V
THE PROBLEM OF TIME

1. TIME AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The formula of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*—"At a time when…" (see p. 35)—implies a close connection between time and consciousness, which in a verse quoted in the *Atthasālinī* (p. 57) is described as a mutual relationship:

> By time the Sage described the mind
> And by the mind described the time,
> In order to show, by such definition,
> The phenomena there arranged in classes.
>
> (*Samaye niddisi cittaṃ cittena samayaṃ muni*
> *niyametvāna dīpetuṃ dhamme tattha pabhedato.*)

The state of consciousness classified in the first part of the schematic sentence of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* is, in its existence, *limited* as well as *described* by time. The duration of that mind-defining time period is circumscribed by the simultaneity of the mental factors enumerated in the second part of the sentence ("…at that time there are sense-contact…"). In other words, a state of consciousness lasts as long as the combination of its single factors. This represents the *limitation* of consciousness by time. Its *description* too is only possible by reference to time, namely, to the temporary simultaneity of the single factors. Conversely, these mental factors—in other words, the internal relations—for their part determine the time by furnishing the measure of the time unit, which consists only in the duration of that temporary combination of factors. The conclusion to be drawn from this mutual relation between time and

consciousness may be formulated in the words of Bertrand Russell: "…we cannot give what may be called *absolute* dates, but only dates determined by events. We cannot point to a time itself, but only to some event occurring at that time."[61] The commentator expresses the same idea when, in explaining the word *samaya* (rendered in our translation by "time"), he says: "Chronological time, denoted by reference to this or that (event), is merely a conventional expression… Since it has no existence in itself (i.e., cannot be found in reality) one has to understand it as a mere concept."[62]

According to the commentary (As 57–61), the term *samaya* in the sentence from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* expresses five meanings:

1. The first is *chronological time* (*kālo* = *pavattikālo*, "duration"), which we have just discussed.

2. *Concurrence* (*samavāya*) of circumstances, that is, the completeness of conditions (*paccaya-sāmaggī*) necessary for the occurrence of the particular state of consciousness. For example, visual organ, visual object, light, attention, etc., are required for the arising of visual consciousness. This meaning of samaya relates the given moment of consciousness to the present, that is, to coexisting conditions.

3. *Condition* (*hetu*), that is, the combination of those modes of conditionality that are operative in the particular case. For example, for visual consciousness, the visual organ and object are conditions by way of prenascence (*purejāta-paccaya*); visual consciousness (*dassana*) is related to the preceding perceptual phase of incipient attention (*āvajjana*, "mental adverting") by way of immediate contiguity (*samanantara-paccaya*); for the subsequent phases of that visual experience the visual consciousness is a condition by way of inducement (*upanissaya*), object (*ārammaṇa*), predominance (*adhipati*), etc. This meaning of samaya relates to all three divisions of time. The future is likewise included because every state of consciousness is not only conditioned but is itself a condition for subsequent states.

4. The right *moment* (*khaṇa*) refers only to wholesome consciousness. It means: the right occasion for additional wholesome activity for which the present moment of wholesome consciousness is capable of being an inducement, support, and starting point. Whether this "right moment" is properly utilized depends on the awareness of that opportunity; if such awareness is absent the potentialities inherent in the moment will be lost. This connotation of samaya refers only to the future.

5. *Aggregation* (*samūha*), that is, the momentary union of the single components of consciousness, the "constellation" that determines the psychological time, just as the constellation of *samaya* refers only to the present.

The simultaneity of mental factors referred to above is not a static juxtaposition of self-contained units as in a mosaic. Their simultaneity results rather from different processes of psychic movements meeting temporarily in the constellation of the present moment, partly overlapping each other but without achieving complete congruity, just as in nature there are also no truly congruent triangles.

A glance into the "antecedents" and the subsequent "life story" of the factors of a single moment of consciousness will show us: (1) that the simultaneity of these factors has to be conceived as something fluid and not static; (2) that simultaneous factors, insofar as they are variable (nonconstant), meet each other at quite different stages of their own "life history": some factors might already have been parts of preceding moments but are disappearing with the dissolution of the present one; some arise only now and recur in future moments; and again, the lifetime of others may be limited to this moment only. Such a differentiation is certainly significant, just as it makes a difference whether we meet with certain people or ideas in youth, maturity, or old age.

