such a way that suffering ceases and freedom arises. Means and end, path and result, are two aspects of the same "natural order". The practice that leads to the cessation of suffering is that of living without interfering with the natural arising and cessation of phenomena; life without interfering with the natural arising and cessation of phenomena is the cessation of suffering.

The doctrine of interdependent arising is therefore central to Buddhism. We suffer because we are ignorant of the natural laws that govern our existence. These laws determine the arising and cessation of phenomena. As we discover these laws, the relationships between things, we learn to let go of arising and cessation, and therefore what arises and ceases. In this way we ensure the cessation of that which causes us suffering and the arising of that which liberates us. The full understanding of these laws constitutes our final goal, awakening.

At the time of the Buddha's awakening two young men, Upatissa and Kolita, were students of the samana (philosopher) Sanjaya, the sceptic. The two friends vowed to each other that whoever awakened first would immediately inform the other. One day, Upatissa saw one of the Buddha's students, Venerable Assaji, going on alms round in Rajagaha. He was so impressed by the appearance of this monk that he approached him and asked for the teaching. Assaji protested that he was a new student and understood little of the Buddha's doctrine. What he did understand he summed up in the following verse:

The Tathagata has spoken of the cause

Of those dhammas produced by a cause,
And also their cessation.
This is the teaching of the Great Philosopher.(7)

Upatissa was immediately awakened to stream entry (sotapatti), the first stage of awakening. He hastened to his friend and repeated the verse. Kolita also attained stream entry. The two men became students of the Buddha, bringing with them the other students of Sanjaya. These two converts became the Buddha's chief disciples, and were known as Sariputta, foremost in wisdom, and Maha-Moggallana, foremost in psychic powers.

This story illustrates the liberating power contained in the teaching of interdependent arising. "Dhammas" are arising and ceasing dependent upon causes; seeing this arising and cessation has the power to transform one's life, here and now.

The twelvefold formula

Interdependent arising is normally presented as consisting of 12 nidanas (ground, foundation, cause) linked in a causal chain which, in its forward order, shows how suffering arises dependent on ignorance, and in reverse order shows how suffering ceases with the cessation of ignorance.

This formula, which later became known as the "wheel of becoming" (bhavacakka), presents a number of problems in interpretation for the modern reader. Its importance is immediately evident as it explains the arising and cessation of suffering, which is the fundamental concern of the Buddha. The individual nidanas themselves create difficulties, as they make up a list of some of the most fundamental terms in Buddhist philosophy. In addition, however, the nature of the relationships between the nidanas present a major obstacle for modern Buddhists in their understanding of interdependent arising.

According to a tradition that has its roots in the Patisambhidamagga, an early treatise which systematically sets out the way to awakening, the causal chain consisting of twelve nidanas takes three lives to complete one cycle. Interdependent arising therefore explains the process of rebirth and the end of rebirth. However, this explanation raises as many questions as it solves. If interdependent arising refers to a process which will come to completion in a future lifetime, what relevance is it to me now? And on what basis can I accept it as true other than that of an act of faith divorced from experience?

An existential problem

In the contemporary world traditional religions and religious world views are under attack from an advancing tide of secular and materialist culture. Buddhists in both East and West are seeking interpretations of traditional teachings which are directly relevant to their lives, and rejecting those that appear to be of merely historical, philosophical or cosmological interest. In the West, many Buddhists do not believe in rebirth and find the notion of liberation from an endless cycle of life after life is not an ideal which inspires them. Western converts to Buddhism are generally attracted to Buddhist meditation techniques for the benefits they provide in this life, not for the hope that rebirth will come to an end some time in the future. Their interest in Buddhism is existential, not cosmological. The same trend is observable among the emerging middle class in modernising Buddhist cultures such as Thailand.

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa was, until his recent death, one of the most influential teachers of Theravada Buddhism in contemporary Thailand. He was renowned as a meditation master, scholar and writer. At his forest monastery in southern Thailand, Wat Suan Mokkhabalarama (or Suan Mokh), more than 1,000 foreigners a year come to study and practice Buddhism.(8) His demythologising approach to Buddhist teachings has a particular appeal for Westerners seeking contact with the ageless wisdom of Buddhism, and for the Thai urban and intellectual middle class, who are at the cutting edge of Thailand's transformation from a traditional Buddhist to a modern secular culture.

For Buddhadasa, interdependent arising is the essence of Buddhism, and it forms the subject matter of most of his writings and talks. Yet he is uncompromising in his attacks on the classical interpretation of interdependent arising extending over three lives. His central objection to this theory is simple: interdependent arising that extends over three lives cannot be practised.

If it is understood in this way what can be done?...How can there be a practice to extinguish suffering when the whole thing is broken apart with the cause in one life and the result in another? So now no benefit is derived from Dependent Origination because it is incorrectly understood and taught so that it straddles three life times although there is only one cycle of Dependent Origination.(9)

Also, to suggest that interdependent arising covers three lifetimes of a person, in which defilements in one life cause karmic results in the next life, makes it into "a teaching of a self, soul, being or person which whirls about in the maelstrom of existence...to teach that paticcasamuppada covers three lives is to undo the Buddha's teaching and teach that there is a self."(10)

Buddhadasa, while himself a scholar, was primarily a teacher of Buddhist practice. He opposed any theory that diverts people from meditation practice and believed that Buddhist orthodoxy actively discourages Thais from seeking the freedom promised by the Buddha. It does this by encouraging an eternalist view that pushes the attainment of nibbana far into the future. Buddhists who should be encouraged to practise for awakening in this life are instead encouraged to make merit for their future lives. For Buddhadasa, the three life theory is at the centre of this eternalist agenda.

The same concern is echoed by other voices within the Theravada. Nanavira Thera was an English bhikkhu who ordained in Sri Lanka and lived there until his death in 1965. He has influenced young Western bhikkhus with his radical and uncompromising attacks on Theravada orthodoxy, again with the three life theory at the centre of his sights. His objection is essentially the same: interdependent arising spread over three lives cannot be seen or realised now.

It is a matter of one's fundamental attitude to one's own existence - is there, or is there not, a present problem or, rather, anxiety that can only be resolved in the present?(11)

Nanavira was strongly influenced by Existentialism, and presented his understanding of interdependent arising in existentialist terms. He distinguishes the existentialist from the scientific method:

The scientist (or scholar) becomes "objective", puts himself right out of the picture...and concerns himself only with abstract facts; the existentialist remains "subjective" (not in the derogatory sense of being irresponsible), keeps himself in the picture, and describes

concrete things (that is, things in relation to himself as he experiences them).(12)

Hence the similarity in language between some existentialist passages and the Nikayas. Both are concerned with the nature of the concrete or specific existence of oneself in the world, rather than with an abstract, objective entity entirely separate from the detached observer. That is, Nanavira believes that the Buddha's teaching is concerned with my present existence; your present existence; and anything that distracts us from this central fact is not true to the teaching.

It is significant that Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana were both sceptics before their conversion to Buddhism. The difficulty that the twelvefold formula creates for people today is partly a product of the scepticism that is inherent in the scientific, secular, materialist culture that dominates the planet. Even in Buddhist countries there is a reluctance to accept doctrines that appear to have no scientific basis or which must be accepted simply on faith. Teachers like Buddhadasa and Nanavira have a wide appeal because they insist on making a pragmatic examination of religious doctrines, no matter how hallowed by tradition, in an attempt to grasp the existential core of their meaning. Only doctrines which can be seen to correspond with the realities of human experience can be expected to survive the analysis of a rational, sceptical age. It is in this context that the question arises: what is the essential meaning of interdependent arising?

This thesis is an exploration of the meaning and significance of interdependent arising in early Buddhism. I will base my examination of interdependent arising on texts found in the Nikayas, especially Samyutta Nikaya. The Nikayas provide us with an account of the Buddha's teaching which is as close to the source as we can hope to get.(13) In addition, they present us with profound and subtle teachings which go to the essence of the Buddhist tradition, and do so in deceptively simple language. While the Nikayas are part of the Theravada scriptural tradition they precede the classical Theravada by centuries, and constitute a heritage common to all subsequent Buddhist traditions.

The subject of interdependent arising is so vast that I cannot hope to consider every aspect, but will confine myself to some fundamental questions which are implicit in the story of Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana:

ù What is the view of reality which underlies the teaching of interdependent arising?; what is meant by the arising and cessation of dhammas?

ù What is the significance of interdependent arising to life as we experience it?; how does an understanding of causation change one's life?

2. THE MIDDLE WAY

The Buddha called his teaching the middle way, and by the use of this term asserted the uniqueness of his doctrine. There are two suttas which together encapsulate the middle way. In the Buddha's first discourse, the Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta, he says:

There are these two extremes, Bhikkhus, which should not be practised by one who has gone out. What two? The practice of sensual enjoyment in relation to sense-objects, which is inferior, common, ordinary, ignoble and not useful; and the practice of self-exhaustion, which is painful

and not useful.

After experiencing both these extremes the Tathagata has fully awakened to the middle way, which leads to tranquillity, higher knowledge, full awakening and nibbana.

And what is the middle way fully awakened to by the Tathagata, productive of vision and insight, which leads to tranquillity, higher knowledge, full awakening and nibbana? This very noble eightfold way, that is: right view; right intention; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right awareness; and right concentration.(14)

The noble eightfold way is the middle way of practice, or of one's way of life. It refers to what one does to gain freedom, and represents the practical aspect of the Buddha's teaching. Most of the suttas are concerned with expounding this noble eightfold way, which is the way from suffering to the cessation of suffering; from bondage to freedom. The Buddha was a practical teacher who was primarily concerned with propagating the practice that results in the experience of freedom. This practical aspect of the teaching, however, is embedded within a doctrinal structure - the "right view" which is the first aspect of the eightfold way. This ontological middle way is expounded in the Kaccayanagotta-sutta:

Venerable Kaccayanagotta said this to the Blessed One:

"'Right view!', Bhante(15), is spoken of. In what respect is there right view?"

"This world is normally reliant upon the duality of existence and non-existence. To one who sees with perfect wisdom, Kaccayana, the arising of the world as it is, there is no 'non-existence' regarding the world. To one who sees with perfect wisdom the cessation of the world as it is, there is no 'existence' regarding the world."(16)

The Buddha's assertion of the ontological middle way between the extremes of existence and non-existence, absolute identity and absolute otherness, was propounded in the context of the two major philosophical theories of his time. These were:

ù Existence (sat, astiva) in the Vedic tradition, which involved a belief in a permanent substratum within the person (atman) and the universe (brahman).

ù Non-existence (asat, nastitva) proposed by the Materialists, which involved a belief in the indestructibility of matter, the annihilation of the personality after death and the denial of any moral responsibility for human actions.'(17)

Existence implies the existence of "things out there" that are independent of me; and the "I in here" who is independent of the things out there. That is, "existence" refers to our conventional view of existing entities, the belief that entities are independent, self-contained, and endure without change over time. "I" am one of these independently existing entities. My belief in this "I" is bound up with notions of substance and attribute.(18) I see that I am constantly changing: my body grows and ages, my beliefs and opinions change and develop, my social circumstances alter over time, and so on. However, I assume an underlying, unchanging substance to whom these changes occur. This substance remains the same, but its various attributes - physical, ideological, social, etc. - change. Similarly, I project the same substance on to the world beyond the boundaries of myself. The world is constantly changing, but I assume an entity

labelled "world" which is undergoing the changes, and which therefore remains the same beneath the surface changes of its attributes. This outlook is programmed into our language. For example, when discussing the weather I may say "It is raining"; I assume a substance called "weather" which has a number of changing attributes: sometimes raining, sometimes shining, sometimes hot, sometimes cold.

Identity assumes otherness. As an independently existing entity I possess a clear border beyond which I am not. The world is that which is not I, that which is separate from me. As such, it constitutes at least a potential threat against which I must defend myself, and a field of activity where I can expand myself and my own interests against the interests of others. The world is necessarily a battlefield.

Non-existence is a corollary of existence. Conceiving self, I conceive other; conceiving that entities exist, it is clear that non-existence too is possible. Entities end; their substance is no more, they cease and are annihilated. The most common form this belief takes is the belief that "I" as an independently existing entity will cease to exist after death.

The Buddha rejected these two views as extremes that go beyond the empirically available evidence of arising and cessation. He saw that all entities are constantly coming into being, changing and disappearing, and no view of existence that ignores either the arising or the cessation of entities can be regarded as encompassing their reality. Further, there is no separate, solid ground upon which this arising and cessation occur. There are no exceptions to this process, no substance to which this process occurs. The process of universal arising and cessation is the middle way between existence and non-existence.

The Buddha developed a technical vocabulary to express his vision of the middle way. Three central terms we need to become familiar with are: idappaccayata; paticcasamuppada; and paticcasamuppanna dhamma.

Idappaccayata

The general principle of interdependent arising is expressed in the compound term idappaccayata. Paccaya is derived from the verb pacceti (pati + i; come back to, fig. fall back on, find one's hold in). Literally meaning "support", its applied meaning is "reason, cause, ground, condition". The other parts of the compound are: ida (this); and the abstract suffix -ta. Idappaccayata refers to the fact that any given experience or phenomenon (ida - this) is supported (paccaya) by something other than itself. That is, any given phenomenon is contingent, coming into existence through phenomena other than itself, and going out of existence through phenomena other than itself. The whole compound can be translated as "the conditionality-of-this".

The general formula which expresses this structural principle is:

Imasmim sati idam hoti; imass 'uppada idam uppajjati.
Imasmim asati idam na hoti; imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati.(19)

When this is, that is; because this arises, that arises.
When this is not, that is not; because this ceases, that ceases.

The first part of the verse uses the locative absolute (imasmim sati), which does not convey causality, but structural or logical coincidence. "When this is, that is" does not say this causes that; it

says this invariably accompanies that. To say that when there is x there is y and when there is no x there is no y is to assert both x and y are contingent. Their "reality" or "substance" depends on that of entities other than themselves, entities whose reality or substance in turn depends on entities other than themselves. Contingency asserts the reality of things to be their lack of independent or separate reality; their substance to be their lack of independent or separate substance.

The second part of the verse is unambiguously causal; because of the arising of this (imass 'uppada), that arises (idam uppajjati). To say because x arises, y arises, and because x ceases y ceases, is to assert causality, which implies change over time. However, the causation of entities is not being asserted, because the notion of independent and separate entities has already been denied. Causation occurs, but no entities are caused.

Idappaccayata expresses the nature of a phenomenon in terms of its relationship with other phenomena. It does not deal with the essence of a phenomenon, but with its movement, its activity; or rather, it sees the essence of any given thing to be its behaviour. Idappaccayata describes a dynamic model of reality, a model of things as processes. The pattern of this process, the behaviour of phenomena, is expressed in our next term.

Paticcasamuppada

Paticcasamuppada is a compound term made up of paticca and samuppada. Paticca is the gerund of the verb pacceti (come back to, fig. fall back on, find one's hold in), and means "grounded on" or "on account of". Samuppada is a compound word from the prefix sam (together) and the verb uppajjati (arise). Samuppada therefore means "arising together", or "co-arising". Paticcasamuppada has been translated in a number of ways, among them "dependent arising", "dependent co-arising", "dependent origination", "conditioned genesis", and "conditioned co-production".

