

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM A COMPARISON OF BUDDHIST THEORIES  
OF CAUSATION WITH BRITISH EMPIRICIST ONES

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine to what extent certain Buddhist theories of causation are comparable with the causal theories of some British empiricist philosophers.

The thesis starts with an introduction. Its first chapter critically analyses Hume's causal theory, while the second points out that its similarity with the causal theories of Buddhist logicians such as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Both Hume and these logicians criticised the concepts of causal efficacy and production, and analysed causal connections merely as relations of unvarying sequence. The third chapter critically analyses Mill's causal theory (and, to a certain extent, that of Berkeley), indicating that 'cause' is a collective name for a complex set of conditions. The fourth chapter points out that the Buddhist 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools anticipated Mill's theory of the multiplicity of conditions. Moreover, the 'Sarvāstivādins' introduced concepts similar to that of Mill's 'negative conditions'. We also tried to compare and contrast Russell's theory of 'functional interdependence' with Buddhist causal theories. In addition, we suggested that by different devices the Buddhist philosophers and Mill saved themselves from the incongruity of admitting any arbitrary sequence as a causal sequence. Chapter V tries to prove that the Buddhist formula of the 'twelve-membered dependent

Origination' contains the incipient attempts of analysing causation 3  
only in terms of 'necessary and sufficeint conditions. Chapter VI  
shows that the concepts of causation and production are co-extensive.  
Thus there is a dilemma of explaining causation without production.  
Realization of this probably led the 'Mādhyamika' philosophers to deny  
causation from the Absolue standpoint. Chapter VII points out that  
the absence, in Buddhist philosophy, of any distinction - corresponding to that  
made by some recent Western philosophers - between reasons for actions  
and causes does not invalidate our comparative study. The appendix to  
chapter I reiterates Hume's thesis, viz., that causes and effects are not  
related by logically necessary connections, pointing out that its  
validity is not disapproved by the recent theories of some philosophers,  
e.g., Blanshard and Kneale.



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ABBREVIATIONS

AK: L'Abhidharma Kośa de Vasubandhu

AN: The Aṅguttara Nikāya

AKV: Abhidharmakośavyākhyā

EL: Buddhist Logic

Buddhist Philosophy: Buddhist Philosophy In India and Ceylon.

ETI: Buddhist Thought In India.

Buddhist Thought: The History of Buddhist Thought

CEN: The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa

CCB: Central Conception of Buddhism...

DN: The Dīgha Nikāya

Enquiries: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and An Enquiry  
Concerning the Principles of Morals.

FEDC: La Formule Bouddhique des douze Causes.

GAP: Guide Through the Abhidhamma Piṭaka

HOS: Harvard Oriental Series

IC: Instant et Cause

JP: Journal of Philosophy

JPTS: Journal of the Pāli Text Society

JRAS: Journal of Royal Asiatic Society

- MKV Madhyamakavṛ<sup>tti</sup>ti (Mādhyamikāsūtras de Nāgārjuna, avec la  
Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti ), ed.,  
De La Vallée Poussin.
- MNK Mūla Madhyamaka-kārikās, Nāgārjuna.
- MN The Majjhima Nikāya.
- OUP Oxford University Press
- PAS Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society
- PQ Philosophical Quarterly
- PTS Pāli Text Society
- SBB Sacred Books of the Buddhists
- SBE Sacred Books of the East
- SN The Saṃyutta Nikāya
- SL A System of Logic
- TDDC Théorie Des Douze Causes
- Treatise A Treatise of Human Nature
- TSP Tattva-Saṅgraha - pañjikā

UCR : University of Ceylon Review

VM The Visuddhi-Magga

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Essay: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke, John.

Psychological Ethics: A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics, C.A.F. Rhys Davids.

'Some Problems': 'Some Problems of Translation and

Interpretation', UCR, vol., VII, pp. 203-224.