The fact that parts of other moments of consciousness may, as it were, spread over the present moment or extend beyond it makes for an intricate interlacing and a close organic continuity in the world of mental phenomena. There are no "empty

spaces," no disconnected events in the universe of the mind, though the connection may often be very loose and remote. Even if a psychic event breaks in quite unexpectedly, it does not arise from nothingness but is related to a perhaps distant past, the gap being bridged by subconscious mental processes. Here we meet again the "third dimension" of mind—its "depth" with regard to time, already referred to (p. 32–33).

A minimum of psychic continuity is always given by the seven "factors common to all consciousness" (see note 40) But we also have to keep in mind the element of diversity in those seven factors. In their repeated occurrence and concrete manifestations, far from being identical, they are actually highly varied. They are "common" factors only as concepts abstracted for the purpose of methodical exposition, though they do possess enough (relative) identity to maintain the continuity in the mental process. Also, with regard to the already mentioned connection of an unexpected event with its conditions in the past, we must not forget the element of diversity. Taking this into account we spoke intentionally of the event as being *related* to a past event, not as being caused by it, which happens only in certain cases. Otherwise we should land in complete determinism, which results in a static view of the world. Though, strictly speaking, there are no completely new events in the material and mental universe, there are also no fully identical repetitions. The truth is in between, that is, in the middle path of dependent origination: "Both these two extremes the Perfect One has avoided and has shown the middle doctrine (*majjhena dhammaṃ*), which says: "With ignorance as condition the kamma-formations come to be" (S II 20). That is to say, the middle path of the Buddha appears here as the law of conditionality—as the fact of correlation, which is what is really implied when we speak, somewhat vaguely, of continuity. It is, in fact, the energy inherent in the conditions (*paccaya-satti*) that creates what is called continuity or a continuum.

To effect continuity is a prominent function of consciousness, and this was already recognized in the

Atthasālinī. Among the traditional categories of definition, the manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) of consciousness is called "connecting" (*sandahana*), which is explained as follows: "Consciousness presents itself as 'connecting,' because when any later state of consciousness arises, it does so by immediately succeeding the preceding state; that is why 'connecting' is its manifestation."[63]

This implies that each state of consciousness is "open" to the past as well as to the future: it has "depth" in time. Though a moment of consciousness has no rigid boundaries, it nevertheless does not lack individuality—in the same way as there will be a characteristic blend of colors where several multicolored beams of light intersect; but its shade will change at once if even one of these beams of light moves away or varies its intensity. Likewise, when a change of direction or intensity occurs in the components of consciousness, the "color" of the subsequent mental state will be different. Apart from the divergent past and future "life story" of the single components of consciousness, also in the point of their intersection, that is, in the given moment of consciousness, there is no motionless stability or self-identity. A single moment too passes through the three phases: (1) the arising (*uppāda*) or the nascent state; (2) the (relative) stability (*ṭhiti*) or state of continuation, which may be understood as the culmination point of the respective process or as the point of the closest contact in the temporary combination of mental factors; (3) the gradual dissolution (*bhaṅga*) of that combination. In other words, these three phases represent the approaching and departing movement in the mutual relationship of the mental concomitants. This corresponds to the changes occurring in that greater temporary combination called "personality," and in the still greater one of society, where a similar rhythm may be observed. We spoke of this previously as the alternating process of assimilation and dissimilation.

Here in this context our purpose is merely to explain the first statement of the commentarial stanza quoted above: "By time the Sage described the mind…" We found that this

statement has a twofold meaning: firstly, a moment of consciousness is limited in its duration by the simultaneity of its concomitants, and only by that simultaneity of factors can a description of it be given; secondly, a moment of consciousness, in its full significance, with all its implications, can be explained only in terms of time, and by referring to all three divisions of time—to the past, present, and future. Because of the conditioned nature of consciousness, no present mental state is self-explanatory.

The second line of the stanza says: "And by the mind [he] described the time." This means that the *time* mentioned in the second part of the sentence (i.e., the duration of the mental factors in their momentary combination) is referred to, and thereby described by, the state of *consciousness* as classified in the first part of the sentence. Here, time is "denoted by reference to" consciousness (*upādāya paññatto kālo*). But quite apart from the denotation and description of a particular time period in terms of consciousness, time in general can be conceived only as the conscious experience of it. This subjective—or better, psychological—character of time becomes particularly distinct when time seems to pass either very slowly or very quickly: slowly in a mental state of dullness or expectancy, quickly in interesting activity or mental absorption. Other examples of the decisive influence of the psychological factor in the experience of time are the contraction of time in dreams as well as in the flashlike retrospect of one's entire life when faced with death. It is also evident that there will be a different time experience and time value in the lives of an ephemerid, a dog, a man, and a two-hundred-year-old tortoise. To an insect living but a single day, the morning, noon, and evening of that day will have the same significance as childhood, maturity, and old age have for us. Each creature, at the end of its life span, will feel that it has lived a full life, irrespective of the number of the hypothetical "objective" time units. William James says: "We have every reason to think that creatures may possibly differ enormously in the amount of duration which they intuitively feel…"[64] We may