A glance at the translations shows basic agreement except for the use of the prefix sam. Is paticcasamuppada dependent arising or dependent co-arising? Does it refer to production or co-production? Buddhaghosa, the great fifth century commentator, casts light on this question in a playful linguistic analysis found early in the Pannabhuminidessa (Exposition of the ground of wisdom) of his Visuddhimagga.

This totality of dhammas [dhammasamuha] resulting from conditionality [paccayata] which is paticcasamuppada is a term which is regarded in two ways. Befalling [patiyamana] it leads to welfare and happiness, and therefore the wise regard it as worthy to fall back on [paccetum]; so it is paticca. And arising, it arises rightly [samma] and together [saha], not one after another and not causelessly; so it is samuppada. Thus it is paticca and samuppada, so it is paticcasamuppada.

Further, it arises together [saha uppajjati], so it is co-arising [samuppada]; it is dependent upon [paticca] a combination of conditions, not rejecting any. Therefore paticca and samuppada is paticcasamuppada...

This totality of causes...is called paticca, taking it as "united with its opposite" [patimukham ito gato] by the mutuality of its combined factors, in that none are missing and they accomplish a common result. It is called samuppada in that it gives rise to dhammas together, such that each gives rise to the other and they are inseparable in their behaviour. Therefore paticca and samuppada is paticcasamuppada.(20)

Buddhaghosa is emphasising that, in practice, cause and effect manifest as a totality of causes leading to a totality of results, not as a single cause leading to a single result. That is, causation over time refers to totalities, not individual entities. That which is paticca (dependent) is a combination of factors; that which is samuppada (co-arising) is a combination of results. From this we can see that sam applies to both parts of the compound, and expresses the interdependency of causes and causes, effects and effects, and causes and effects; therefore paticcasamuppada is translated here as "interdependent arising".

Paticcasamuppanna dhamma

Dhammas arise and cease; because they arise and cease due to conditions, they are interdependently arisen dhammas (paticcasamuppanna dhamma), or, more simply, the interdependently arisen.

The Buddha's teaching is a "doctrine of analysis" (vibhajjavada). His analysis examines the given world of sense experience, and in so doing sees that entities which appear solid and lasting break up into a series of shifting experiences. They resolve into "dhammas" (Skt., dharmas). A. K. Warder defined the meaning of "dhamma" in this way:

The basic or more original meaning of dhamma appears to have been "nature", what truly exists, true reality, what actually is in the universe. An enumeration of dhammas (plural) will then be a list of what there is in the universe, the entities of which it is composed, its real elements as opposed to less real combinations of them or superficial appearances. In this book we use "principles" for dharma in the sense of these entities, understanding "natural principles", many of them "natural elements" as irreducible principles out of which the universe and all experience is constructed.(21)

For Warder, dhammas are "real elements", the basic building blocks of the universe. However, to understand the meaning of dhammas we must remember that the Buddha was primarily a yogin, not a scientist. Buddhist philosophy arises out of the foundation of Buddhist yogic experience, and can be regarded essentially as an analysis of the self and the world from the viewpoint of one who has awakened. It is an analysis of human experience based on yoga, not science.

As such it is very different from our science-based psychology. Science studies the objective world and assumes a radical division between the subjective and objective aspects of experience, investing "reality" into the objective.(22) In our science-based culture, to call a given view "subjective" is to regard it as at best suspect, very probably false. When we say we are being "objective", we are saying our view should be taken seriously; it is probably true. Subjective and objective in everyday discourse are almost synonymous with false and true.

The Buddha recognised the distinction between subjective (ajjhatta) and objective (bahira), but did not equate subjective with false and objective with true. The inner world of (subjective) experience and the outer world of (objective) facts are equally real, insofar as both of them are simply manifestations of experience.

The Buddha's view of the world is revealed in the Sabba-sutta:

I will teach you everything [sabbam]....

And what, Bhikkhus, is everything? The eye and forms; ear and sounds; nose and scents; tongue and tastes; body and tangible things; mind and phenomena.

Whoever would say, "Rejecting this everything, I declare another everything", the basis for that would be mere words, and if asked he could not sustain it. Furthermore, he would become distressed.

Why is that? Because it is beyond experience (avisaya).(23)

"Everything" is the totality of our experience. That which is beyond experience is, by definition, unknowable. Anything said about what is unknowable can be based only on speculation and logic - "mere words". The field of the known is the field of the six senses (which includes the mental sense of everything thought, felt, seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched in the mind, imagination and memory).(24) The range of the six senses is the known universe, and therefore it is, for us, the universe.

In other words, the world is not an independently existing entity out there which, within our limits, we perceive and relate to; the world is our experience of the world. This does not mean that the world is merely subjective, for sense perception depends upon an object of sense. Nor is the world merely objective, for objects out there are beyond our experience and knowledge except for our perception of them.

That is, dhamma does not refer to "things" which are out there or in here, to substances which possess attributes, but to our experience of things.(25) A dhamma is a thing-as-experienced, or the experience-of-a-thing. Note that the experience-of-a-thing has two essential aspects: the experience and the thing experienced. Remove either and the dhamma does not manifest. This subtle shift in perception is vital for understanding the Buddha's teaching. His concern is with the nature of human experience, not with a scientific, objective description of the world. His concern is pragmatic - the cessation of suffering - not scientific - the development of a new theory.

Hence the Buddha's response to a question posed by a deva (god), who asked:

"Bhante, is it possible for us, by means of movement, to know, see, and arrive at the end of the world, where one is not born, does not age or die, does not fall [from one existence] and rise [into another]?"

"I declare, Friend, I would not, by means of movement, know, see, or arrive at that end of the world where one is not born, does not age or die, does not fall [from one existence] and rise [into another].

Moreover, I declare that within this very fathom-long body, endowed with perception and mind, is the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world, and the practice leading to the cessation of the world."(26)

Here a question which assumes the existence of an objectively existing and material "end of the world" receives an answer which turns the perception of the questioner around to the nature of his own experience, and the practice which illuminates that experience.

When examined with yogic insight, the self and the world resolve into a

series of experiences. These experiences are not random and chaotic, but manifest according to patterns of perceived cause and effect. That is, experiences arise because of causes and cease because of causes. Experiences arise and cease interdependently - all dhammas are interdependent (paticcasamuppanna dhamma).

Indeed, they are dhammas because they arise and pass away interdependently. A fundamental characteristic of "things out there" in our conventional sense of "things" is that they are regardless of our experience of them. A scientist has no experience of an atom, but he knows it is there. I have no experience of Melbourne, but I know it is there. The validity or existence of a "thing" is not affected by whether or not I have any direct experience of it. The Buddha gives the example of a blind man who denies the existence of the sun and moon because he cannot see them. He is wrong, because they do objectively exist.(27)

A dhamma, in contrast, refers to my experience-of-a-thing; it arises and passes away interdependently, because it is dependent on experience. Experience, in turn, is dependent on a functional sense organ (e.g., an eye), a corresponding sense object (form) and the appropriate sense consciousness (eye consciousness), all coming together as contact. The absence of any one of these factors means the dhamma (my experience of seeing "this") does not arise; the dhamma is dependent on the conjunction of these factors.

The thing-in-itself, or the thing out there, however, is not dependent on my seeing it. It is its in-dependence which makes it a thing; it is its inter-dependence, embracing both subjective and objective, which makes it a dhamma. Hence, the most appropriate translation for "dhamma" in the context of paticcasamuppada is not element or principle, but "phenomenon". This translation points out that all we know is what is present to consciousness; there is no "thing-in-itself" beyond the range of consciousness.(28)

Anatta

Central to the Buddha's teaching is the concept that all dhammas are anatta, not-self. This is the subject of his second discourse, the Anattalakkhana-sutta:

"What do you think, bhikkhus, is the body permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent (anicca), Bhante"

"Is that which is impermanent happy (sukha) or painful (dukkha)?"

"Painful, Bhante."

"Is it appropriate to regard that which is impermanent, painful and subject to change: 'This is mine; I am this; this is myself (atta)'?"

"Certainly not, Bhante."

"Is sensation ... perception ... creations ... consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is it appropriate to regard that which is impermanent, painful and subject to change: 'This is mine; I am this; this is myself (atta)'?"

"Certainly not, Bhante"(29)

Belief in attan (Skt.: atman) is characteristic of the thought of the Upanisads, but the Buddha, while also rejecting the Upanisadic teaching, was pointing to something more fundamental than an opposing religious doctrine. He was referring to a universal human view that "I" exist separately from the rest of the universe. My world is divided irrevocably into two aspects: me in here and everyone else out there. This conviction in my separate existence as "I" is characterised by a sense of permanence, in that even though I acknowledge that I was born and will die, yet I remain convinced that the I that was born so many years ago is the same I reading these words, who in turn will be the same I who eventually dies. The teaching of anatta is based on the experience of the yogi who investigates his mind-body process and fails to find any aspect of his experience which actually corresponds to this "I"; he fails to find anyone to whom experience is occurring, who owns the experiencing mind-body. That is, he fails to find any aspect of his experience which is independent of every other aspect.

The absence of a separate, independently existing self is the corollary of the absence of a separate, independently existing world. Separate things and a separate self are two sides of the same coin. When we see "things", we assume the self that sees things; when we construct "things", we assume the self that constructs things. Interdependent arising, however, presupposes no separate self, and therefore no separate things. Or, alternatively, interdependent arising assumes no separate things, and therefore no separate self.

To summarise, interdependent arising, the middle way between the extremes of existence and non-existence, involves three aspects:

ù Idappaccayata (the conditionality-of-this): the general principle that any given phenomenon is contingent. It is dependent upon something else and arises and ceases dependently upon that something else. That is, things depend on each other for their existence.

ù Paticcasamuppada (interdependent arising): the pattern of arising and cessation. What is central here is the behaviour of phenomena rather than their identity; the relationship between phenomena rather than the phenomena themselves. Together, the conditionality-of-this and interdependent arising comprise the structural principle of ourselves and the world as we experience them, the natural order, the fixed state of nature.

ù Paticcasamuppanna-dhamma (the interdependently arisen): what arises and ceases. All phenomena are contingent; all phenomena are dependent upon other phenomena. As the Buddha is primarily concerned with suffering and the cessation of suffering, the phenomena associated with "the middle way which leads to tranquillity, higher knowledge, full awakening and nibbana" receive a detailed analysis. We will begin this analysis in the next chapter.

3. THE ARISING OF THE PSYCHO-PHYSICAL PERSON

What, Bhikkhus, is paticcasamuppada?

Depending on ignorance (avijja), creations (sankhara);
Depending on creations, consciousness (vinnana);
Depending on consciousness, mind-body (nama-rupa);
Depending on mind-body, six sense-spheres (salayatana);
Depending on six sense-spheres, contact (phassa);
Depending on contact, sensation (vedana);
Depending on sensation, craving (tanha);

Depending on craving, clinging (upadana);
Depending on clinging, becoming (bhava);
Depending on becoming, birth (jati);
Depending on birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief
and despair.
Thus this entire mass of suffering (dukkha) arises.

This, Bhikkhus, is called arising.(30)

The most common exposition of paticcasamuppada is contained in the twelvefold formula. In forward order (anuloma), it begins with the arising of ignorance and ends with the arising of suffering; in reverse order (patiloma), it begins with the cessation of ignorance and ends in the cessation of suffering. The twelvefold formula in reverse order will be examined in the next chapter.

The twelvefold formula is essentially an expansion and application of the general formula ("When this is, that is ..."), which it often accompanies in the suttas.(31) Each factor of the formula is a nidana, a word which comes from da, dyati to bind, and the prefix ni, denoting downward direction. Literally "tying down to", nidana means "ground, foundation, cause". The twelvefold formula shows how suffering arises dependent upon the arising of ignorance, and ceases dependent upon the cessation of ignorance. This concern with suffering shows the practical intent of the formula. Its purpose is soteriological, and its subject matter is the nature of human experience. Suffering is not considered as an abstract category but as an inherent aspect of life, so any explanation of the arising of suffering is intimately bound up with an account of the human situation.

Ignorance

And what, Bhikkhus, is ignorance [avijja]? That which is absence of insight [annana] into dukkha, the arising of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha, and the way leading to the cessation of dukkha.(32)

Ignorance is simply ignorance of the four noble truths. The first noble truth asserts the truth of dukkha. Usually translated as "suffering" or "pain", dukkha is a technical term which points to the fact that no experience is perfect; all experience is imperfect, and therefore unsatisfactory. Dukkha ranges from the extremely gross to the extremely subtle. Extreme physical pain is dukkha; the knowledge lurking at the back of the mind during the most blissful experience that this too will end is dukkha. Dukkha can therefore be most accurately translated as "unsatisfactoriness", but here I will follow the usual convention and use "suffering".

Suffering arises and ceases. The fact of arising and cessation, of impermanence, is central to the Buddha's understanding. Suffering has a beginning, and because of that it also has an end. While the Buddha's preoccupation with suffering has caused some scholars to regard Buddhism as pessimistic, this assessment ignores the fact that the necessary corollary to the arising of suffering is its cessation. During a discussion on impermanence the Buddha picked up "a pinch of cow dung" and said:

There is not even this much of oneself [atta-bhava] which is permanent, fixed, eternal, immune to change, that will remain forever just as it is.

If, Bhikkhu, there was even this much of oneself which is permanent,

fixed, eternal, immune to change, this living of the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering would not be known. But because there is not even this much of oneself which is permanent, fixed, eternal, immune to change, the living of the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering is known.(33)

The fact that suffering is not "immune to change" means that it is possible to bring it to an end. Suffering, moreover, arises and ceases interdependently;(34) the development of certain conditions will cause it to cease. The development of such conditions comprises the noble eightfold way, the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

Ignorance arises and ceases within a specific context:

"'Ignorance' is spoken of, Bhante. What is ignorance, and in what respect is one in ignorance?"

"Here, Bhikkhu, an untrained ordinary person does not know, in accordance with truth, the arising of the body. He does not know, as it is, the cessation of the body. He does not know, as it is, the arising and cessation of the body.

"An untrained ordinary person does not know, as it is, the arising of sensation...recognition...creations...the arising and cessation of consciousness. This, Bhikkhu, is called ignorance, and in this respect one is ignorant."

"'Knowledge' is spoken of, Bhante. What is knowledge, and in what respect does one attain knowledge?"

"Here, Bhikkhu, a trained noble disciple knows, as it is, the arising of the body. He knows, as it is, the cessation of the body. He knows, as it is, the arising and cessation of the body.

"A trained noble disciple knows, as it is, the arising of sensation... recognition...creations...the arising and cessation of consciousness.

"This, Bhikkhu, is called knowledge, and in this respect one attains knowledge"(35)

Ignorance is ignorance of the nature of human experience. The knowledge of the arising and cessation of suffering occurs within the psycho-physical person. This echoes the Buddha's declaration that "everything" consists of the field of the six senses (the psycho-physical person and its objects of sense perception), and that the arising and cessation of the world is to be found within "this very fathom-long body, endowed with recognition and mind".

The psycho-physical person consists of five khandhas (factors, aggregates, or subsystems), which together make up the living being. These are: body (rupa); sensation (vedana); recognition (sanna); creations (sankhara); and consciousness (vinnana). The twelvefold formula speaks of mind-body (nama-rupa) and consciousness (vinnana), and these together make up the five khandhas, the living being.