INTRODUCTION

From the very traceable beginning of the history of ideas man has been engaged - in one way or another - in causal speculations. The world around him was full of things and events which appeared mysterious to him, and he wanted to know what caused them. More serious thinkers even indulged in speculations about what caused the world itself. Even today philosophers are trying to solve many difficult problems about causation. Thus the concept of causation has gone through a long evolutionary process - starting from relatively primitive conceptions, to subsequent criticisms and modifications, and finally to the emergence of the present sophisticated notions of cause. But although there is a very long history of causal theorising, some of these causal theories stand out among the rest. Their outstanding character is due to their conspicuous break with the tradition. In the present thesis we shall consider two such streams of causal theorising, one coming from the Occident, the other from the Orient. Our main purpose in considering them here is to point out the remarkable similarity that exists between these two sets.

The relevant Western theories were introduced by empiricist philosophers like Berkeley, Hume and Mill.<sup>1</sup> The Eastern

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1. Hume inherited the main spirit of Berkeley's causal theory, viz. natural phenomena do not have any 'power' to cause anything. (See Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge, Secs. XXV and XXVI). Both Hume's causal theory and that of Mill in fact differ in  
(continued on next page ...)

conceptions were developed by various Buddhist schools of thought. Both these sets insist that the pivotal point of causation is not the concept of 'power' or 'efficacy' a cause possesses,<sup>1</sup> but rather that of the appearance of something under certain conditions. Hume and the Buddhist logicians like, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla agree in particular in their emphasis that causal relations can be analysed in terms of the constant conjunctions of certain things or events with certain others. Mill and the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools of Buddhism on the other hand share especially the belief that a thing is never caused by one thing alone, but always by a multiplicity of conditions. The main point to notice with regard to these two sets of causal theories is that they both emphasized that the concepts of causal efficacy and production are not indispensable for giving causal explanations.

In this connection, someone may object that Buddhist discussions of causation abound in words apparently meaning 'producer', 'production'. Thus, he may say, the proposition that the concepts of causal efficacy and production were not essential

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many respects from Berkeley's. According to the latter, natural phenomena are 'causes improperly so called'. The only true cause is God. (See chapter III, p.132 and footnotes in this connection).

1. Russell also criticised the notion of 'causal operation' in his article, 'On the Notion of a Cause' (published in Mysticism and Logic, pp. 132-151). He suggested the replacement of the concept of causation by that of 'functional interdependence'. Yet, as we shall show in chapter IV (pp.207-213), his theory of 'functional independence' has very little similarity with Buddhist causal theories.

for Buddhist causal explanations, seems to have no validity. Our first comment with regard to such an objection is, that although some Buddhist schools have used words apparently meaning 'producer', 'production', they might have actually meant (see chapter V, pp.217,264) by a proposition like 'X produces Y' merely 'X is always followed by Y'. Secondly, some philosophers, e.g. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla relentlessly exposed the difficulties connected with the concept of causal efficacy. Moreover, the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers undoubtedly referred to (see Chapter IV, See especially pp.145-46, 180 cl. pp.144-203) conditions ('paccayas' or 'pratyayas') while apparently talking about a cause. Discussions of problems like these form part of the present thesis.

In saying that both the empiricist and the Buddhist theories of causation have remarkable similarity, we are not by any means suggesting that the two sets are identical in all respects. If they had no difference, we could not really compare them.

In the first place, the Buddhist theories of causation are predominantly concerned with mental events and their conditions, because of the overriding importance of mental attitudes in the Buddhist system. As contrasted with this, the empiricist theories of causation are mostly concerned with the causes of physical things and happenings. There are other distinguishing features of the two sets of theories. In his discussion of causal relations Hume was to a large extent preoccupied with showing that the cause