tentatively say that time value or time experience depends on the intensity of consciousness and on the life span, the first being the more "subjective" and the other the more "objective" factor. This shows again the interweaving of these two forces—subjectification and objectification—in each aspect of life, which we earlier illustrated by the internal and external relations present in each moment of consciousness.

These examples of the psychological character of time suggest that there exist different planes of time corresponding to different levels of consciousness. A few provisional remarks about this are given in the next section.

2. PLANES OF TIME

> It is now held that each series of events has its own time order, and it is difficult to relate the one to the other since there is no common standard time.
>
> —Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*

From what was said in the last chapter it seems that the Buddhist teaching of the relativity of time is not limited merely to the statement that time is a relational concept, related to, and inseparable from, the events occurring in it. By inference we may assume that Buddhist philosophy also acknowledges different *planes* of time, though they are not mentioned as such. This puts the relativity of time on a still wider basis.

Any phase or aspect of any life process has the inherent potentiality of an increase or decrease in the scale of its varying intensity, extending far beyond the horizon of the particular point of observation. Science has shown that there are sound and light waves beyond our perceptual range ascertainable by deduction or by experiment with an apparatus more sensitive than our human sensorium. In the same way we need not suppose that time is limited to the radius of the human time experience and that there is no increase or decrease in its intensity. There are certainly time planes below and above the range of average human consciousness, which may likewise be either inferred by

deductive methods or actually experienced in the "experimental situation" of meditative practice, in which the range and sensitivity of average consciousness may be greatly expanded.

In Pāli Buddhist literature we have found only two express references to different time planes, and these are extreme cases below and above the average time experience. The fact that they are extreme cases might be accidental and attributable to our still uncompleted survey of the scriptures from that point of view; or it can be explained by the fact that the differentiation of time levels is more evident in such extreme cases and cannot be neglected when the respective phenomena are investigated. These two cases are: (1) matter, and (2) the meditative attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*).

Matter. In the postcanonical Abhidhamma literature it is said that the duration of a material phenomenon is equal to sixteen moments of consciousness. In other words, one material time unit equals sixteen mental time units of average human consciousness. The number "sixteen" should not be taken as a definite time measure, the less so since the unit of one moment of consciousness is metaphorically defined as "the billionth part of a flash of lightning." It is only the ratio of 1:16—a comparative relation—that is expressed here. In the same way, a complete process of sense perception (*pañcadvāravīthi*) has been hypothetically determined as lasting sixteen moments,[65] in order to fix the proportional duration of the single phases of that process; for example, impulsion (*javana*) occupies seven of these sixteen. The relative duration of a material unit was determined as equalling that of a complete perceptual process, that is, sixteen moments. The choice of the number "sixteen" may have been influenced by the fact that in India this number was (and is) a very popular measuring unit of space, time, etc., often used metaphorically.[66] A Westerner with his decimal system might have chosen "ten" as a starting point for distributing proportional values.

By the ratio 1:16 an estimate of the relative velocity of corporeal and mental processes is given—the former being considerably slower than the latter. The commentary to the *Vibhaṅga* says: "In corporeal things change is difficult and cessation slow; in mental things change is easy and cessation quick."[67]

To circumscribe in that way the time rhythm of corporeal things in terms of consciousness is justified (1) by the second principle laid down in the commentarial stanza, "And by the mind [he] described the time"; and (2) by the close connection between time and consciousness corresponding to the connection between space and matter. But there is yet a third point that is important to remember when material processes are related to or explained by mental ones: it is a fundamental idea of Buddhist philosophy that matter cannot exist without a kammic consciousness desiring life in a material world: "If, Ānanda, there were no kamma maturing in the sensuous sphere, could sensuous existence (*kāmabhava*) appear?"—"Surely not, Lord" (A I 223).