While the twelvefold formula begins with ignorance, this does not mean that ignorance is a First Cause, as God is for theists or prakrti and purusa are for Samkhya. Ignorance is merely "a convenient starting point to explain a series of inter-connected phenomena".(36)

The concept of a "beginning" illustrates a distinction between

conventional, linear causation and interdependent arising. Linear causation assumes a one-way flow of influence from the cause A to the effect B:

A >> B >> C >> D...(37)

Such a model assumes a first point from which causation begins: a causeless cause. Since, however, every cause that we actually experience arises as an effect from a previous cause, we have no actual experience of the original causeless cause. It remains "mere words". As the causeless cause remains beyond experience, it is dismissed by the Buddha.

Unthinkable (anamata) is the beginning of this continual moving along (samsara). A time prior to the continual moving and running along of beings bound by craving and hindered by ignorance is unknown (na pannayati).(38)

Further, ignorance is itself interdependently arisen.

The beginning of ignorance is not seen [na pannayati], Bhikkhus, such that one could say: "Previously there was no ignorance, and then ignorance arose". Further, it is seen that ignorance is dependent on something [idapaccaya]. Ignorance, I declare, is with support [ahara], not lacking support. And what is the support of ignorance? The five hindrances is the answer.(39)

The five hindrances (panca nivarana) are the hindrances to the attainment of concentration. They are: sense desire; ill-will; mental stiffness and dullness; restlessness and worry; and sceptical doubt. Far from being a causeless cause or origin of the cosmos, ignorance is an existential beginning. It is the not-knowing of the confused, dull mind of the "untrained ordinary person", one who is untrained in meditation (bhavana). As such, it is the necessary starting point for one who wishes to travel the noble eightfold way to the cessation of suffering.

Creations

Sankharas arise dependent on ignorance. The meaning of sankhara remains one of the most difficult problems in Buddhism, which is reflected in the number of different translations suggested for the word. Rune Johansson lists some of them: activity, habitual tendency, effort, aspiration, accumulation, construction, kamma-formation, kammic residue, condition, propensity, factor, thing, component thing, created thing, complex, constituent part, element of existence, trouble(40). To this list we can add dispositions(41), concoctions(42), and plastic forces(43).

In the Nikayas, sankharas include possessions, both animate and inanimate: towns, cattle, clothing, jewels, etc. The earth, rivers and ocean are sankharas. The contents of mind during the practice of samadhi are sankharas, as are false views. Human activities are sankharas: breathing, initial and sustained thought, recognition and sensation. Further, sankharas are invariably mentioned in the plural - there always appears to be a number of them.(44)

Sankhara is a noun derived from the verb karoti (to build, make, produce, act, perform, do) and the prefix sam (with, together). Sankharoti therefore means "to put together; to construct". From this we can see the common aspect of all the things listed as sankharas;

they are all put together, constructed, compounded, created - they are sankhata (the past participle of sankharoti). Further, they in turn put together, construct, compound and create.

During the discussion on impermanence referred to above, the Buddha went on to describe his life as King Mahasudassana in a previous existence, and the power and wealth he enjoyed. All Mahasudassana's possessions were described as sankharas. The Buddha concluded:

In this way, Bhikkhus, all of these sankharas of the past have vanished, have changed. So impermanent are sankharas, so unfixed and unconsoling, that one is sure to be disenchanted with all sankharas, sure to have one's passion fade, sure to be liberated.(45)

Because these possessions are seen to be impermanent and unfixed, they are seen to be unconsoling, ultimately futile. Hence, disenchantment (nibbida) arises, passion fades and liberation is won. The reason why they are impermanent is that they are sankhata - put together, constructed, composite. They are made up of parts, so they must ultimately break up, fall apart. Further, they are sankhara - they put together, construct. The owner of all these possessions was King Mahasudassana, and it was these royal possessions which made him into King Mahasudassana. Mahasudassana's sense of himself, his self-nature (attabhava) or sense of identity, comes from his position as king, which in turn is produced by his immense wealth of goods, slaves and soldiers.

Hence the Buddha's definition of sankhara:

And why, Bhikkhus, do you say "sankharas"? "They create the created" [abhisankharonti sankhatam], therefore they are called "creations" [sankhara]. And what is the created that they create?

They create created form into its present state [rupam rupattaya sankhatam abhisankharonti]; ... created sensation into its present state; ... created recognition into its present state; ... created creations into its present state; ... they create created consciousness into its present state. Therefore they are called "creations" [sankhara].(46)

Buddhadasa gives three meanings for sankhara:

The single word "sankhara" can mean "conditioner", the cause that conditions; it can mean "condition", the result of the action of conditioning; and it can mean "conditioning", the activity or process of conditioning. We use the same word for the subject of the conditioning, "the concocter", as well as the object, "the concoction". We even use it for the activity, "the concocting", itself.(47)

Nanavira translates sankhara as "determination", as it determines other things. He argues that sankhara, "in all contexts, means 'something that something else depends upon'".(48)

The Buddha is attempting to provoke the insight that "I" am not an independently existing self (attan). This insight manifests when I see that my sense of self depends upon supports that are impermanent. If what I depend upon is impermanent, then I must be impermanent. Mahasudassana realised his identity depended on his possessions. With the cessation of these possessions, the thought "I am King Mahasudassana" ceased.(49) The possessions, therefore, are sankharas, because they create, condition, concoct, or determine something other than themselves.

Sankharas are interdependently arisen phenomena (paticcasamuppanna dhamma). If we regard them as meaning some kind of "thing", then the word covers so many meanings that it becomes meaningless. However, sankhara does not refer to a thing, but the fact that the thing - any thing - is constructed, put together, made, and in turn constructs, puts together, makes. Sankhara refers to constructive processes rather than things; the relationships between things rather than the things themselves.

Experience is endlessly changing: things turn into other things, which means things create other things. Like dhammas, which refer to our relationship with things (our experience of things), sankhara refers to the relationships between things, the fact that things create other things, and these other things (the created - sankhata) are therefore dependent on them (the creating - sankhara). Here I follow Johansson in emphasising the creative aspect of sankhara, and translate it as "creations".

Consciousness

Sankharas create consciousness; that is, consciousness is dependent on something other than itself for its existence.

Why, Bhikkhus, does one say "consciousness" [vinnana]? One cognises [vijanati], therefore one says consciousness [vinnana].

What does one cognise? One cognises sour, bitter, pungent, and sweet. One cognises alkaline and non-alkaline, salty and non-salty. One cognises [vijanati], therefore one says "consciousness" [vinnana](50). Consciousness is defined by its action: consciousness is that which cognises or knows an object. Here, tongue or taste consciousness is used as an example of the cognising function of all forms of consciousness. (Definition by example is common in the Nikayas.) Another definition focuses on the objects that are cognised:

And what, Bhikkhus, is consciousness? There are these six classifications of consciousness: eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness and mind consciousness. This, Bhikkhus, is called "consciousness"(51)

Note that there is no consciousness without an object (arammana); there is no such thing as pure consciousness. Consciousness is always consciousness of something, consciousness arises dependent upon something else. In turn, the object of consciousness arises dependent upon consciousness, for without consciousness the object could not be discerned. Consciousness is therefore both creating (sankhara) and created (sankhata); the object of consciousness is also both creating and created. Both that which creates and that which is created is an interdependently arisen phenomenon (paticcasamuppanna dhamma).

Consciousness is the presence of the phenomenon, the object of consciousness. Hence its mutually dependent relationship with mental and physical phenomena (nama-rupa), which constitute what is present.(52) The phenomenon and its presence together compose the experience. Consciousness, having arisen dependent upon creations, in turn gives rise to mind-body. However, the relationship is not linear, or one-way. If consciousness depends on its object, and the discernment of the object depends on consciousness, then we would anticipate a relationship of mutual dependence between consciousness and mind-body, rather than just: "depending on creations, consciousness; depending on

consciousness, mind-body." This, indeed, is what we find, as Sariputta explains to Maha-Kotthita:

Just as, Friend, two sheaves of reeds would stand leaning against each other, in the same way consciousness is conditioned by mind-body, mind-body is conditioned by consciousness....

If, Friend, one should pull one of these sheaves of reeds toward oneself, the other would fall; and if one should pull the other towards oneself, the first would fall. In the same way, the cessation of consciousness comes from the cessation of mind-body; the cessation of mind-body comes from the cessation of consciousness.(53)

Consciousness plays an integral part in the arising of suffering:

And what, Bhikkhus, is the arising of suffering?

Dependent upon eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The combination of the three is contact. Sensation is conditioned by contact; craving is conditioned by sensation. This, Bhikkhus, is the arising of suffering.(54)

The same process occurs for the other senses. No matter what form consciousness takes, it gives rise to sensation and craving, and therefore suffering. Consciousness is part of a process of growth and development which creates further becoming:

What one intends, determines and has dormant in one's mind is an object [arammana] for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is an object, there is a support [patittha] for consciousness. When this support for consciousness grows, further becoming is produced in the future. When further becoming is produced in the future, there arise together [sambhavanti] ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.(55)

Consciousness is intimately bound up with becoming and suffering because of the ingrained tendency to identify with it. For untrained ordinary people, consciousness is not just the presence or cognition of the phenomenon, but the one who cognises. When consciousness arises dependent on ignorance, consciousness is always regarded as self (attan). From this comes the intimate relationship between ignorance, intention, consciousness and suffering.

If one who is ignorant, Bhikkhus, creates a meritorious creation [punnam sankharam abhisankharoti], consciousness is attached to merit. If one creates an unmeritorious creation, consciousness is attached to demerit. If one creates a motionless creation, consciousness is attached to motionlessness.

When, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu's ignorance is abandoned and understanding developed, he, because of the fading of ignorance and the arising of understanding, does not create a meritorious creation; he does not create a demeritorious creation; he does not create a motionless creation.

Not creating [anabhisankharonto], not planning [anabhisancetayanto], he clings to nothing in the world. Not clinging, he is not disturbed; not disturbed, he is completely freed [parinibbayati] within himself. He knows: birth is exhausted; the holy life is fulfilled; duty is done;

there is no more of this.(56)

The arising of consciousness in the forward order of the twelvefold formula is the arising of consciousness in the untrained ordinary person, for whom "This is present" means "This is present to me"; it is the arising of consciousness in one who assumes that "I am conscious of this"(57). It is, for all practical purposes, simply impossible for the ordinary, untrained person to break the power of this identification.

It may be, Bhikkhus, that an untrained ordinary person would be wearied of this body consisting of the four great elements, detach himself from it, and wish to be liberated from it. Why is that? The growth and decay, the taking up and putting down of this body consisting of the four great elements is seen....

But the untrained ordinary person is not able to be wearied of this which is called "inner space" [citta], "inner sense" [manas] or "consciousness" [vinna] (58), is not able to be detached and liberated from it. Why? For a long time, Bhikkhus, the untrained ordinary person has hung on to, has been attached to, and has grasped it as: "This is mine; I am this; this is myself"....

Just as a monkey going through a forest or along a mountain side takes hold of a branch, releases it, and grasps another, just so this which is called "inner space", "inner sense" or "consciousness" arises as one thing and ceases as another, both by day and by night.(59)

The arising of the view, "This is mine; I am this; this is myself", is the arising of mind-body dependent on ignorance. When I am possessed of a sense of an independently existing self I interpret all my experience as "This is my experience"; "This is happening to me". The supposed independently existing self is a product of confusion: it does not actually exist. In Chapter 2 we saw the statement "It is raining" expresses the assumption that there is some "thing" which rains. If I searched for the "it" out there which is raining, I would fail to find it. There is just the process of raining. Similarly, although I say "I" and "mine", when I investigate my own mind-body process I fail to find the entity which is doing the existing or owning; there is just the mind-body process.

Despite this fact I construct myself by developing a sense of being a separate identity. The sense of identity includes both the bundle of mental and emotional processes we call ego and a sense of identification with the ego - the notion that "I am my ego". As an independent entity I am necessarily concerned with my life, my career, my security, my relationships. This process of construction and creation is sankhara, and it in turn confirms and develops my sense of identity, of ownership of experience: "Depending on ignorance, creations; depending on creations, consciousness". As consciousness is owned, so too are the objects of consciousness, mental and physical phenomena, or mind-body: "Depending on consciousness, mind-body".

Six sense-spheres and contact

And what, Bhikkhus, are the six sense-spheres [salayatana]? The eye sense-sphere, the ear sense-sphere, the nose sense-sphere, the tongue sense-sphere, the body sense-sphere, and the mind sense-sphere. This, Bhikkhus, is called the six sense-spheres.(60)

The six sense-spheres (sal-ayatana) arise dependent on mind-body.

Ayatana is derived from a + yam, to stretch or spread out. It indicates the extent, reach or sphere of the senses. The six sense-spheres are the six functioning sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and their appropriate objects (forms, sounds, scents, tastes, tangible things and mental phenomena). They arise interdependently. A functioning sense organ, that is, a sense organ capable of responding to sense-stimuli(61), requires an object of sense, a source of stimulus. An object of sense is not present without a functioning sense organ. Experience arises from the relationship between sense organ and sense object(62). The convergence of functioning sense organ, its appropriate sense object and its presence to consciousness is contact or stimulus (phassa). Hence, the six sense-spheres give rise to contact.

And what, Bhikkhus, is contact [phassa]? There are these six classifications of contact: eye contact, ear contact; nose contact; tongue contact; body contact; and mind contact. This, Bhikkhus, is called "contact"(63).

Contact is the communication between the psycho-physical person and the inner and outer world. As such, it cannot occur without functioning sense organs, their objects of recognition, and the appropriate consciousness.

Just as consciousness and mind-body are inseparable because consciousness and its objects are inseparable, so mind-body is inseparable from the six sense-spheres, as functioning sense organs and their objects of recognition are inseparable. The union of sense organ and sense object is contact. Any one of these phenomena are unimaginable without the others. We can break up the ignorance / creations / consciousness / mind body / six sense-spheres / contact nexus for purposes of intellectual analysis, but not in lived experience. They arise together as a single complex of interdependent identity, and therefore they are interdependently arisen.

The psycho-physical person is a single unit made up of a complex of interlinked processes. Without those processes and their interconnections there would be no person; and the absence of any one of these processes changes one person into another. Someone, for example, who is blind will develop in ways which are quite different from how he would have developed had he possessed vision. The experienced world of a blind person is different from that of a sighted person. The inter-relationships between the person and his experienced world create both the person and the world which is experienced.

The defining characteristic of the created person in the twelve fold formula is, from the Buddha's point of view, the fact that all these processes are based upon, and inseparable from, ignorance. The person thus created is one who assumes his or her separate, independent existence is standing at the centre of the experienced universe. Such an existence is characterised by suffering. How this "untrained ordinary person" functions is the subject of the next chapter.

4. THE PERSON IN BONDAGE

The fact that nama-rupa (mind-body) is a compound illustrates how neither mind nor body is found alone. Mind is always supported by a physical structure (even if a very subtle one, as for devas), and body without mind quickly decays. In lived experience, mind-body is always accompanied by consciousness. Mind, body and consciousness together make up a single being, the physical, mental and emotional person. A

person is not an indivisible and solid entity, but a complex of processes. The Buddha called the processes that constitute the person the five khandas (panca khandha).