does not have an internal logical connection with its effect. To all intents and purposes, no corresponding discussion can be found in Buddhist causal theories. A dominant feature of Mill's causal theory is his insistence that the cause is the invariable and unconditional antecedent of the effect. By this emphasis he saves the empiricists from the incongruity of admitting any unvarying sequence as a causal sequence; although such a sequence is, according to them, one of the main features of a cause. Since causes have to be unconditionally related to their effects, any regularly occurring antecedent phenomena would not qualify as the causes of their subsequent phenomena. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalāśīla also characterised a cause as a regular antecedent. They too had to have recourse to a device in order to avoid admitting any constantly preceding phenomenon as the cause of the succeeding one. Yet, as we shall show later,<sup>1</sup> their device was different from insisting on the unconditionality of the causal sequence. Neither is there anything in Buddhist causal theories corresponding to Mill's theory of the 'plurality of causes'.<sup>2</sup> Mill pointed out that the same event may be caused on different occasions by different causes. An accident may sometimes be caused by the

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1. See chapter IV, pp.206-207.

2. Although the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers recognised that the word 'cause' is a collective name for a multiplicity of conditions.

driver's ignoring the traffic signals, and at other times by his attempt to overtake another car. Such a possibility of the plurality of causes does not seem to have attracted the attention of Buddhist philosophers.

Leaving aside the points of disagreement between the two sets of theories, the question arises, what accounts for this remarkable similarity between them? In my opinion, one of the causes is the fact that they both are based on one and the same first premise, viz., 'there are no unitary, enduring entities called substances'.

For several reasons Buddhist philosophers unanimously rejected the concept of enduring and immutable substances, physical and mental. And in the absence of substances or things over and above changing qualities, it is no longer possible to speak of 'the efficacy of causes', or of 'agents' producing something. It is Paul who starts the engine of his car. It is the alarm-clock that wakes me up. If instead of these things there were only a bundle of fleeting qualities, it would have been impossible to say that someone (or something) is an 'agent' that brings about certain changes. Accordingly, Buddhist philosophers in general had to analyse a cause as a sum total of conditions under which another thing called the effect appears Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla in particular argued that since all things, mental and physical, are in the ultimate analysis streams of 'space-time

point-instants' (i.e. 'dharmas'), nothing has the time to produce something else. According to them, what is conventionally known as production is in reality the unvarying sequence of some momentary entities when certain other momentary entities precede them.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophers of the empiricist tradition like Berkeley, Hume, Mill and Russell also denied causal operations and production. Hume is famous for his relentless criticism of mental substances or selves. Since Berkeley had already criticised the notion of physical substances,<sup>2</sup> Hume directed his criticisms mainly against <sup>h</sup>psycical substances or selves. About the self he remarks that he is never aware of anything else apart from some fleeting sensations, feelings etc. In his case, as we shall show<sup>3</sup> in our first chapter, one of the factors<sup>4</sup> that prompted him to deny causal operation was undoubtedly his denial of substances. Now the objective reality of substances was denied also by Mill and Russell. One may well wonder whether it is just a coincidence and that both the Buddhist philosophers on the one hand (apart from Hume) and Berkeley, Mill and Russell too denied substances and

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1. One should not think that such a statement contradicts Kamalaśīla's comment that 'among all the jewels of Buddhist philosophy its theory of causation is the chief jewel.' (See TSP, p. 10 and BL, I, p. 119. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla did not reject the concept of causation as such. They only argued that the notions of efficacy or production are not essential for causal explanations.
  2. Berkeley believed in the reality of selves inspite of his criticism of the idea of physical substances. See his Principles of Human Knowledge, secs. LXVIII, LXXX, particular, for his criticism of the notion of physical substances. (..continued on next page....)
  3. See chapter I, pp.69-72 . 4. The other factor was probably his/

at the same time devised causal theories entirely bereft of the concepts of production and efficacy! Mill does not give any elaborate refutation of the concept of substance. About physical objects he remarks, "all we know of objects is the sensations which they give us, and the order of occurrences of those sensations".<sup>1</sup> He further remarks, "But of the nature of either body or mind, further than the feelings which the former excites, and which the latter experiences, we do not, according to the best existing doctrine, know anything; and if anything, logic has nothing to do with it, or with the manner in which the knowledge is acquired."<sup>2</sup> According to Russell, substances are not 'permanent bits of matter', but only 'strings of brief events.'<sup>3</sup> He agrees with the physicist's analysis of common-sense 'things' into electrons and protons,<sup>4</sup> and argues that even electrons and protons are in reality merely groups of events connected by causal laws. In his own words, "we have a series of events connected together by causal laws; these may be taken to be the electron, since anything further is a rash inference which is theoretically useless."<sup>5</sup>

He added, "what is peculiar about a string of events which

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/ theory of 'psychological atomism'. See chapter I, pp.66-67.