Of course, this must not be taken to imply an idealistic conclusion; for mind, like all component things, is a conditioned phenomenon and cannot be regarded as a sole cause, be it of matter or of anything else. But, avoiding the extreme beliefs in primacy of matter or primacy of mind, we can say that both matter and mind are manifestations of kammic energy at varying distances from the generative source of that energy. We may also express it thus: that around the center of generative kammic energy several peripheral circles revolve. Closest to the center we have to imagine the kamma-results proper (*vipāka*), which are only mental states. Next comes the circle of such matter as is directly produced by kamma (*kammaja-* or *kamma samuṭṭhāna-rūpa*), which is only one division of matter. After that come kinds of matter produced by consciousness (citta samuṭṭhāna), by food (*āhāra-samuṭṭhāna*), and by such physical influences as temperature (*utu-samuṭṭhāna*).[68] The latter, too, though most distant from the center, must be assumed to be still connected with the kammic force.

Though the rhythm of matter is so much slower than that of mind, the lifetime of a single material unit is as little within the range of our direct perception as that of a mental unit. Nevertheless, it is owing to that increase in duration that such continua of inorganic matter as are directly perceptible produce the impression of relative constancy. And this impression of the constancy of matter, linked with the innate human longing for permanency, not only allows the poet's mind, so sensitive to the fleetingness of short-lived things, to find a spell of soothing rest in the contemplation of the "eternal hills," but is also responsible for theories about the primacy of matter and for belief in an objective and abiding material world. The probability that this our earth may still exist long after all human, animal, and plant life has vanished is different only in degree, but not in essence, from such evident facts as that the work may outlive the worker, an effect its cause, etc.

The Attainment of Cessation. While matter exists on a time level—or better, changes in a time rhythm—slower than that of mind, and comparable to the infrared end of the spectrum, there are also vibrations corresponding to the ultraviolet rays, which are so completely beyond the range of average human consciousness that, in the Buddhist psychology of meditative experience, they are only spoken of in terms of negation and exclusion similar to Nibbāna. We refer here to the meditative attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*), a term that signifies the temporary cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*). There are also gradual transitions to that highly abstract ultraconscious state, just as there are between any two points in the round of *saṃsāra*. These transitions are the four formless absorptions (*āruppa*). Here the rate of mental vibrations is already so intensified as to suspend contact with the world of matter and its special time rhythm. The suspension can take place either in the brief periods of meditative absorption in the case of a human meditator, or in an inconceivably long life span in the case of a rebirth in the formless worlds (*arūpaloka*).

In this context it is worth noting that what is now an exceptional meditative experience may, if the affinity with that experience is sufficiently strong, become the normal status in a new existence. Any peripheral events may become the center, and exceptions the rule, of a new life in a higher or lower sphere. The territories of the saṃsāric spheres have fluid boundaries. "Neighboring" spheres may widely overlap. Human life, for example, is in certain respects regulated by laws pertaining to the realm of matter and to the vegetable and animal kingdoms. The human mind requires the regular tidal movement between the peak of its strenuous activity during the day and its subsidence into the subconsciousness of sleep. The interpenetration with higher regions, surpassing average human consciousness, is much less extensive and much rarer. There are, indeed, some rare contacts with the realm of higher spirituality and intensified consciousness: in meditation, religious inspiration, artistic intuition, etc.; but they are followed only too quickly by a relapse into the relative dullness of everyday consciousness.

So there is, first, an actual and regular interpenetration with lower spheres, including their different time levels; and, second, there are the potential or rare contacts with the higher planes of existence and time, which may extend up to the four formless absorptions. The last of them (which may be followed by the attainment of cessation) is called *nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*, "the sphere of neither-perception-nor-nonperception" ("the ultimate limit of perception," Anagārika Govinda). The twofold negation in the name of this meditative state has to be understood as referring not only to the function of perception but to all components of consciousness. Here consciousness has reached such a degree of refinement that even the name "consciousness" is no longer quite appropriate and is retained only because there is still a residuum of sublime mental activities directed to the most abstract and sublime object imaginable: the previously obtained experience of the sphere of nothingness, which is the preceding stage of attainment. Here

the tension between the subject and object is naturally so exceedingly low that all that we call consciousness and time is on the point of vanishing completely. Consciousness, in fact, means to be aware of an object, and "time experience" means being aware of the relative movements of the subjective and objective aspects of a perceptual process.

The borderline of consciousness and time, reached in that fourth formless absorption, is transcended by the *attainment of cessation*. This is trenchantly expressed by the exclusion of that meditative state (1) from the normal time order of subsequent mental states, and (2) from the systematization of all "things" in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.