Usually the five factors are referred to as the five clung-to factors (panca-upadana-khandha). This term expresses the relationship between the untrained ordinary person and "his" mind-body. We do not simply experience mental and physical phenomena, we claim them as our own and identify with them as "me" and "mine". Wanting to possess, I believe that body and mind are mine; wanting to be someone, I believe that I am my body, I am my mind. Clinging and the five factors, while distinct, are inseparable in lived experience.

"on what, Bhante, are these five clung-to factors based?"

"These five clung-to factors are based on desire [chanda]."

"Is clinging [upadana] the five clung-to factors, or is clinging somewhere other than the five clung-to factors?"

"Clinging is not the five clung-to factors, nor is clinging somewhere other than the five clung-to factors; but where there is desire and passion [raga], there is clinging."(64)

The five clung-to factors consist of: body (rupa); sensation (vedana); recognition (sanna); creations (sankhara); and consciousness (vinnana). These phenomena arise from causes. They are interdependently arisen, and their arising can be seen by meditative insight. The Buddha explains the causes of these five clung-to factors:

The four great elements, Bhikkhu, are the cause (hetu), the four great elements are the condition (paccaya) for the disclosure of the body factor (rupa-khandha). Contact (phassa) is the cause, contact is the condition for the disclosure of the sensation factor (vedana-khandha). Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the disclosure of the recognition factor (sanna-khandha). Contact is the cause, contact is the condition for the disclosure of the creations factor (sankhara-khandha). Mind-body (nama-rupa) is the cause, mind-body is the condition for the disclosure of the consciousness factor (vinnana-khandha).(65)

Body

The four great elements (mahabhuta) are: earth-element (pathavi-dhatu); water-element (apo-dhatu); fire-element (tejo-dhatu); and air element (vayo-dhatu). They refer to the nature of physical experience rather than physical elements in the modern sense. Earth-element is the experience of softness and hardness, or resistance; water-element is the experience of fluidity and cohesion; fire-element is the experience of temperature, whether cold or hot; and air-element is the experience of movement, tightness and tension(66). These experiences can be subjective or objective, but in every case they have these characteristics. Again we encounter this fundamental aspect of the Buddha's view of reality: the world is our experience of the world; the physical elements are the irreducible units of our experience of the physical world.(67)

Hence the Buddha's definition of body (rupa):

Why, Bhikkhus, do you say "body" [rupa]? One is afflicted [ruppati], therefore it is called "body". What is one afflicted by? One is afflicted by cold, heat, hunger, and thirst; one is afflicted by

contact [samphassa] with snakes, wind, heat, mosquitos and gadflies. One is afflicted [ruppati], therefore it is called "body".(68)

This definition is based on a word play with the verb ruppati which, despite its similarity, is not etymologically related to rupa. The definition is made within the context of the Buddha's conviction that physical experience is essentially unpleasant (dukkha). The point is that what defines "body" is the way in which a person is affected by the experience of physical phenomena. That is, "unless the experience of such phenomena are available, it is meaningless to speak of material form"(69). Or, as Johansson says:

The body is a collection of observed processes. Without vinnana there would be no consciousness of our own body, i.e. no body-processes.(70)

All physical experiences, when closely examined, resolve into one or more of the four elements of hardness/softness, fluidity, temperature and movement/tension. In brief, the body is the experience of the body.(71)

Sensation

And why, Bhikkhus, do you say "sensation" [vedana]? One senses [vediyati], therefore it is called "sensation". What does one sense? One senses what is pleasant [sukha], unpleasant [dukkha] and neither pleasant nor unpleasant [adukkhamasukha]. One senses, therefore it is called "sensation".(72)

Vedana is the hedonic or affective aspect of experience: the automatic discernment of experience as being either pleasant, unpleasant or neither. It is usually translated as "feeling", but the English word "feeling" is associated with emotion, which is not meant here. Vedana is not emotion, but simply the registering of every experience, the direct sensation, as either pleasant, painful, or neutral. In a conversation with Visakha, Ayya(73) Dhammadinna explains:

Whatever physical or mental experience is pleasant [sukha] or agreeable [sata] is pleasant sensation; whatever physical or mental experience is unpleasant [dukkha] or disagreeable [asata] is unpleasant sensation; whatever physical or mental experience is neither agreeable nor disagreeable is neutral sensation.(74)

At the root of our psychological makeup is an inbuilt attraction for the pleasant and aversion for the unpleasant. We all want happiness and seek to avoid pain. Visakha asks Dhammadinna:

"What tendency [anusaya] lies dormant [anuseti] in pleasant sensation, Ayya; what tendency lies dormant in unpleasant sensation; what tendency lies dormant in neutral sensation?"

"A tendency towards passion [raga] lies dormant in pleasant sensation; a tendency towards revulsion [patigha] lies dormant in unpleasant sensation; and a tendency towards ignorance [avijja] lies dormant in neutral sensation.(75)

This attraction and aversion has nothing to do with choice or intention, just as the instant reaction of "I don't like this" when I accidentally burn my hand is not intentional. As sensation is a direct response to sense stimulus, it is caused by contact.

Recognition

And why, Bhikkhus, do you say "recognition" [sanna]? One recognises [sanjanati], therefore it is called "recognition". What does one recognise? One recognises blue-green, yellow, red, and white. One recognises, therefore it is called "recognition".(76)

Recognition takes the raw percept, then classifies and interprets it. The eye sees forms, which are simply shifting patterns of colour. Recognition takes the changing patterns of colour and, on the basis of past experience, interprets them as "man close by", "woman further away", "house in the distance", etc. Walpola Rahula explains:

It should be clearly understood that consciousness does not recognise an object. It is only ... awareness of the presence of an object. When the eye comes in contact with a colour, for instance blue, visual consciousness arises which simply is awareness of the presence of a colour; but it does not recognise that it is blue.... It is perception [sanna] ... that recognises that it is blue. The term "visual consciousness" is a philosophical expression denoting the same idea as is conveyed by the ordinary word "seeing". Seeing does not mean recognising.(77)

Eye consciousness sees a pattern of black symbols against a white background; recognition recognises written words on a page. Hearing consciousness hears random sounds; recognition recognises some of them as words expressing meaning and some as background noise. Similarly with the other senses: recognition takes the raw data of experience and recognises patterns and structures based on our past experiences. Recognition is made up of "a mixed bag of memories, concepts, dispositions, and material elements".(78) From it "we carve out discrete objects out of the flux of experience"(79). Like sensation, recognition is based directly on sense experience, and is therefore caused by contact.

Creations

We saw in the last chapter that the general term sankhara refers not to any particular phenomenon, but to the fact that the phenomenon in question is constructed, put together, made, and in turn constructs, puts together, makes. Sankhara refers to constructive processes rather than things.

Note that vedana, sanna, sankhara and vinnana are defined in terms of their activity: sensation is sensing, recognition is recognising, creations are creating, consciousness is cognising. There is not some "thing" in the mind which can be labelled "recognition" or "consciousness"; rather, there are processes of ongoing activity, and for purposes of linear thought and analysis we abstract "things" or "entities" from these processes. It is a different, and, for us, unusual, standpoint - that of interdependent arising and interdependently arisen phenomena - where instead of beginning with entities and proceeding to their actions and the relationships between them, we begin with the experience of interrelated processes and from these infer the existence of entities. Even the solid, material body is a process: one of being afflicted or affected. Hence, all these phenomena are sankharas.

In the context of the five factors, however, sankhara has a more specific meaning:

And what, Bhikkhus, are "creations" [sankhara]? There are these six

types of intention [sancetana]: intention regarding forms ... sounds ... scents ... tastes ... touches ... (mental) phenomena. These are called "creations".(80)

In the context of the five clung-to factors, sankharas are all those mental events that involve intention or volition. Both vedana and sanna are automatic: we do not have to intend to feel pleasure or pain as we experience the events that make up our lives; pleasure and pain simply manifest. We do not have to intend to recognise the sounds of our names when we hear them; recognition simply manifests. Vedana and sanna are beyond the realm of choice, and therefore beyond the realm of moral responsibility. We cannot do anything about the fact that we feel pleasure and pain, or that we understand one language and not another; these are simply givens of experience. Although experienced as givens, they are already the result of a complex process of interpretation which has turned the raw data of experience into a meaningful world populated by the everyday objects and entities our senses present to us. Creations, however, involve choice. They constitute the higher level processing of sense data, what we choose to do with this everyday world. Because creations are based on sense stimulus, they too are caused by contact.

Creations are kamma (action), the realm of moral responsibility:

Intention [cetana], I declare, is action [kamma]: after intending one performs action of body, speech or mind.(81)

The Buddha goes so far as to say that the body itself is simply old kamma that has been intended [abhisancetayita] and performed [abhisankhata](82). My body in the condition it is today is the result of innumerable decisions taken regarding, for example, what and how I eat and drink, how and to what extent I exercise. A different lifestyle will result in a different body in the future.

Kamma begins as plans and intentions, and develops into actions of body and speech. The actions we take and the choices we make determine the development of our bodies and minds, our lives, and our identities, in an ongoing process of becoming. In brief, we are our actions; identity is a verb:

One is a farmer by action, a craftsman by action,
A merchant by action, a servant by action.

One is a thief by action, a soldier by action,
A priest by action, a king by action.

Thus the wise see action as it is,
Seeing interdependent arising, understanding action and its result.(83)

The wise do not see people and their actions, in-dependently existing entities and their attributes. They see an inter-dependently arisen pattern of actions and results, and for purposes of communication use conventional terms such as "farmer", "priest", etc. They are not deceived by these words, however, as they do not reify the phenomena indicated by them into separately existing selves.

Consciousness

Consciousness (vinnana) arises along with the other factors, as an integral aspect of a wider system.

If one were to say: "I will declare the coming or going, the death or birth, the increase, growth or full development of consciousness somewhere other than the body, sensation, recognition and creations"; this is impossible.(84)

This is essentially a restatement of: "Depending on consciousness, mind-body; depending on mind-body, consciousness". Consciousness, the presence of the object, arises dependent upon the object which is present - the sense object - and the functioning sense organ. When any of the five factors are present to awareness, then there is consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is inseparable from the experience of the five factors. Consciousness acts like a spotlight on a dark night, bringing into the light of awareness specific aspects of the wider functioning of the mind-body process.

Contact

Contact is the "coming together" (sangati) of consciousness with an object through a sense faculty. Contact is the communication between the psycho-physical person and the inner and outer world. Where there is contact, there is sensation and recognition, as we process the raw data of sense perception. Hence, sensation, recognition and consciousness are interdependent, as Sariputta explains to Maha-kotthita:

Sensation, recognition and consciousness, Friend, are united, not separate, and it is not possible to distinguish any difference between them, even after repeatedly sifting through them.

What one senses, one recognises; what one recognises, one cognises. Hence these phenomena are united, not separate, and it is not possible to distinguish any difference between them, even after repeatedly sifting through them.(85)

The five factors are distinguished for purposes of analysis, but in lived experience they, like the other factors of the twelfold formula, arise together as a single complex of interdependently arisen phenomena. When one is present, all are present.

In the twelfold formula, contact is mentioned only as the condition of sensation. However, we have seen that the Buddha also saw contact as the condition of recognition and creations. It appears that the twelfold formula, in declaring "depending on contact, sensation", is using sensation as an example of a wider process. This is another instance of definition by example, and its use here alerts us to the possibility that the twelfold formula is not meant to be a complete exposition of interdependent arising, but rather a series of examples used to illustrate aspects of a wider structural principle.

Craving / clinging / becoming

Where there is experience there is a sense of pleasure and pain, and therefore an automatic tendency to turn toward and cultivate what gives pleasure, and turn away from and avoid what gives pain. As Dhammadinna explained above, passion (raga) lies dormant in pleasant sensation, revulsion (patigha) in unpleasant sensation, and ignorance (avijja) in neutral sensation. These tendencies must be abandoned.(86) If they are not, there is craving (tanha).

And what, Bhikkhus, is "craving" [tanha]? There are these six

classifications of craving: craving for forms, sounds, scents, tastes, tangible things, and (mental) phenomena. This is called "craving"(87).

Tanha literally means "thirst". It is simple want, like the desire for a drink when one is thirsty. We want forms, scents, tastes, tangible things, and (mental) phenomena that provide us with pleasant sensations. We also want to avoid or bring quickly to an end unpleasant sensations. Such wants are entirely natural, and are an inherent aspect of sentient existence. However, wants do not remain simple and natural, any more than we satisfy our thirst simply and naturally with water. Craving tends to be cultivated, and when cultivated develops into clinging (upadana) and becoming (bhava).

Craving develops for the one who lives contemplating the enjoyment regarding the things that are clung to [upadana dhamma]. Clinging conditions becoming; becoming conditions birth; birth conditions ageing and death; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and arise together. Such is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.(88)

Craving is part of a continuous process of psychological development. I realise I am thirsty and begin to think of what I would like to drink - perhaps a cold beer. My desire is cultivated and refined, influenced by tastes and by imagined images of satisfaction in the future that themselves are the products of habits cultivated over a lifetime. To satisfy my desires I make plans to gain the necessary money. I plan my life to ensure I will always have the money necessary to satisfy this and other desires. I feel comfortable with people who share my desires and spend my time with them, perhaps at the local pub. At work, I find myself looking forward to my time with my mates at the pub. Over time, it may be I find my life revolves around the physical, emotional and social satisfactions that come from the neck of a beer bottle. From a simple desire, I have constructed a life and an identity. This is the maturing of a journey beginning with craving and proceeding through enjoyment and clinging. Its end result is a personality defined by its desires for specific types of sense (including mental) satisfaction. As the Buddha says:

What one is desiring [kamayamana] gives rise to its appropriate personality [attabhava], whether favourable or unfavourable.(89)

Upadana is one of a number of terms from the same root which contain a complex of related meanings. Upadana is "that ... by means of which an active process is kept alive or going". It comes from: upa, denoting nearness or close touch, with the idea of approach from below or rest on top; a, "towards (oneself)"; and da, "to give". It can mean "taking up"; or "that which is placed under, support".(90)

In terms of the first meaning, upadana means "clinging". One takes up, clings to and develops simple wants which are rooted in pleasurable and painful sensations. Sense experiences and personality processes are taken up, collected and developed, and in this way a personality is formed.(91) One "becomes" someone of specific character and identity; clinging (upadana) conditions becoming (bhava). This development is characteristic of consciousness, which develops by way of clinging into the presence to me of experience, the owner of experience, the one who experiences.

Should consciousness remain clinging to body [rupa-upaya], with body as its object and its support in the pursuit of delight, it would undergo increase, growth and full development.