1. SL, vol. I, p. 65. Italics as in the original.
2. SL, vol. I, p. 69.
3. The Analysis of Matter, pp. 243, 246.
4. The Analysis of Matter, p. 244.
5. The Analysis of Matter, pp. 244-245. Italics as in the original.

physics takes as belonging to one electron is a character which is present approximately in the common-sense 'thing', a character which I should define as the existence of a first order differential law connecting successive events along a linear route." <sup>I</sup>

It is quite likely then that the special empiricist method of explaining causal processes without bringing in the concept of causal operation is directly derived from the first premise, 'there are no unitary and abiding substances'. In the absence of substantial entities we cannot have any notion of an agent endowed with a special power by virtue of which it produces something.

It is possible that the similarity between the two sets of theories is the result of one system of thought influencing the other? An article written recently by Professor Jacobson <sup>2</sup> of South Carolina University may shed some light on this question. He is of the opinion that Hume was influenced by some Chinese philosophical ideas, which represented a synthesis of Indian Buddhist philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy. If this were true, then it is quite possible that Hume's ideas of causation were influenced by Buddhist ideas; and this might have

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1. The Analysis of Matter, p. 245.
  2. See 'The Possibility of Oriental Influence in Hume's Philosophy' by Professor Nolan Fliny Jacobson, published in Philosophy East and West, January 1969, vol. XIX, no. I, pp. 17-37.



resulted in the creation of a subsequent trend of philosophical speculations about causation which resembled Buddhist causal theories to a large extent.

Professor Jacobson starts by pointing out some remarkable points of similarity between Hume's philosophical ideas and Buddhist philosophical speculations in general. The first point of resemblance, as has already been suggested, is their conception of the Self. Commenting on the Buddhist conception of the Self De La Vallée Poussin remarks, "According to the Buddhists no Self, that is, no unitary, permanent feeling or thinking entity, comes into the field of enquiry... That these states of consciousness depend upon a Self, are the product of a Self, or arise in a Self, is only a surmise, since there is no consciousness of a Self outside these states of consciousness..."<sup>1</sup> One cannot but note the extraordinary similarity of this comment with Hume's famous statement, "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the

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1. De La Vallée Poussin, The Way to Nirvāna, pp. 38-39.

Perception." <sup>1</sup> Both the Buddhist philosophers and Hume relentlessly admonish us of the danger of extending our speculative thinking beyond the limits of what is grasped by our senses. Jacobson also draws our attention to the way both the Buddhist philosophers and Hume claim that our calling something a producer-cause is essentially based on our conventional way of thinking and our cultural habit. <sup>2</sup> Both the Buddhist philosophers and Hume, according to Jacobson, are the major turning points of the history of ideas by virtue of reversing the roles previously ascribed to the rational and passionate sides of man's nature, by claiming that reason is, and ought to be, the slave of passion. <sup>3</sup> They all show that desire or craving is the fundamental determinant of conduct. <sup>4</sup> Our ends or aims are determined solely by our desires and reasoning or knowledge has no direct influence on them. Knowledge has, according to Hume, only the limited capacity of indicating the means whereby desires may be satisfied. <sup>5</sup>

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1. Hume, Treatise, p. 252. Incidentally, Jacobson gives inaccurate reference from the Treatise. See Jacobson, op. cit., p. 18.
  2. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 20.
  3. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 23. See also Hume, Treatise, p. 415.
  4. Hume meant this to be an argument against the rationalist philosophers according to whom passions are, or at any rate ought to be, the slaves of reason. They believed that rational actions are determined by reasoning and knowledge, as opposed to actions determined by passions.
  5. According to the Buddhists knowledge cannot excite passions in us. On the contrary, passions can give rise to the delusive conceptions of the things desired. See chapters II, p. 28; V, pp. 232, 247, 259).