The first point, exclusion from the normal time order, is stated in the *Paṭṭhāna* (*Pañha-vāra* §§4, 5) in the following way: "After emergence from the attainment of cessation, the (previously obtained) wholesome state of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-nonperception is a condition for the attainment of fruition (of the nonreturner or arahant), by way of proximity or contiguity condition (*anantara-* or *samanantara-paccaya*)." When the time relation of the two other states is said to be one of immediate succession, this means that the intervening attainment of cessation is not counted. The obvious conclusion to draw is that the state of cessation is assumed to take place on quite a different time level. This is emphasized by the statement that from the view of the human time rhythm, the attainment of cessation may last for seven days.

As to the second point, the exclusion from the "Enumeration of Things" (*Dhammasaṅgaṇī*), we read in the *Atthasālinī* (p. 346): "It has been pointed out that in this triad (of wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate phenomena) the following states do not obtain: the three characteristics, the three concepts, the space obtained after the removal of the *kasiṇa*, empty space, the object of the consciousness of the sphere of nothingness (that is, the void aspect of the consciousness of infinite space), and the *attainment of cessation*."

The *Mūlaṭīkā* remarks that all these are excluded because they are not "real things" (*sabhāvadhamma*): "There is no real thing not contained in the triad of the wholesome, etc." (p. 160). Furthermore, the *Visuddhimagga* remarks (p. 709): "The attainment of cessation can neither be said to be conditioned nor unconditioned (*saṅkhata-asaṅkhata*), neither mundane nor supramundane (*lokiya-lokuttara*). Why not? Because it does not exist as a real entity (*sabhāvato natthitāya*). But because it has been entered into by the meditator, it is called 'produced' (*nipphanna*) and not 'unproduced' (*anipphanna*)."

When, in the above passage, the quality of a "real thing" is denied to the attainment of cessation, this certainly does not mean that this state is "unreal" in the sense of a hallucination or a figment of the imagination. We should therefore better speak of it as being "differently real" because all the data of our experience of reality and even of the most sublime states of absorption are absent in that state. In the same way, Nibbāna may be said to have no "existence" in terms of the *khandha*-world, but by denying its reality we would fall into the error of annihilationism (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*).

In this context our aim was only to put on record that Buddhist psychology of meditative experience knows of a time level that leaves our own so far behind that it can only be spoken of by a paradoxical statement, namely, by its assignation to, as well as the annulment of, seven days of our own calendar.

3. THE CONCEPT OF THE PRESENT IN THE ABHIDHAMMA

The Depth Dimension of Time

We have observed earlier (pp. 32–33) how Buddhist philosophy does not stop short at the rigid and "two-dimensional" concept of time, and particularly of the present, resulting from analysis. Through its philosophy of relations involving a synthetical method, the Abhidhamma adds the third dimension of "depth in time." When subjected to analytical treatment alone, the present

tends to become an insignificant point of intersection between past and future with a most elusive and even illusory nature. But when the depth dimension is added it becomes charged with energies deriving from the past and with a significance extending to the future—both in varying degrees, starting from very weak connections up to a definitely determined course, which is, however, limited to very few cases.[69] To express this dynamic view of time, special terms were required beyond the conventional and therefore too static concepts of past, present, and future. We proffer the opinion that it was for this purpose that the "triad of things arisen, not arisen, and bound to arise" (*uppannā, anuppannā, uppādino dhammā*) was included in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (at §§1035–37) and that the commentarial four categories of *uppannā* were formed, which will be dealt with later.

But the "triad of things arisen" was not intended to supersede the "triad of things past, present, and future" which remains at Dhs §§1038–40. The latter has an importance of its own in the much more frequent cases when it is necessary to distinguish between the three periods of time and the objects existing in them. Also, as a corrective against the opposite extreme, this triad is required in order to insist on the (relative) differentiation of the three periods of time and to counter the tendency to obliterate them completely. This tendency (as well as its opposite) appears again and again in the history of philosophy, and the following emphatic words of the Buddha may well have been directed against similar contemporary ideas:

> Monks, there are three unconfounded appellations, expressions, and designations. Unconfounded before, they are now unconfounded and cannot be confounded; they are not rejected by wise ascetics and brahmins. Which are these three? For such corporeality (feeling, etc.) that is past, gone, and changed, "It has been," is here the (right) statement, the usage, the designation. The statement "It is" does not apply to it, the statement "It will be" does not apply to it. (S III 71–72)[70]

Within the Buddhist fold the philosophical trend to obliterate the distinction between the three periods of time came very much to the fore among the Sarvāstivādins, who maintained that *dharmas* (conceived as the ultimate unchangeable elements of existence) persist through all three periods of time, which have only conventional validity, and that things appearing in these three time periods have only phenomenal existence. These ideas obviously contradict two basic conceptions of Buddhist doctrine, namely, impermanence and insubstantiality. In view of such consequences it is therefore imperative not to forget the relative differentiation of time manifested in the fact of change or impermanence. Following the principle of the twofold method, we stress this complementary aspect just here before proceeding to deal with the other, more neglected aspect of the relations between the three periods of time, in which partial interpenetration is prominent.