Should consciousness remain clinging to sensation ... recognition ... creations, with creations as its object and its support in the pursuit

of delight, it would undergo increase, growth and full development.(92)

In terms of the second meaning, upadana can mean "fuel", that which supports a fire. The self-in-process is likened to a great fire (aggi-khandha), "consuming and constituted by its impressions, fuelled by sights, sounds, touch, tastes, smells, mental objects, and driven by the wants that they awaken ... "(93). Hence, after explaining that "craving develops for the one who lives contemplating the enjoyment regarding the phenomena that are clung to (upadana dhamma)", the Buddha goes on to say:

For example, if one was to light a great fire of ten, twenty, thirty or forty cartloads of wood, and a person was, from time to time, to throw into it dry grass, dry cowdung and dry sticks; such a great fire, fed [ahara] and supplied with fuel [upadana], would burn for a long time.(94)

A fire is interdependently arisen; it arises dependent on nourishment (ahara) and fuel (upadana), and is inseparable from these factors. Its nature and identity is dependent on the nature of the fuel; hence, we call it a bush-fire, house-fire, coal-fire, etc. Dependent upon the fuel (upadana), the fire comes into existence (bhava). Like a fire, the self is a pattern of dynamic processes which maintains a shape although its substance constantly changes.(95) The type of personality result that comes from clinging depends on the type of clinging cultivated.

And what, Bhikkhus, is clinging [upadana]? There are these four classifications of clinging: clinging to sense desires [kama-upadana], clinging to views [ditthi-upadana], clinging to morality and practices [sila-bbata-upadana], and clinging to belief in a self [atta-vada-upadana]. This is called clinging.(96)

Clinging to sense desires, I can become a person addicted to certain pleasures or physical habits. Clinging to views, I can become dogmatic and intolerant, obsessed with the correctness of my chosen ideology. Clinging to morality and practices, I can become obsessed with specific moral codes and spiritual practices, complacently convinced that merely by reproducing certain traditional practices my spiritual liberation or salvation will be assured.

However, for the Buddha, the fundamental form of clinging is atta-vada, the belief in oneself as a separate entity; belief in independently existing things, rather than interdependently arisen phenomena. The becoming that is conditioned by clinging blossoms into the becoming of a supposedly separate, independent self.

Bondage

Someone who imagines oneself to be such an entity is like the king who was entranced by the sound of a vina the first time he heard it. He ordered that the sound be brought to him, and was disappointed by the sight of a wooden instrument. Where was the sound? His courtiers explained that what is called a "vina" is made up of many parts, including the effort of the player. But the king was unconvinced, and broke up the vina in his attempts to discover the sound.(97) Like the king entranced by the vina's sound, we are entranced by our own existence, but when we examine this complex mind-body we fail to find the one who exists, the one to whom experience occurs.

We are bound to our imagined independent self like Narcissus was bound to his reflection in the water. After speaking of the "continual moving and running along of beings bound by craving (tanha)" which is samsara,

the Buddha says:

For example, Bhikkhus, a dog bound by a leather strap to a strong pillar or post is closely tied up. If he goes, he goes around that pillar or post; if he stands, he stands around that pillar or post; if he sits, he sits around that pillar or post; if he lies down, he lies down around that pillar or post.

In the same way, the untrained ordinary person regards the body as: this is mine; I am this; this is myself. He regards sensation ... recognition ... creations ... consciousness as: this is mine; I am this; this is myself.

If he goes, he goes around these five clung-to factors; if he stands, he stands around these five clung-to factors; if he sits, he sits around these five clung-to factors; if he lies down, he lies down around these five clung-to factors.(98)

No matter where we go or what we achieve in life, we are, from the Buddha's point of view, like that dog bound to a post. No matter how noble our ideals or exalted our thoughts, our lives are limited by the fixed length of the strap. This bondage is the source of our suffering.

And what, Bhikkhus, is the arising of body? What is the arising of sensation ... recognition ... creations ... consciousness?

Here one delights in, welcomes, and remains hanging on to. What does one delight in, welcome and remain hanging on to? One delights in, welcomes, and hangs on to body. Delight arises in the one delighting in, welcoming and hanging on to body. That which is delight in the body is clinging; conditioned by his clinging is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth is ageing and death; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise together. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.

One delights in, welcomes and hangs on to sensation ... recognition ... creations ... consciousness.... That which is delight in consciousness is clinging; conditioned by his clinging is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth is ageing and death; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise together. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.(99)

The five factors together constitute the person, which in turns constitutes the world of experience. These five factors manifest according to natural processes, taking the raw data of sense experience and transforming it into an intelligible world. However, something has gone wrong; the natural tendency towards pleasure and away from pain has resulted in the development of a separate, independently existing entity: a self which imagines itself to be independent from the world and other beings in the world. This independently existing self suffers because of the open-ended nature of the desires that created him. No matter how much he satisfies his desires he will not be finally contented, because the creation of new desires goes on apace. Further, his sense of separation creates its own anxiety. Faced with the other, he must defend himself and his possessions from a threatening world; having borders, he must defend his borders.

The owner of experience is in the same situation as King Mahasudassana. He was king because of his royal possessions, so his identity depended upon these possessions. However, it was impossible for him to hide the fact that these possessions, and the royal position dependent upon

them, were impermanent and subject to change and decay. The sense of identity and security that the arising of the self provides is inherently unstable, for it rests upon creations that are constantly coming into and going out of existence. We search for security in our jobs, our relationships, our income and our sense of identity, precisely because we know deep within that there is no security. Our hard-won identity is like a heavy person walking over thin ice. It is only a question of time before the abyss opens.

The development from sense experience to suffering is neatly summed up in this famous passage from the Madhupindika-sutta:

Depending on eye and forms eye consciousness arises; the union of the three is contact; depending on contact, sensation.

What one senses, one recognises; what one recognises one reflects on; what one reflects on one multiplies [papanceti].

Based on what one multiplies, concepts characterised by multiplied recognitions [papanca-sanna-sankha] assault the person in regard to forms of the past, present and future cognised by the eye.(100)

The first paragraph shows a natural process of sense perception proceeding as nature is designed to do. The second paragraph shows the functioning of creations, volitional actions, and the first appearance of someone to whom experience is occurring. We have become someone (bhava). We reflect, and these reflections proliferate and multiply. Unwilling or unable to let them go, we build them up by clinging (upadana) to them; they become fuel (upadana) cast onto the fire of our thinking mind. Our thoughts multiply and become ever more fascinating, like the characters in a soap opera whose developing fates draw us in. In the third paragraph, we have lost all semblance of control over the process. From being the actor who reflects on what we experience, we become the acted upon, assaulted by a multiplicity of thoughts and images from the past, present and future. Now we find we cannot turn off the soap opera even if we wanted to. We are possessed by our own rampaging mental and emotional processes.

Hence we have travelled the road from natural processes of sense stimuli, to the ownership of experience, to the loss of control over our own inner world because of our multiplying obsessions (papanca). We have become the victim of forces beyond our control. We are in bondage. How we emerge from this bondage is the subject of the next chapter.

5. INTERDEPENDENT CESSATION

But from the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance, creations cease;

From the cessation of creations, consciousness ceases;

From the cessation of consciousness, mind-body ceases;

From the cessation of mind-body, six sense-spheres cease;

From the cessation of six sense-spheres, contact ceases;

From the cessation of contact, sensation ceases;

From the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;

From the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;

From the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases;

From the cessation of becoming, birth ceases;

From the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair dissolve.

Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering(101).

Implicit in interdependent arising is interdependent cessation. What arises, ceases, and if we understand arising - the conditions that result in the emergence of any given phenomenon - then we can understand cessation. If certain conditions cause a phenomenon to arise, then removing those conditions will cause it to cease. The Buddha's path of practice, the noble eightfold way, is the skillful management of conditions in order to achieve a particular result, the cessation of suffering. Suffering, in the Buddha's view, is the suffering implicit in birth and all those phenomena associated with birth. In the last chapter we saw how interdependent arising describes the arising and dynamic development of the psycho-physical person, the living being, from the viewpoint of the yogin examining her own existence. To understand cessation, however, we must be clear on who or what ceases. Central to this question is the meaning of birth (jati) in interdependent arising.

Birth

There are these two searches [pariyesana], noble [ariyal and ignoble [anariyal].

And what, Bhikkhus, is the ignoble search?

In this case someone, because he himself is subject to birth [jati-dhamma], searches out what is subject to birth. Because he himself is subject to ageing, he searches out what is subject to ageing. Because he himself is subject to disease ... dying ... sorrow ... fixation [sankilesa] ... he searches out what is subject to disease ... dying ... sorrow ... fixation.

And what, Bhikkhus, should you say is subject to birth? Sons and wife are subject to birth ... male and female servants ... goats and sheep ... cocks and pigs ... elephants, cows, horses and mares ... gold and silver are subject to birth.

Those phenomena that are subject to birth are an attachment [upadhaya], and here, because he himself is bound to, infatuated with and clinging to what is subject to birth, he searches out what is subject to birth.(102)

This list is mostly unexceptional, a catalogue of living creatures who, having been born, will one day die. But how can gold and silver be subject to birth? And why is birth equivalent to fixation? We know that what is born, dies; what begins, ends. What things that are "subject to birth" have in common is a beginning and an end. They are sankhata, constructed and complex entities, and being constructed, they are subject to falling apart, to deconstruction. They are sankhara, constructing entities, that create and define entities other than themselves, as Mahasudassana was constructed and defined by his possessions. They are upadhaya, an attachment: what is taken up and developed, or a support, what underlies and supports a dynamic process.

Kilesa and its equivalents, sankilesa and upakkilesa, are associated with attachment and birth. Usually translated as "defilement", kilesa is derived from the verb kilissati, to adhere. We can compare the mind to a white cloth. If we throw mud on the cloth, the mud sticks or adheres. This quality of the stuckness or fixation of the mud creates a stain or defilement on the cloth. In the same way, when the mind moves

toward an object and is stuck there, that fixation is kilesa. The mind is fixated on a particular experience or aspect of experience. Having moved to the desired object or away from the hated object, consciousness is fixated in a posture of attraction or aversion. Creations, attachment and fixation all refer to processes that give rise to phenomena that endure, that are clung to, and that ultimately end.

The Buddha says:

Everything, Bhikkhus, is subject to birth. And what is everything?

The eye is subject to birth; forms are subject to birth; eye consciousness is subject to birth; the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensation that arises dependent on eye contact is subject to birth.

Tongue ... body ... mind [manas] is subject to birth. (Mental) phenomena are subject to birth; mind consciousness is subject to birth; the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensation that arises dependent on mind contact is subject to birth.(103)

In brief, all experience is sankhata, constructed out of parts: the functioning sense organ, the sense object, and the appropriate sense consciousness. All experience is subject to birth, and therefore to ageing, disease, death, sorrow and fixation. "Everything" (sabba) is subject to birth, the world and all it contains; in brief, the interdependently arisen is subject to birth.

The Buddha is using the word "birth" in an unconventional way. This is not surprising, given his unconventional view of the world. Our use of language presupposes the existence of subject and object. There are beings that act and entities and beings that are acted upon; there are "things" to which words apply. That is, in our conventional world view there are in-dependently existing entities. The Buddha, however, sees patterns of inter-dependently arisen phenomena rather than things. His use of language seeks to frustrate our tendency to project real existence onto phenomena by labelling them as nouns.

Hence the Buddha used statements which are neyyattha (whose meanings need to be drawn out) which refer to "things" and their activities; and statements that are nitattha (having the meaning drawn out) which do not assume the existence of "things".(104) Similarly, Theravada Buddhism distinguishes vohara-vacana, or "conventional" everyday language; and paramattha-vacana, the language used especially in Abhidhamma, which speaks not of "things" but of ultimately existing phenomena (paramattha-dhamma).(105)

Buddhadasa also maintains the distinction between these two ways of using language, which he calls everyday language and dhamma language. Everyday language is the language of relative truth, the purpose of which is to teach morality to people "still befuddled with the idea of eternalism; those who feel that they are selves ... ". Dhamma language is the "language of ultimate truth", and therefore the language of interdependent arising.(106) To teach morality, the Buddha speaks as if persons exist and will receive the results of merit and demerit after they die. Such language carries the danger that it presupposes and therefore encourages an eternalist view, a view that there is someone to whom words refer, someone who acts, continues in existence, and suffers the consequences of actions. When teaching ultimate truth the Buddha uses dhamma language, which is intended to eliminate both the eternalist and annihilationist points of view.(107)

There are only those interdependent events which arise for a moment and then pass away ... called paticcasamuppanna dhamma (events which arise by reason of the law of causation) and which are called paticcasamuppada when they are connected together in a chain or string of events. There is no way to say "who" or "self" in any of those moments, even the present one, so there is no one born and no one to die and receive the results of past deeds (karma) as in the case of the theory of eternalism.(108)

We are caught in a paradox. At the level of relative truth, of the self and the world in our ordinary experience, there is past, present and future, there are those who act and experience the consequences of their actions, there is this life and a future life. At the ultimate level, however, there is neither existence nor non-existence, there is no doer and owner of actions and their results; there is simply the middle way of interdependent arising:

When this is, that is; because this arises, that arises.
When this is not, that is not; because this ceases, that ceases.

Both these views, however, are correct within their respective domains(109); each view supplements rather than contradicts the other. We can see something similar in contemporary science. The fixed laws of the Newtonian universe are quite different from the probabilities of quantum physics, yet both are correct - or rather, both work - within their contexts. The quantum physicist knows that solid entities dissolve into space and energy when examined, but this does not keep him from getting out of the way of a bus when he crosses the street.

And what, Bhikkhus, is birth? That which is, regarding all beings and classifications of beings, birth, origin, entry, becoming; the appearance of the factors [khandhanam patubhavol and the taking up of the sense spheres [ayatananam patilabho]: this is called birth.

And what, Bhikkhus, is ageing and death?

That which is, regarding all beings and classifications of beings, ageing, old age, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkled skin; the decline of life and the decay of the faculties [indriyanam paripako]: this is called ageing.

That which is, regarding all beings and classifications of beings, falling away, separation, disappearance, mortality, the fulfilment of one's time; the breaking up of the factors [khandhanam bhedo] and the laying down of the body; this is called death.(110)

Birth is "the appearance of the factors" (khandhanam patubhavo), and death is "the breaking up of the factors" (khandhanam bhedo). Can these mean something other than biological birth and death?

We have seen that the Buddha is concerned with life as we experience it rather than life as an object of abstract analysis, regarded as separate from an objective, uninvolved observer. As a psychologist, the Buddha's object of study is himself; the yogin is both therapist and patient. From this focus on experience comes the Buddha's distinctive use of words: a dhamma is not a thing but our experience-of-a-thing; the world is not something out there but our experience-of-the-world. Things are processes; nouns are verbs. Dhamma language is used to describe phenomena from the intimate perspective of interdependently arisen phenomena.

This view is inherent to the Buddha's method of investigation, the

yogic contemplation of his own mind and body. The Buddha investigated his own mind-body processes, and in doing so investigated birth and death(111); he gained insight into his own mind-body processes, and in doing so gained insight into birth and death(112). Birth and death are immediately available to yogic investigation; the Buddha did not have to rely on memory or anticipation to know and see them, any more than he had to rely on memory or anticipation to know and see the five factors constituting his own person.

Here, Bhikkhus, an untrained ordinary person is unaware of the noble ones. He is ignorant of the noble teaching and untrained in the teaching of the noble ones; he is ignorant of good people and untrained in the teaching of good people. He regards body as the self, the self as possessed by body, body in the self, the self in body.

He regards sensation ... recognition ... creations ...consciousness as the self, the self as possessed by consciousness, consciousness in the self, the self in consciousness.

This is how he regards it: it occurs to him, "I am".