How to account for these remarkable similarities? Professor Jacobson suggests that this resemblance is due to the influence of Chinese Buddhist ideas on Hume's philosophical thinking. Hume might have been exposed to the flood of Chinese Buddhist ideas mainly in two ways. In the first place, Oriental influence was such a major feature of the intellectual climate of eighteenth century Europe,<sup>1</sup> and particularly France, where Hume came to write his Treatise, that Hume's exposure to the major philosophical ideas of the Orient (China in particular) seems to be unavoidable. Secondly, Hume was greatly influenced by the philosophical ideas of Pierre Bayle<sup>2</sup> who, in his turn, was a friend of, and worked in close co-operation with, Leibniz, "a major vehicle for bringing Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist ideas in the intellectual climate of Europe."<sup>3</sup> In Jacobson's view Bayle was well acquainted with Buddhist ideas. He points out that Bayle wrote in his Historical

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1. As pointed out by Jacobson, the following major intellectual figures were influenced by Oriental ideas in Europe in the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century: (i) Bayle, Malebranche, Fénelon, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Quesnay in France; (ii) Leibniz and Christian Wolff in Germany; (iii) Lord Shaftesbury (Anthony Ashley Cooper) and Alexander Pope in England. All of them were in more or less close communication with each other.
  2. Hume avidly read and followed Bayle sometimes with almost verbal consistency. Yet he acknowledged his debt to Bayle very rarely. See N.K. Smith's The Philosophy of David Hume, pp. 43. n.2, 284. n. 3, 514-515.
  3. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 29. Donald Lach writes about Leibniz, "The Influence of Leibniz upon his contemporaries was just as important in the field of Chinese studies as it was in general philosophy and Mathematics." (see Lach, Leibniz and China, published in the Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. VI, October, 1945. See also Jacobson, op. cit., p. 33, n.49.) Joseph Needham suggests that Leibniz was influenced by Chinese Neo-confucian philosophical

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and Critical Dictionary about the 'real nothingness' of Buddhism as 'that which has no properties of sensible matter'.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in his formulation of skepticism Bayle was influenced by the ideas of Pyrrho who founded skepticism in Greece after visiting India with Alexander. According to Jacobson, Bayle's doctrine of skepticism "confers freedom upon man in the Hindu-Buddhist style by disentanglement from knowledge-claims regarding the true constitution of things."<sup>2</sup> Jacobson is of the opinion that Hume was probably influenced even in his ethical ideas by the great Chinese thinker Mencius. He says that Hume's doctrine of universal sympathy probably originates in Mencius. Mencius's doctrine of sympathy probably had a strong influence on Adam Smith's ethical thinking,<sup>3</sup> and Hume in his turn was influenced by Adam Smith. It is not unlikely, Jacobson suggests, that Hume himself had access to some books concerning the Orient collected by Jesuit missionaries (who had been to the Far East and Burma) in their college, La Flèche. This college is the place where Hume wrote his ~~his~~ famous Treatise, and,

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 / ideas about 'correlativism' in his formulation of the doctrine of 'pre-established harmony'. See J. Needham, Science and Civilization in China, II, p. 292.