Before dealing with the term *uppanna*, which is particularly relevant in that connection, we shall mention briefly the three divisions of the term *paccuppanna*, "present."[71] These three kinds of the "present" are given in an order of increasing duration:

1. The "momentary present" (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*), extending only over the three phases of a single moment of consciousness: this is to be regarded as the present in the strict sense, though not actually perceptible.

2. The "serial present" (*santati-paccuppanna*), comprising a series or continuum (*santati*) of moments. The *Atthasālinī* records the definitions made by two schools. The first (the reciters of the *Majjhima Nikāya*) says that it lasts for one or two continua (*santati*), which are defined by examples such as the time required for things to become visible after an abrupt change from daylight to a dark room or conversely. The second school of thought (the reciters of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*) distinguishes material and mental continua. The former are explained by the aforementioned and other examples, the latter by the duration of two or three processes of impulsion

(*javanavīthi*), that is, by two or three processes of a complete perception, each lasting sixteen moments. We should hesitate to ascribe actual perceptibility to a duration of two or three processes, though on the other hand the earlier examples imply a duration somewhat too long to convey the idea of "present." Still we must suppose that the second division, the "serial present," is intended to refer to the actual experience of a "now."

3. The third division stands apart: it is the present with reference to the present life term or present birth process (*addhā-paccuppanna*).

The Fourfold Meaning of Arisen

We now turn to the term *uppanna*, "arisen," for which a fourfold division is given:[72]

1. *Vattamān'uppanna*, that is, presently or actually arisen. *Uppanna*, being grammatically a past participle, can also be taken here in the meaning of a "present tense" for which *vattamāna* is the grammatical term. It is identical with the "momentary present" (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*; see above).

2. *Bhūtāpagat'uppanna*, that is, "arisen" in the sense of "gone after having been." The *Atthasālinī* and the *Mūlaṭīkā* paraphrase the first part of that compound (*bhūta*) by *anubhavitvā*, "having experienced," and, alternatively, by *bhavitvā*, "having been." In the first case it is explained as follows: "By greed, etc., or their opposites, unwholesome or wholesome kamma experiences the taste of the object (*ārammaṇarasaṃ anubhavati*)." We suggest that the "experience of the taste" refers to the evaluation of the object by greed, non-greed, etc., which, as the *Mūlaṭīkā* stresses, can be performed only by kammic consciousness at the stage of impulsion (*javana*). This evaluation impresses a strong mark upon the entire cognitive process, and, together with that associated mark of evaluation, the image of the first perception is taken up by the subsequent states of consciousness.

This may happen in two ways: (a) In order to bring about the result of a complete perception such as we are actually

aware of, there is required a sequence of several serial processes (*vīthi*) of sixteen moments each. The later *vīthis*, being repetitions or variations of the first, are naturally influenced by the evaluating act of the first *vīthi*. (b) Further, on the occasion of a later encounter with the same or a similar object, the original association of it with a feeling of attraction or aversion will greatly prejudice any later evaluation of it. In such ways a certain portion of past kammic energy (*kammavega*), quite apart from its maturing later into kammic result (*vipāka*), is transmitted to present states of consciousness. To this extent this past evaluating experience (*anubhavitvā*), though "having gone" (*bhavitvā*), has present significance. Being active within the present, it may well be regarded as belonging to that qualified conception of the "present" implied by the term *uppanna*.

When *bhūta* is explained as *bhavitvā*, "having been," this second category of "things arisen" refers to everything conditioned (*saṅkhata*) which, after having passed through the three phases of its existence in the present, "has gone." If this last explanation had been given alone, we should be inclined to think that *bhūtāpagat'uppanna* referred merely to the use of the word as a past tense. But against this supposition there is firstly the rather involved term *bhūtāpagata*, which would have been unnecessary to express such a simple matter; secondly and particularly, by the emphasis on the evaluating function of kammic consciousness, the first part of the compound (in the sense of "having experienced") receives a greater stress than the second part expressing the fact of "having gone."

We therefore suggest that this second category of *uppanna* is intended to express the share of past mental states in present ones, particularly that of the active, that is, kammic mental states.