When it occurs to him "I am", then there is the appearance of the five senses [pancannam indriyanam avakkanti hoti]: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. There is mind, there are (mental) phenomena, there is the sphere of ignorance.

To the untrained ordinary person touched by experience born of ignorant contact [avijja-samphassa-jena vedayitena] comes "I am"; "I am this"; "they will be"; "they will not be";...

In this situation, Bhikkhus, the five senses remain. But in the case of the trained noble disciple, ignorance is abandoned, knowledge arises. Because of the fading of ignorance and the arising of knowledge, for him there is no "I am"; there is no "I am not";...(113)

The ordinary untrained person identifies with the five factors and therefore fabricates an "I" which really does not exist. The "I" is clung to, protected and further developed. This fabrication comes from "experience born of ignorant contact", which is: "depending on contact, sensation" restated, with ignorance and contact linked in one compound. This reminds us that interdependent arising in forward order is not meant to explain the evolution of the human species or the biological mechanisms of birth, but the arising of the unfree person, the person in bondage. All its terms refer to phenomena that arise within this state of bondage - phenomena that arise dependent upon ignorance.

Hence the five senses appear when we think "I am". When the Buddha talks about the five senses he is not concerned with the senses in an abstract, scientific sense, but with our relationship to our existing five senses which are, for the normal healthy human, a given of experience. The five senses "appear" when they appear to someone. They "cease" when the someone who owns them ceases. This does not mean that the arahant(114) no longer sees, hears, smells, tastes or touches. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching proceed, but they are not claimed or owned by anyone; the arahant does not identify with his senses or the data the senses transmit. The senses that arise in interdependent arising are the senses "born of ignorant contact"; they are my senses, not simply the senses. These senses cease in interdependent cessation; in the absence of ignorant contact, they cease to be my senses, but are simply the senses. In the same way, "birth" in this fundamental sense is the appearance of the factors as my factors; "death" is the breaking up of the factors as my factors.

Buddhadasa therefore declares that birth is "the birth of the I concept ... and not the physical birth from a mother's womb."(115) He argues that when someone decides to steal, he is born a thief at that moment; if someone is lost in the experience of pleasure, he is born into heavenly realms at that moment; if someone can't eat fast enough because the food is so good, he is born a peta or hungry ghost at that moment.(116)

In this sense the ordinary person is born very often, time and time again. A more developed person is born less frequently; a person well advanced in practice is born less frequently still, and ultimately ceases being reborn altogether.... As soon as anyone thinks like an animal, he is born as an animal that same moment. To think as a human being is to be born a human being.(117)

In the world described by everyday language we know that where there is birth there is ageing and death. Birth, ageing and death are painful, suffering. The same is true of the world described by dhamma language. The Buddha says:

The manifold and multifaceted suffering which is decay and death arises in the world. This suffering has attachment [upadhi] as its ground [nidana], attachment as its arising, attachment as its origin.

When there is attachment, there is ageing and death; when there is no attachment, there is no ageing and death.(118)

Attachment (upadhi) is synonymous with clinging (upadana). Note the structural simultaneity in the use of the locative absolute, which we have seen in the general formula of the conditionality-of-this (idappaccayata): when there is x there is y, and when there is no x there is no y. The Buddha is not saying that when there is attachment, ageing and death will occur in the future, or that when there is no attachment, in the future there will be only one more death. He is saying that the absence of attachment now necessitates the absence of ageing and death, now.

There is ageing and death for one who clings to ageing and death; for one who thinks he ages and dies, one who identifies with the natural processes of ageing and death and says: "This is my ageing and death"; "I am ageing and dying". There is no ageing and death for one who does not cling to ageing and death, despite the inevitable fact that his body ages and dies.

Not creating, not planning, he clings to nothing in the world. Not clinging, he is not disturbed; not disturbed, he is completely freed within himself.

He knows: birth is destroyed, the holy life is fulfilled, duty is done, there is no more of this.(119)

The destruction of birth is immediately apparent to the arahant. He is not saying "birth will be destroyed in the future". The destruction of birth is synonymous with being completely freed (parinibbayati), which again is happening, now. The holy life is now fulfilled, duty is now done.

The cessation of consciousness

Another problem associated with interdependent cessation is that of the cessation of consciousness. This reminds us that interdependent arising does not concern merely objective phenomena, but the mind itself; interdependent arising assumes personal involvement.(120) The twelvefold formula says, "From the cessation of consciousness, mind-body ceases". If we are to regard consciousness in the conventional sense then it would appear that the arahant is unconscious; in fact, since mind-body ceases, he must be dead. Yet we know that the Buddha functioned normally for 45 years after his awakening.

Should consciousness remain clinging to body, with body as its object [arammana] and support [patittha], and in pursuit of delight, it would undergo increase, growth and full development. Should consciousness remain clinging to feeling ... perception ... creations ... it would undergo increase, growth and full development. If a Bhikkhu abandons passion for the earth-element, then because of the abandoning of passion its object is cut off; there is no support for consciousness. If a Bhikkhu abandons passion for the feeling-element ... perception-element ... creation-element ... consciousness-element, then because of the abandoning of passion its object is cut off; there is no support for consciousness.

That unsupported consciousness does not grow, does not create creations and is liberated. Because of its liberation, it is stable; because of its stability, it is happy; because of its happiness, it is untroubled. One who is untroubled is completely freed in his own heart. He knows: birth is destroyed, the holy life is fulfilled, duty is done, there is no more of this.(121)

We saw in Chapter 3 that consciousness is subject to growth and development. This growth is produced by clinging (upadana) to the five factors, the psycho-physical person as experienced. When clinging is abandoned the object (arammana) of consciousness is cut off and support (patittha) is absent. This unsupported consciousness is liberated, stable, happy and untroubled. Again we are faced with a paradox. How can consciousness be without an object? Consciousness arises dependent upon a functioning sense organ and a sense object; these three together are contact. Take away one of these factors, and none of them can arise. Similarly, how can the cessation of consciousness also be described as consciousness that is stable, happy and untroubled?

The paradox is resolved when we see that interdependent cessation involves the same processes as those of interdependent arising, except for the absence of ignorance. Unsupported consciousness is that of the arahant touched by experience born of contact without ignorance. Consciousness without an object is consciousness which does not have passion for its object, which does not cling to any specific object.(122) The contact, or sense stimulus, is the same; what is different is the absence of ignorance, and therefore the absence of clinging.

The cessation of consciousness in the reverse order of the nidana formula is the cessation of consciousness coloured by the assumption that there is someone who is conscious, someone to whom this is happening. For the arahant, nothing extra is added to the bare experience. Rather than "This is present to me", there is simply "This is present". There is no craving, and therefore no suffering.

In Chapter 4 we saw how intentional action (kamma) is a powerful force in creating ourselves as independently existing entities, defining ourselves by our habitual patterns of action. When there is no

ignorance, and therefore no clinging to the results of action or to the identity of the actor, then again consciousness is unsupported.

And if, Bhikkhus, one does not intend, determine or have something dormant in one's mind, there is no object for the maintenance of consciousness. When there is no object, there is no support for consciousness. When there is no support and growth for consciousness, no further becoming is produced in the future. When further becoming is not produced in the future, future birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering.(123)

Note the connection between intention, latent tendencies and the object of consciousness. Where there is intention fuelled by latent desire and aversion coming to the surface of the mind, there is grasping after or clinging to particular objects. The mind moves toward an object because of the attraction which is latent in pleasant feeling; or it moves away from an object because of the aversion which is latent in painful feeling. This movement towards the object in order to grasp it or away from the object in order to avoid it is asava.(124) Asava literally means "that which flows", and is translated variously as canker, taint, corruption, intoxicant and bias. Here I translate it as "movement". When there is no desire and aversion disturbing the mind, such that consciousness is stable, happy and untroubled, then there is no movement towards and away from desired or hated objects, because there is no attraction or aversion and therefore no objects which are desired or hated. Consciousness continues to function, but in the absence of these movements.

Asava implies kilesa. The mind moves to an object to grasp it and remains stuck or fixated on that object; it moves away from an object to avoid it and remains fixated on that posture of avoidance. This fixation is the object and support of consciousness. In the absence of object and support, in the absence of fixation that arises from clinging to any given object, there is the absence of becoming any particular identity or being, which is freedom, the cessation of suffering.

Action is free and spontaneous. The arahant is not fixated (kilesa) on any particular outcome of action, nor on an identification with the actor; consequently she does not intend a particular result, and therefore does not create (sankharoti) results in the form of constructing (sankhara) and constructed (sankhata) entities.(125) The Buddha says:

What do you think, Bhikkhus? Would a bhikkhu who has exhausted the movements intend a meritorious act or a demeritorious act or a motionless act?

Certainly not, Bhante.(126)

The arahant does not grasp after or cling to actions or results, not because she has rejected the virtuous life but because virtue, along with everything else, is no longer to be grasped.

What ceases in interdependent cessation is ignorance and everything that flows from ignorance. In our ignorance we construct ourselves along the lines of our likes and dislikes and cling to these constructions. In the absence of ignorance, craving and clinging cease, and therefore our sense of identity with experience ceases. The arahant ceases to be someone, ceases to claim ownership to the experiences that necessarily flow from the functioning of the senses. Experiences arise, but identification with those experiences cease. The arahant, in

ceasing to cling to the notion that she is or must be someone, is free.

6. Interdependency

Many causes, one result

We saw in Chapter 3 that conventional causation - the causation assumed by ordinary untrained people who regard themselves as separate, independently existing entities tends to be linear. It assumes independently existing entities that give rise to other independently existing entities. Linear causation follows this model:

A >> B >> C >> D ... (127)

A now causes B to arise later; B now causes C to arise later; C now causes D to arise later. We find a different model of causation in interdependent arising. When the Buddha asked himself how suffering arises, he did not frame the question as: "What is the cause of suffering?", but: "When what is present does suffering come to be?; what is suffering dependent upon?" (128). In the twelvefold formula he gives a list of twelve nidanas that result in suffering. This list cannot be considered simply a linear chain of A follows B follows C. In Chapter 3 we saw how ignorance, creations, consciousness, mind-body, the six sense spheres and contact all presuppose each other and cannot be separated. They are all essential aspects of the existing person. Nor can any of the other nidanas be separated in lived experience. If there is one, there must be all.

The interdependence of phenomena is brought out in a number of passages dealing with the problem of suffering. In the Dvayatanupassana-sutta of the Sutta Nipata, the Buddha explains how suffering arises and ceases:

There are, Bhikkhus, teachings that are skillful, noble, leading beyond, leading to full awakening. Why should you listen to these teachings? If you are asked, this is how you could answer: "There are two things which should be known as they are." What should you say the two are?

The first insight is: "This is suffering; this is the arising of suffering." The second insight is: "This is the cessation of suffering; this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering."

Possessed of these two insights, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who lives watchful, ardent and resolute can expect one of these two results: either perfect knowledge in this life or, as long as a trace of attachment remains, the state of non-return...

Is there another way of correctly describing the twofold insight? If you are asked, this is how you could answer.

The first insight is: "Whatever suffering arises, all of it is based on attachments [upadhi]." The second insight is: "Because of the remainderless fading and cessation of these very attachments, there is no arising of suffering."

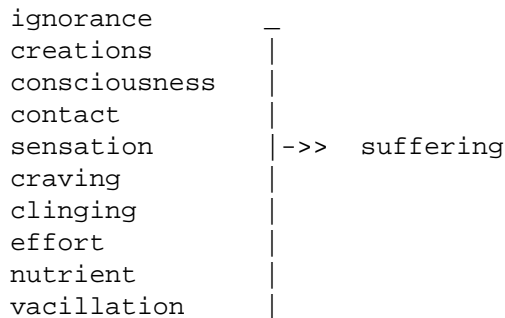
Is there another way of correctly describing the twofold insight? If you are asked, this is how you could answer.

The first insight is: "Whatever suffering arises, all of it is based on ignorance [avijja]". The second insight is: "Because of the remainderless fading and cessation of this very ignorance, there is no arising of suffering."

.... creations [sankhara] ... consciousness [vinnana] ... contact [phassa] ... sensation [vedana] ... craving [tanha] ... clinging [upadana] ... effort [arambha] ... nutrient [ahara]...

The first insight is: "Whatever suffering arises, all of it is based on vacillation [injita]". The second insight is: "Because of the remainderless fading and cessation of this very vacillation, there is no arising of suffering."(129)

The model of causation outlined above can be pictured as follows:



For A to arise, there must be B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K. Remove any one of these supports and A will not arise. Further, remove A and all those supports are removed; and if any one of these supports is removed, then the rest of them and A also is removed. If one is missing, all are missing; if one is functioning, all are functioning.

Joanna Macy comments:

Here the series clearly represents no linear chain: Each upadhi, in giving rise to all pain, gives rise to the others. Occasioning and occasioned by each other, their causality is mutual. Like a house of cards, the constellation of factors that condition our existence can be disrupted and collapsed at any point.(131)

We can see the same model of causation expounded by the Buddha in his discourse on seeds:

"There are these five kinds of seeds, Bhikkhus. What five? Seeds from roots, cuttings, shoots, buds and seeds. These are the five kinds of seeds.

"If these five kinds of seeds were unbroken, not rotten, not spoiled by wind or heat, fertile and well planted, but earth and water were lacking, would these five kinds of seeds undergo increase, growth and full development?"

"Certainly not, Bhante."

"If these five kinds of seeds were unbroken, not rotten, not spoiled by wind or heat, fertile and well planted, and there was soil and water, would these five kinds of seeds undergo increase, growth and full development?"

"Certainly, Bhante. "(132)

For a seed to grow there must be a number of causal factors operating together: the condition of the seed itself; fertile soil and adequate water; suitable weather conditions; proper planting. If any of these conditions are lacking the seed will not grow. If all these conditions are available then the result - a healthy plant - will arise. No one

factor is solely determinative. Similarly, two sticks rubbed together are needed to make fire and all the rafters, converging on the roof-peak, are required to construct a house.(133)

When one is missing, all are missing

This structure of conditionality can be seen in terms of the path that leads to awakening. The Buddha shows both aspects of the path: one aspect leads to bondage; the same process, when reversed, leads to liberation. He begins with the fact that ignorance, the beginning of the path, is itself contingent (idapaccaya), interdependently arisen:

The beginning of ignorance is not see, Bhikkhus, such that one could say: "Previously there was no ignorance, then ignorance arose". Further, it is apparent that ignorance is contingent [idapaccaya]. Ignorance, I declare, is with support [ahara], not lacking support. And what is the support of ignorance? The five hindrances [panca-nivarana] is the answer.

The five hindrances, I declare, are with support, not lacking support. And what is the support of the five hindrances? The three wrong ways of life [ducarita] is the answer...

And what is the support of the three wrong ways of life? Unrestrained sense faculties [indriya-samvara] ...

And what is the support of unrestrained sense faculties? An absence of awareness and understanding [sati-sampajanna]...

And what is the support of an absence of awareness and understanding? Superficial attention [ayonisomanasikara] ...

And what is the support of superficial attention? Lack of faith [asaddhiya] ...

And what is the support of lack of faith? Not hearing the true teaching [asaddhammasavana] ...

And what is the support of not hearing the true teaching? Not associating with the true people [asappurisasamseva] is the answer.

Thus, Bhikkhus, the fulfilment of not associating with true people fulfills not hearing the true teaching; the fulfilment of not hearing the true teaching fulfills lack of faith; the fulfilment of lack of faith fulfills superficial attention; the fulfilment of superficial attention fulfills the absence of awareness and understanding; the fulfilment of the absence of awareness and understanding fulfills unrestrained sense faculties; unrestrained sense faculties fulfills the three wrong ways of life; the fulfilment of the three wrong ways of life fulfills the five hindrances; the fulfilment of the five hindrances fulfills ignorance.(134)

This teaching is a restatement of interdependent arising using nidanas other than those found in the twelvefold formula. The factors of the formula differ, but the structure remains the same: when x is, y is; when x is not, y is not. The fact that we find in the texts formulas of interdependent arising and cessation that use different factors indicates the importance of the underlying structure compared to the specific factors. In the example above we again have the situation where there is not one single determining factor, and the absence of one factor means the absence of all.

When one is fulfilled, all are fulfilled

In the same way, the fulfilment of one factor means the fulfilment of all. The Buddha says:

I declare, Bhikkhus, that release by knowledge [vijja-vimutti] is with support, not lacking support. And what is the support of release by knowledge? The seven aspects of awakenment [satta bojjhanga] is the answer.

And what is the support of the seven aspects of awakenment? The four foundations of awareness [cattaro satipatthana] ...

And what is the support of the four foundations of awareness? The three right ways of life ...

And what is the support of the three right ways of life? Restraint of the sense faculties ... awareness and understanding ... penetrating attention ... faith ... hearing the true teaching ... associating with good people is the answer.

Thus, Bhikkhus, the fulfilment of associating with true people fulfills hearing the true teaching; the fulfilment of hearing the true teaching fulfills faith; the fulfilment of faith fulfills penetrating attention; the fulfilment of penetrating attention fulfills awareness and understanding; the fulfilment of awareness and understanding fulfills restraint of the sense faculties; the fulfilment of restraint of the sense faculties fulfills the three right ways of life; the fulfilment of the three right ways of life fulfills the four foundations of awareness; the fulfilment of the four foundations of awareness fulfills the seven aspects of awakenment; the fulfilment of the seven aspects of awakenment fulfills release by knowledge.(135)

To walk this path one does not first associate with good people; then later hear the true teaching; then later develop faith; then later develop penetrating attention; then later develop awareness and understanding; etc. Rather, in associating with good people one hears the teaching, develops faith, develops penetrating attention, etc. All these phenomena are occurring at the same time. Faith develops penetrating attention; penetrating attention develops faith. The fulfilment of the four foundations of awareness is the fulfilment of penetrating attention. If any one of these factors is fulfilled, all are fulfilled; if any one of them is absent, all are absent. These factors are inter-dependent.

For example, awareness and understanding (nidana 5) here come before the four foundations of awareness (8); yet the four foundations of awareness include awareness and understanding.(136) If this were a purely linear path, one would be faced with the absurdity of having to fulfill awareness (5) before fulfilling awareness (8). Restraint of the sense faculties require awareness,(137) as does penetrating attention. Similarly, all the seven aspects of awakenment (awareness, investigation, effort, rapture, calm, concentration and equanimity) are inherent in and necessary to the practice of satipatthana (cultivation of awareness) from the beginning, although they develop from weak to strong during practice.(138) Out of the nine nidanas listed, the cultivation of awareness is crucial to at least five of them (penetrating attention; awareness and understanding; restraint of the sense faculties; the four foundations of awareness; and the seven aspects of awakenment). Indeed, awareness is a condition for all nidanas leading to liberation, as the absence of awareness is a condition for all nidanas leading to bondage.

Returning to Buddhaghosa's commentary, we see the model of causality assumed by interdependence:

Further, it arises together, so it is co-arising [samuppada]; it is dependent upon [paticca] a combination of conditions, not rejecting any. Therefore paticca and samuppada is interdependent arising.

...Just as in the world sugar is a condition for phlegm, it is said "sugar is phlegm"; and in the teaching the arising of buddhas is a condition for happiness, it is said "the arising of buddhas is happiness".

This totality of causes, which is expounded one by one under the heading of causes beginning with ignorance for the appearance of creations, etc, is called paticca... by the mutuality of its combined factors, in that none are missing and they accomplish a common result. It is called samuppada in that it gives rise to dhammas together, such that each gives rise to the other and they are inseparable in their behaviour. Therefore paticca and samuppada is paticcasamuppada.(139)

A combination of conditions together give rise to a totality of results. Conditions arise together, as do their results. Buddhaghosa adds:

Among the conditions explained under the heading "ignorance, etc", those conditions that give rise to phenomena beginning with creations are unable to give rise to them when they are not mutually dependent or when there is a deficiency in their mutuality.

Therefore this conditionality, having depended [paticca], gives rise to phenomena equally and together, not one by one and in successive order.(140)

The model of causation Buddhaghosa is outlining is as follows:

| | | |
|--|----|--|
| ignorance | | ignorance |
| creations | | creations |
| consciousness | | consciousness |
| mind-body | | mind-body |
| six sense bases | | six sense bases |
| contact | -> | contact |
| sensation | <- | sensation |
| craving | | craving |
| clinging | | clinging |
| becoming | | becoming |
| birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair | | birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair |

Interdependent arising asserts the arising and cessation of the entire phenomenal world within this very mind-body. Every aspect of our experience is contingent upon phenomena other than themselves, which are in turn dependent upon phenomena other than themselves. Our world is an infinitely complex web of mutually supporting conditions in which there is no solid ground standing outside the process of interdependent arising and cessation. It is, finally, because nothing in our existence can be found to be separate from anything else; because the web of interconnecting phenomena is effectively infinite, that liberation is possible. Bondage is not fixed; it can be worked on and ultimately overcome.

There remains, however, one final problem to be examined: how does

interdependent arising deal with the given fact of continuity over time? In particular, how does interdependent arising deal with rebirth?

7. Causation over time

We have examined the interdependent arising and cessation of phenomena and have seen how our ignorance of this process results in bondage, and our understanding of it results in freedom. Interdependent arising is our experience of phenomena under the influence of ignorance; interdependent cessation is our experience of phenomena in the absence of ignorance. That leaves us, however, with the problem of the three life theory of the classical Theravada. Where does that fit in?

Rebirth

The Buddha believed in and taught rebirth, which he had directly verified by means of his own perception.(141) The problem of rebirth is bound up with that of personal continuity over time, which in turn is bound up with that of identity; the entities who endure over time, who experience the results of their actions and who are reborn from life to life. My tendency to identify with and own experience manifests most strongly in my determination to identify with consciousness, which is the "unbroken stream" providing the link between one life and another,(142) and between one moment and another. Questions of rebirth and identity are bound up with notions of "my" consciousness.

The Buddha had great difficulty in countering his students' tendency to identify with consciousness. For example, after a discussion on the "food" (ahara) or support of beings, Venerable Moliya-Phagguna asked: "Bhante, who is supported by the consciousness support?"

"The question is not relevant", the Blessed One said. "I do not say 'One is supported'; should I say 'One is supported', the question 'Who is supported?' would be relevant. But I do not say so. Not saying so, one could ask me: 'What does consciousness support?'; this is a relevant question.

"The relevant answer is: 'The consciousness-support is the condition for further becoming and birth in the future. When that comes to be, there are the six sense bases. The six sense bases are dependent on contact.'"

"Who contacts?"

"The question is not relevant ... contact is dependent on the six sense bases; sensation is dependent on contact."

"Who senses?"

"The question is not relevant ... sensation is dependent on contact; craving is dependent on sensation." ...(143)

Note that the Buddha is not denying the existence of the future: there is "further becoming and birth in the future". What he is denying is the one who thinks he endures from past to future. But there were many students who could not grasp this distinction - students like Venerable Sati:

At that time a bhikkhu called Sati, a fisherman's son, came to this evil conclusion: "I understand the teaching taught by the Blessed One to be this: it is this very consciousness and not any other that

continuously moves [samsarati] and runs along".

Like Moliya-Phagguna, Sati identifies with consciousness, believing that he is the one who senses, recognises, creates and cognises, and is ultimately reborn. "His" body will die, but "his" stream of consciousness will go on to rebirth. When the Buddha heard of Sati's belief he summoned and questioned him:

"What is this consciousness, Sati?"

"It is this very one who speaks and senses, Bhante, who experiences the result of actions whether good or bad."

"You stupid man, to whom do you think I teach this teaching in such a way? Have I not said in many ways that consciousness is interdependently arisen? That other than from a condition there is no arising of consciousness? You not only slander me by your own misunderstanding, but you also destroy yourself and create a great deal of demerit which will bring you harm and suffering for a long time."(144)

The severity of the Buddha's reaction to this wrong view indicates it must have been very common. Rebirth occurs but no-one is reborn: this is a paradox that cannot be resolved by philosophical thought, only by directly seeing the arising and cessation of one's own mind-body process.(145) It was Siddhartha Gotama's full realisation of this process that turned him into Sakyamuni Buddha, and it was Venerable Kondanna's glimpse of it during the Buddha's first sermon that turned him into a noble one:

While he delivered this teaching the stainless and passion-free dhamma-eye arose for Venerable Kondanna: Whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to cease.(146)

Those of the Buddha's students who did not have this insight - who were not at least stream-enterers - necessarily assumed that someone is reborn. Lacking direct insight, they remained fixated on the ordinary, everyday world of enduring entities indicated by conventional language. Consequently they, like Sati, misunderstood the teaching regarding rebirth. Assuming in-dependent existence, they thought rebirth meant beings are reborn, and struggled with the teaching of inter-dependent arising.

The three life theory

Interdependent arising is a theory formulated on the basis of the direct experience of interdependently arisen phenomena; it refers to the immediately available present.(147) Note that for the Buddha, the present is not a momentary "knife-edge" between past and future, but a "saddle-back", and includes the perception of duration.(148) Phenomena are perceived as arising, ceasing, and "changing as they endure" (dhammanam thitanam annathattam).(149)

When we fail to see interdependent arising and assume the existence of an independently existing entity, we assume permanence. We assume the same entity extends from the past through the present to the future. One who sees, now, the arising and cessation of phenomena no longer assumes permanence, and is therefore no longer concerned with past and future:

Because, Bhikkhus, this interdependent arising and these interdependently arisen phenomena are well seen, as they are, by the

perfect wisdom of the noble disciple, he will surely not run back to the past:

"Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After being what, what did I then become?"

Nor will he run after the future:

"Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? ... "

Nor will he now, at the present time, have personal doubts:

Do I exist? Do I not exist? What am I? How am I? The being that I am - from where did he come and to where will he go?"(150)

Not owning experience, not identifying with experience, the noble disciple lives in the pure experience of the given present. Past and future are no longer identified with and therefore no longer constitute a problem.

While conventional, or linear, causation assumes separate, independent entities that give rise to other separate, independent entities over time, interdependent arising assumes there are no separate entities to begin with. Rather, it says that every "entity" exists only through its dependence on other "entities"; there is no independence, and therefore no separation. Interdependent arising refers to the structure of our experience of phenomena, now. From this viewpoint, past and future are merely ideas in the mind.

Nevertheless, I remember yesterday and would be wise to plan for tomorrow. Causation over time applies to the world of conventional language; interdependency applies to the world of dhamma language. Neither denies the other; rather, each supplements the other. Interdependent arising includes but is not confined to causation over time, but sees causation over time in a specific way - as the arising over time of this totality of phenomena, rather than one phenomenon after another.

In terms of linear causation, I can say this paper is caused by a number of factors, including the work involved in researching and writing it, the printing, the binding, etc. In terms of interdependent arising, this situation, now, in which I am reading this paper is a full and complete experience, a gestalt, within which phenomena arise and cease. It is tathata, the just this-ness of immediate experience.(151) Nevertheless, part of the givenness of just this is the sense of flow within it, which comes from the arising, change while enduring and cessation of phenomena.

Linear causation selects an individual phenomenon from this gestalt, reifies it into an independent entity and examines the lines of cause and effect that give rise to it. Interdependent arising is concerned with the gestalt, and sees each individual phenomenon in terms of its radical contingency; in terms of its context within the experienced gestalt.

Linear causation, in focusing on individual phenomena, supports our innate tendency to assume the existence of independently existing entities. Interdependent arising cuts through this false assumption from the very beginning. Therefore, any use of interdependent arising to construct a model of causation over time runs the risk of defeating its own purpose by encouraging the assumption of entities - by encouraging eternalism.

Buddhists were faced with the task of explaining how rebirth occurred without anyone being born. They used the twelvefold formula of interdependent arising, and spoke in terms of the formula extending over three lives:

PAST

Cause

- (1) ignorance; and
- (2) creations

are the "causal phase of the previous life which brought about existence in the present

PRESENT

Result

- (3) consciousness; (4) mind-body; (5) six sense bases; (6) contact; and
- (7) sensation

are "their fruit, the resultant phase of the present life".

Cause

- (8) craving; (9) clinging; and (10) becoming
- are "renewed causal activity in the present life".

FUTURE

Result

- (11) birth; and (12) ageing and death
- are "the resultant phase of the future life".(152)

Why three lives? Why not two or four? The purpose of the three life theory is to explain cause and effect over time. When we consider time, we are faced with three times: past, present, and future. The pattern of causation is the same whether the unit of time be a moment, a day, a human life span, or whatever. We have seen how terms like birth and death are used in different ways by the Buddha, depending on whether he is speaking in conventional or dhamma language. The notion of a single human life span assumes an entity who exists from physical birth to physical death, but such an enduring entity is explicitly denied by interdependent arising. Govinda points out that according to the Abhidhamma birth and death are taking place with extraordinary rapidity every moment.(153) "Three lifetimes" really means three consecutive periods of time, regardless of the unit employed.

K. N. Jayatilleke points out the relativity of past, present and future:

[T]o imply that the past and the future are not accessible to me in the present is not correct since the present life, from the point of view of the past, is the future, and from the point of view of the future life, is the past. So we do not have to take the first two links or the last two on faith since they can be experienced in this life itself. We can be aware of our ignorance here and now, although ignorance was also present in our past life.(154)

We are now experiencing life two, the present life. The past is life one; and the future is life three. We are always situated at this moment (life two), where there is consciousness, mind-body, six sense bases, contact, sensation, craving, clinging and becoming. For these phenomena (3 - 10) to exist now, there must have been ignorance and creations (1 - 2) in the past; and since these phenomena (3 - 10) exist now, there will be birth, ageing and death (11 - 12) in the future.

Life one gives rise to birth, ageing and death in the next, which is now (life two); so birth, ageing and death are operating now. From the

viewpoint of the future time (life three) there were ignorance and creations in the previous life, which is now (life two), so ignorance and creations are operating now. For the three life theory to work, all twelve nidanas must be functioning in the present.

Bhikkhu Bodhi says:

To prevent misunderstanding it has to be stressed that the distribution of the factors into three lives is an expository device employed for the purpose of exhibiting the inner dynamics of the round [of birth and death]. It should not be read as implying hard and fast divisions, for in lived experience the factors are always intertwined.(155)

In conclusion, while interdependent arising does not deny causation over time, it is fundamentally concerned with the structure of the experienced present. However, one aspect of the experienced present is its flow from past to future. Interdependent arising can, therefore, be used to explain causation over time in terms of continuity without someone who continues. To the degree that interdependent arising can explain continuity from one moment to the next, it can explain continuity from one lifetime to the next. From the viewpoint of interdependent arising, there is no qualitative distinction between the two.