3. *Okāsakat'uppanna*, that is, "arisen" in the sense of "opportunity made." It includes (a) that *by which* an opportunity is made and (b) that *for which* an opportunity is made.

a. The first is the kamma of the past by which an opportunity is made for the arising of its corresponding kammic result. The *Atthasālinī* says (p. 66): "Though being a thing of the

past it excludes any other kammic result and makes an opportunity only for its own result." That is to say, though being past, it still exercises a selective and purposive function. Though not being "real" in the sense of present existence, on account of its being "active" in the above sense it has to be included in that wider conception of "actuality" implied by the term uppanna. This past kamma "by which an opportunity is made" is identical with that of the previous division ("gone after having experienced"). The difference is that here the persisting of the past kamma refers to its corresponding kammic result (*vipāka*), while in the previous category the other effects of that past kamma have been considered.

b. That "*for which* an opportunity is made" is the corresponding kammic result of the past kamma. Though being a thing of the future, it nevertheless counts as "arisen" in the sense of having a definite opportunity or chance to arise. It is identical with the "things bound to arise" (*uppādino dhammā*) belonging to the above-mentioned triad in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (*uppanna-ṭīkā*). About these "things bound to arise," the *Atthasālinī* says (p. 360) that they are not to be regarded as nonexistent (*natthi nāma na hoti*). This is another proof of the dynamic conception of actuality and time to be found in the canonical Abhidhamma and its earliest commentaries.

In this third category of *okāsakat'uppanna*, the relation is shown between certain things of the past and of the future (leaving out the present), both regarded as "arisen."

4. *Bhūmiladdh'uppanna*, that is, "arisen" in the sense of "having obtained soil," that is, fertile soil for the actual arising. This applies to potential defilements (*kilesa*), which are "potential" in the sense of possessing fertile soil from which they may actually sprout when the other conditions for their arising are given. This soil (*bhūmi*) is provided in all three planes (*bhūmi*) of existence by the individual's own five aggregates (*khandha*) as long as the respective defilements are not yet eliminated by one of the stages of awakening (stream-entry, etc.). The *Visuddhimagga*, in an instructive elaboration of our passage (at p. 687), lays particular stress on the fact that this fertile soil for the arising of

defilements consists in the individual's own life process and not in the outer world of tempting objects. Here we have a noteworthy reiteration of the fundamental Buddhist doctrine that human beings are not bound by the external world but only by their own craving. Not only the actuality but also the potentiality of bondage is centered in the individual, that is, in the subjective side of the impersonal life process.

In order not to leave any doubt about the meaning of the word "soil" (*bhūmi*) in this context, we shall elucidate it by the example of the visual perception of a pleasant form. Let us suppose that this perception was not followed immediately by conscious craving or enjoyment because it was superseded at once by a much stronger impression on the mind. Nevertheless this "deferred" defilement of sensual desire (*kāmarāga*) for beautiful forms may spring up at some later moment, for example, when that previous visual perception is remembered. The "soil" for its appearance was provided by the aggregates existing at the time of the previous visual perception: the aggregate of corporeality being represented by the eye, etc., the four mental aggregates by the visual consciousness and by the visual perception, the feeling, volition, etc., connected with it. Until the fetter of sensual desire (*kāmarāga-saṃyojana*) is severed on entering the path of the nonreturner (*anāgāmi-magga*), this defilement underlies the continued process of the individual's five aggregates; it is dormant or latent in their foundation or at their root; it is, as it were, the subsoil to that soil. With all these latter terms we have been paraphrasing the Pāli term *anuseti* (cf. *anusaya*, proclivity, latent tendency, disposition), which is used in this connection in the *Visuddhimagga* thus: tesu tesu (*khandhesu*) … *kilesa jātaṃ anuseti*, "this species of defilement underlies the respective aggregates of existence."

These potential defilements may be compared to dangerous microbes infesting the body, which, though in a latent state, may become active at any moment when conditions are favorable. It is this soil of the aggregates impregnated with potential defilements that is meant by the Abhidhamma categories of

"things favorable to defilements, to cankers, etc." (*saṅkilesikā dhammā and sāsavā dhammā*) and kindred terms in the triads and dyads of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.