8. Conclusion

Interdependent arising is a matter of direct experience, here and now. It is this experience, seeing into the arising and cessation of phenomena, that produces the liberating insight that was the Buddha's awakening. Indeed, that all phenomena arise and pass away dependent upon other phenomena is the content of the Buddha's awakening.

The phenomena that arise and cease in dependence upon conditions are our experiences of ourselves and the world. Interdependent arising is not concerned with the purely objective realm of science, but with the existential realm of human experience that includes both subjective and objective. The world is our experience of the world; mind and body are our experiences of mind and body. When examined, solid entities dissolve into dynamic processes; nouns dissolve into verbs; being dissolves into becoming.

Any given phenomenon that arises and ceases does so because of specific conditions. All phenomena are contingent, and by understanding what conditions give rise to what results we can live in a way that maximises the appearance of favourable phenomena and minimises the appearance of unfavourable phenomena. Interdependent arising implies freedom, the capacity to mould our lives according to our aspirations. We do not have to be victims of circumstances beyond our control.

There are no exceptions to this universal law of interdependent arising. There is no-one outside this process to whom it is happening. There is therefore no independently existing self, no owner of experience. Bondage is essentially the conviction that there is one who exists independently, one who is separate from the world and other beings within the world. This independently existing self is a product of a process of clinging and appropriation founded on open-ended desires that can never be satisfied. The sense of separation inherent in independent existence involves an anxiety which results from the need to defend one's identity and possessions. The ceaseless struggle to satisfy the needs and desires of a non-existent independent self is suffering.

When ignorance ceases, when we see into universal arising and cessation, craving and clinging cease, and therefore our sense of identity with experience ceases. The arahant ceases to be someone, the owner of experience; she is free from bondage.

This is not a matter of faith or philosophical reasoning, but of direct perception. The sphere of interdependent arising is that of the available present, and this includes a sense of flow from past to future. Interdependent arising does not deny causation and continuity over time, and can therefore be used to explain rebirth. Because interdependent arising deals with dhammas, phenomena as experienced, as distinct from independent entities, the unit of a conventional lifetime of a being is of no more validity than that of any other unit of time. Continuity from one moment to the next is structurally the same as continuity from one lifetime to the next.

Interdependent arising assumes no separate entities; consequently, it deals with the totality of phenomena that is my experience of this situation, now. Within this experienced gestalt, specific phenomena arise, change and pass away. Linear causation selects an individual phenomenon, reifies it into an independent entity and examines the lines of cause and effect that give rise to it. The classical three life theory adapts interdependent arising to the task of explaining the process of rebirth without reifying an independent entity who is born.

Any attempt to explain rebirth, however, may confirm the assumption of the ordinary untrained person that there is someone who develops, someone who is reborn, someone who is liberated from rebirth. Clinging to such a theory justifies a sense of separate identity and destiny, and postpones to a more favourable time in the future one's practice of investigating the interdependently arisen nature of the mind-body process. Buddhadasa and Nanavira warn against this danger, for such a view denies the fundamental purpose of the Buddha's teaching of interdependent arising.

The Buddha's teaching aims at the cessation of suffering and bondage. This experience of freedom is expressed in terms of finality: "birth is destroyed, the holy life is fulfilled, duty is done, there is no more of this". Such finality can only be experienced in this present moment - duty is now done - without any sense of postponement or further developments. The doctrine of interdependent arising is concerned with the problem of freedom, and therefore it is fundamentally concerned with the structure of our existence, now, as freedom postponed is freedom denied.

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Notes

1. M 1.190-191

2. S 3.120

3. S2.25

4. Streng, Frederick. "Reflections on the attention given to mental construction in the Indian buddhist analysis of causality", in Philosophy East and West 25 no 1 (January 1975) p 77; and Jayawardhana, Bandula "Causality", in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Volume 4 Fascicle Government of Ceylon, 1979 pp 2-3

5. English word enlightenment is not equivalent to the Sanskrit or Pali word Bodhi. Enlightenment comes from an 18th century European philosophical movement and implies the supremacy of reason. A buddha is one who has awakened, one who knows; the condition he or she has attained is one of awakenment.

6. S 2.10

7. Vin 1.40

8. Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu. Me and mine: selected essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. p 2.

9. Buddhadasa, Bhikkhu. Paticcasamuppada: dependent ongination. Bangkok: Kurusapha Ladprao Press, 1986.pp 24-25.

10. Ibid.,p49

11. Nanvira Thera. Clearing the path: writings of Nanvira Thera (1960 - 1965). Colombo: Path Press, 1987. p.21.

12. Ibid., p.432.

13. They represent the consensus among the "elders" (theras) regarding the Buddha's teaching during the reign of Asoka (c. 268-235 B.C.). Norman, K. R. Pali literature. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983. p 5: (Geiger, Wilhelm. Pali literature and language. Translated by Batakrishna Ghosh. 2nd ed. Calcutta: [University of Calcutta, 1956. p11.

14. Vin 1.10

15. "Bhante" is a respectful form of address
16. S 2.17
17. Kalupahana, David. J. Mdlamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna: the philosophy of the Middle Way. First Indian edition. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991. pp 9 & 13.
18. See: Macy, Joanna. Mutual causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: the dhamma of natural systems. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991. pp29-30; and Streng. op. cit. p 73.
19. S 2.28
20. Vism p 443
21. Warder, A. K. Indian Buddhism. 2nd rev. ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980. p 98.
22. Although this attitude shows signs of changing, due to the fall-out from the rise of postmodern physics: McCance, Dawne. "Physics, Buddhism and Postmodern interpretation", in Zygon 21 no. 3 (September 1986: 287-297.
23. S 4.15
24. See the discussion in Kalupahana, David J. "A Buddhist tract on empiricism", in Philosophy East and West 19 (1969): 65-67.
25. See the discussion regarding causation and things caused in Cruise, Henry. "Early Buddhism: some recent misconceptions", in Philosophy East and West 33, no. 2 (April 1983). pp 155-156; and the "first person" aspect of dharmas in Daye, Douglas D. "Reflexivity and metalanguage games in Buddhist causality", in Philosophy East and West 25 no. 1 (January 1975). pp 96-97. See also Kalupahana, David J. "Dhamma (1)", in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Volume 4 Fascicle 3. Government of Ceylon, 1988. pp 442 & 444; and Karunaratne, Upali. "Dhamma (2)", in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Volume 4 Fascicle 3. Government of Ceylon, 1988. p 454.
26. A 2.47-47.
27. D 2.328
28. Kalupahana, David J. Causality: the central philosophy of Buddhism. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975. pp 86-87.
29. Vin 1.14
30. S 2.1
31. Kalupahana. Causality. op.cit. p 144
32. S 2.4
33. S 3.144
34. S 2.33
35. S 3.171-172
36. Jayatilleke, K. N. The message of the Buddha. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975. p 201.

37. Macy. op. cit. p 9.
38. S 3.151
39. A 5.113
40. Johansson, Rune E. A. The dynamic psychology of early Buddhism. Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series no. 37. 2nd ed. London: Curzon Press, 1979.p 41.
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43. Sn p 175
44. Johansson. op.cit. p.44
45. S 3.146
46. S 3.87
47. Buddhadasa Anapanassati. op. cit. p.37
48. Nanvira. op.cit. p. 108
49. Ibid., pp 108-109
50. S 3.87
51. S 2.4
52. Nanvira. op.cit. p 103
53. S 2.114
54. S 2.72
55. S 2.65
56. S 2.82
57. Nanvira. op.cit. p. 104
58. Citta is the inner centre or space which "contains" mental processes. Manas is the mind as sense organ: like the physical sense organs it perceives a particular type of object. The eye, for example, is the organ which perceives visible forms; manas is the organ which perceives dhammas (mental phenomena). Vinnana is the presence of all phenomena, whether physical or mental. Together, citta, manas and vinnana constitute "mind".
59. S 2.94-95
60. S 2.3
61. Nyanatiloka Maha Thera. Buddhist dictionary. 3rd ed. Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1970. p 28.

62. Kalupahana. Causality. op. cit. p 122.
63. S 2.3
64. S 3.100-101
65. S 3.102
66. Pandita, Sayadaw. In this very life: the liberation teachings of the Buddha. Boston: Wisdom, 1992. p 106.
67. See: Sachs, Mendel. "Comparison of the field concept of matter in relativity physics and the Buddhist idea of nonself", in Philosophy East and West 33 no. 1 (October 1983). pp 395-399; for a discussion of physical "things" resolving into process, according to the field concept of matter contained in the theory of general relativity.
68. S 3.86
69. Kalupahana, David J. The principles of Buddhist psychology. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. p 17. 70 Johansson. op. cit. p 32.
70. Johansson. op. cit. p32.
71. Note that this definition embraces both the subjective (being affected) and the objective (that which affects), denying neither. See Kalupahana, David J. "The Buddhist conceptions of 'subject' and 'object' and their moral implications", in Philosophy East and West 38, no. 3 (July 1988). p 292.
72. S 3.86-87
73. "Ayya" is a respectful form of address for bhikkhunis (nuns).
74. M 1.302-303
75. M 1.303
76. S 3.87
77. Rahula, Walpola. What the Buddha taught. '2nd ed. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1974. p 23.
78. Kalupahana. A hisfory of Buddhist philosophy. op. cit. p 71.
79. Kalupahana. The principles of Buddhist psychology. op. cit. p 18.
80. S 3.60
81. A 3.415
82. S 2.64-65
83. Sn 651-653
84. S 3.55
85. M 1.293
86. M 1.303

87. S 2.3
88. S 2.84
89. A 3.411
90. Rhys Davids, T. W., and William Stede (eds.) The Pali Text Society's Pali-English dictionary. London: Pali Text Society, 1979 reprint pp 138 & 149.
91. Johansson. op.cit. p 71.
92. S 3.54-55
93. Macy. op.cit. p 110.
94. S 2.85
95. Macy. op.cit. p 111.
96. S 2.3
97. S 4.196-197
98. S 3.151
99. S 3.14
100. M 1 111-112 See Kalupahana A history of Buddhist philosophy. op cit. p 32; and Nanananda, Bhikkhu. Concept and reality in early Buddhist thought. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1986 pp 5-6
101. S 2.1-2
102. M 1.161-162
103. S 4.26-27
104. Streng. op.cit. p.78
105. Nyanatiloka Maha Thera Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka. 4th ed. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983 p 2
106. Buddhadasa. Paticcasamuppada. op. cit. p 4.
107. Ibid., pp 7-8
108. Ibid., p.5
109. Ibid., pp. 15-16
110. S 2.2-3
111. S 2.80-82
112. S 2.56-58
113. S 3.46-47
114. Lit "worthy one". In early Buddhism, no distinction is drawn between the liberating insight enjoyed by the Buddha and an arahant. In regard to questions of freedom and bondage, therefore, buddha, tathagata and arahant are synonymous.

115. Buddhadasa. paticcasamuppada. op.cit. p.44
116. Ibid., p 32.
117. Buddhadasa. Me and mine. op.cit. p 132.
118. S 2.108
119. S 2.82
120. Streng. op.cit. pp 77-78
121. S 3.54-55
122. See Buddhadasa. Me and mine. op. cit. pp 92-94 for a discussion on arammana; and Streng. op cit pp 75-79 for the role of "support" in consciousness.
123. S 2.65-66
124. Hosaka, Gyokusen. "Asrava", in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Volume 2 Faccicle 2. Government of Ceylon, 1966. p 202.
125. "For the arahant there is nothing more to do..." S 3.169 See the discussion on the distinction between phala (result) and sankhara in Reichenbach, Bruce R "The law of karma and the principle of causation", in Philosophy East and West 38 no 4 (October 1988) p 401
126. S 2.83
127. Macy. op.cit. p 9
128. S 2.10
129. Sn pp 172-178
130. See Kalupahana Casuality. op. cit. p 98; and Cruise, Henry "Early Buddhism: some recent misconceptions", in Philosophy East and West 33, no 2 (April 1983). p 153.
131. Macy. op.cit. p 55
132. S 3.54
133. Macy. op.cit. p 51
134. A 5.113-114
135. A 5.114-115
136. M 1.57; Silananda, ven U, The four foundations of mindfulness. Wisdom: Boston, 1990 pp 50-51
137. Pandita, Sayadaw op. cit. p 172.
138. Ibid., p 98
139. Vism p 143. Emphasis added.
140. Vism p 444. Emphasis added.
141. Kalupahana. Causality. op. cit. p 115. this verification was

itself an interpretation of meditative experience: Bucknell, R. S. and Stuart-Fox, M. "The 'three knowledges' of Buddhism: implications of Buddhadasa's interpretation of rebirth", in Religion 13 (1983). p 106.

142. D 3.105

143. S 2.13

144. M 1.256 & 258

145. M 1.486

146. Vin. 1.11

147. Kalupahana. A history of Buddhist philosophy. op. cit. pp 53-54

148. Kalupahana. "Dhamma (1)". op. cit. p 243

149. S 3.38

150. S 2.26-27

151. Loy, David. "The paradox of causality in Madhyamika", in International Philosophical Quarterly 25, (1985). p 69.

152. The great discourse on causation: the Mahanidana Sutta and its commentaries. Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1984. p 5.

153. Govinda, Lama Anagarika. The psychological attitude of early Buddhist philosophy. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974. p 58.

154. Jayatilleke. op.cit. pp 204-205

155. The great discourse on causation. op. cit. p 5.

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Earlier, we used the analogy of mountain-climbing to help explain the relationships among the steps of the path. When you set out to climb a mountain, you must have the summit in view. It is the sight of the summit that imparts the general direction to one's steps. Wisdom is described as the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the understanding of interdependent origination, and the like. What we mean when we say this is simply that the attainment of wisdom is the transformation of these doctrinal items from mere objects of intellectual knowledge into real, personal experience. In other words, we want to change our knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and the like from mere book learning into actual, living truth. As everything is interdependently arisen, we do not have the perspective of a solitary agent performing a variety of actions but a complex multifaceted individual engaged with many diverse roles, intersecting with a very complex world. This is the real core of it all and a Buddhist Quote for the day. This interconnectedness of everything is termed "interdependent arising"™ in Buddhism. As everything is interdependently arisen, we do not have the perspective of a solitary agent performing a variety of actions but a complex multifaceted individual engaged with many diverse roles, intersecting with a very complex world. This is the real core of it all and a Buddhist Quotes Tibetan Buddhism Quote Of The Day Perspective Masters Core The World Phrase Of The Day Master's Degree. In early Buddhism, we speak of Interdependent Co-arising. In latter Buddhism, we use the words interbeing and interpenetration. The terminology is different, but the meaning is the same. (Thich 1999, p. 225). His interpretation of interbeing is influenced by the thoughts of Nāgārjuna¹³ where he links it with emptiness¹⁴ in Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra¹⁵ or A Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom Śāstra (Thich 1999, p. 226): When we understand impermanence and non-self, we understand Interdependence Co-Arising. In this gatha, Nāgārjuna links Interdependent Co-Arising with emptiness: All phenom