The fourth category of uppanna refers to things that may possibly arise in the future. It differs from those future things of the third category "for which an opportunity is made" insofar as these latter things are related to an actual kamma of the past, while the fourth category relates only to the proclivity of things. The things of the third category are therefore to a much higher degree determined than those in the fourth, because, besides cases that are absolutely determined (see note 69), actually any other kind of kamma-result must eventually arise if not effectively counteracted. They are, therefore, nearer the borderline of factual reality than the mere proclivities of the fourth category. This relation to factual reality was probably the principle underlying the sequence of enumeration of the four categories. Beginning with factual reality, that is, "things presently arisen" (*vattamān'uppanna*), the other three divisions progressively decrease in actuality.

It is important to note that according to the *Visuddhimagga* (p. 689) only the things of the fourth category (*bhūmi-laddh'uppanna*), that is, *potential* defilements, can be overcome, or, more correctly, prevented from actually arising.

As a historical sidelight it may be added that the views of the Sarvāstivādins about the coexistence of the *dharmas* in all three time periods are reduced to their proper proportions by the commentarial exposition of *uppanna*. It is shown here which parts of the past and the future have or may have active and potential significance for the present and may therefore be regarded as actualities, though not realities. But according to the Theravāda this cannot be said of *all* things past and future, and it hardly seems tenable. It is quite possible that this disquisition on the term *uppanna* was partly intended for use as a refutation of the Sarvāstivāda, which was probably already in existence at the time the *ancient* commentaries were being compiled, the original works on which Buddhaghosa based his own commentaries.

It should be mentioned that the commentarial fourfold division of *uppanna* does not appear in the explanation of the "triad of things arisen" (*uppanna-ṭīkā*) but of the phrase *kusalaṃ cittaṃ uppannaṃ hoti* at the beginning of the Consciousness Chapter in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*. It is said that in this context the first category of "presently arisen" applies, that is, things presently or actually arisen. In the canonical triad itself, *uppanna* is defined by exactly the same words as *paccuppanna*. But as the defining terms are rather noncommittal we must not conclude that the meaning of "presently arisen" necessarily holds true here as well. Also, the statement in the *Atthasālinī* that the "triad of things arisen" extends over two time periods (i.e., past and future) does not necessitate that limitation for "presently arisen," because the commentarial conception of *uppanna* does not comprise the actual *things* of the past but only their persisting energy, that is, their conditioning influence, still active or latent in the present and the future. It has to be noted further that in the commentarial conception of the term *uppanna*, the "things bound to arise" (*uppādino dhammā*) are only a subdivision belonging to *okāsakat'uppannā*, though not mentioned under that name. In the triad, however, they are not included in the term *uppanna* but form a separate class.

Although, as we see, the *Atthasālinī* does not in any way relate the four categories of *uppanna* to the canonical triad, we feel justified in doing so because both groups of terms are obviously intended to introduce a more elastic and dynamic conception of time. So we suggest that the commentarial four categories may be taken to cover the same field as the *uppannā dhammā* and *uppādino dhammā* of the canonical triad. For any further development of Abhidhamma thought it seems to us important to bring into relation, and if possible into agreement, the terminology of the different periods of the Abhidhamma literature, as far as it is philosophically justified, even if, as in our present case, no complete historical proof can be furnished.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The past course of movement, and the direction to which a process moves, doubtlessly belong to the co-determining factors of a present situation. Parts of the past and of the future are, though not real, yet *actual*, in the sense of acting on the present. In the life of the individual as well as in human history this fact is illustrated by the powerful influence of traditions and of ideals, the one being the surviving past, the other the anticipated future. But there is still another unreal factor acting upon the present: the potency or potentiality of a situation, comprising its unmanifested possibilities, its neglected aspects, the deliberately excluded alternatives, the roads open but not pursued. Never can all the aspects and potentialities of a situation manifest themselves simultaneously. Some may well appear in the next moment, others in the near or distant future, either after being remembered and taken up consciously or after undergoing a subliminal maturing process. But the significance of these potentialities is not restricted to the future. They are operative in that very moment. For example, the excluded alternatives will influence the speed, the energy, and the duration of the movement proceeding in the direction decided upon. This influence may be retarding or accelerating, according to circumstances. That is to say, these potentialities are co-determining factors of what we may call the "specific weight" of the given situation; and on this "specific weight" depends the amount of influence that the particular moment of consciousness itself is able to exercise. In this connection, whether or not there was conscious awareness of the various potentialities and alternatives is also a relevant factor. Here enters the Abhidhammic distinction of spontaneous (*asaṅkhārena*) and nonspontaneous (*sasaṅkhārena*, "prompted") actions.[73]

The fact that the potentialities of a situation cannot be excluded from a dynamic conception of actuality was not only recognized in the commentarial period of Pāli literature, as illustrated above in our exposition of the term *uppanna*, but