1. Jacobson, op. cit. p. 35.
2. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 26.
3. See L.A. Maverick's China: A Model for Europe, p. 32 in this connection.

according to Mossner, spent three years, 1734-1737, reading French works which "seem so astonishing for a foreigner to have consulted." <sup>1</sup>

But the question is, if Hume was really influenced by oriental and Buddhist ideas, could he have failed to mention some oriental sources of his ideas? Yet Jacobson points out <sup>2</sup> that the practice of acknowledging the indebtedness to other sources is exclusively a twentieth-century custom. No such custom existed in Hume's time. One evidence of this is the fact we have already mentioned, viz. that Hume followed Bayle almost blindly <sup>3</sup> in many places, yet he mentions him only once in the Enquiries (p. 155, n.1), and only once in the Treaties, (p. 243, n.1). "The fact that Hume does not mention Bayle by name, and gives no reference to the Zeno article, "Kemp Smith says in one connection, "and follows him with almost verbal consistency, is but one illustration of how different from our own was the practice in this regard at the time when Hume was writing." <sup>4</sup>

If all this is true, then it is quite likely that the

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1. E.C. Mossner, The Life of David Hume, p. 27.
  2. See Jacobson, op. cit., p. 27.
  3. See R.H. Popkin, 'Bayle and Hume', Comunicaciones Libres Memorias del XIV Congreso Internacional de Filosofia, Mexico, 1963), IX, pp. 307-318. See especially, p. 318.
  4. N.K. Smith, op. cit., p.284n.3; See also pp. 514-515.

influence of Buddhist philosophy led Hume to formulate a particular causal theory, which created a model for subsequent empiricist causal theorising.

Now granted that the Buddhist causal theories resembled the empiricist theories, the question may be asked what is the point of showing this resemblance? What is the purpose of the comparative study we have undertaken? Comparative studies may have different objectives. Sometimes we may be engaged in showing the similarity between two systems of thought in order to suggest the possible influence of one system on the other. At other times we tend to compare different systems with the hope of solving some conceptual problems. Now although we do agree with Professor Jacobson's view that Hume was probably influenced by Chinese Buddhist ideas, our main purpose in trying to compare the two sets of causal theories is not to suggest any such influence. We have referred here to Jacobson's view mainly because we think that it is extremely interesting to reproduce a few points about the opinion of renowned scholars about the possibility of Oriental influence on Western philosophy. We did not pursue an examination of the question whether Hume was influenced by Oriental ideas in the present thesis, because we think that a whole thesis can be written on the possibility of Oriental influence on the Western philosophy of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. There is in fact a wide range of literature about the influence of Oriental (especially Chinese)

ideas on Leibniz and other philosophers.<sup>1</sup> Our prime concern in the present thesis has been an attempt to analyse philosophically the ideas involved in the theories of causation developed by British empiricist philosophers like Hume, Mill on the one hand, and Buddhist philosophers on the other. Such a philosophical analysis may even help people to understand the plausibility of Oriental influence suggested by authors like Jacobson in terms of more specific philosophical notions. But we are trying to compare the Buddhist and the empiricist causal theories mainly because we hope that such a comparison will facilitate a proper understanding of the two sets of theories. We hope that our comparison will primarily help people acquainted with Western philosophical ideas to have a proper grasp of the kind of ideas that are involved in Buddhist causal theories.

Like any other Indian philosophical doctrines Buddhist causal theories abound in technical terminology. Western readers are naturally unfamiliar with such a highly specialised terminology. Translators of Indian philosophical treatises are sometimes happy in merely rendering verbal translations, which fail to convey the full philosophical import of the specialised doctrines. Under

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1. See for example Helmuth von Glasenapp's 'Kant und die Religionen des Ostens'; for the influence of Oriental ideas on Leibniz see especially pp. 99, 102, 131, 153, 176(n). See also Raymond Schwab's 'La Renaissance Orientale', for the influence which Oriental culture exerted on Western philosophers and scholars in the 18th & 19th centuries.

such circumstances, an analytic and philosophical comparison with parallel theories in the West may render the Buddhist causal theories more intelligible to people versed in Western philosophy. Study of the behaviour of apes helps man to understand the complexity of human psychology. Knowledge and understanding are frequently based on the method of connecting the unfamiliar with what is already familiar. We hope that a comparison of similar Buddhist and Western philosophical doctrines may even help people familiar with Buddhist ideas to have some insight into some parallel developments in the West.

We believe that the present study of the two sets of causal theories will also free us from a possible misconception, viz., that it is possible to give a valid explanation of causation while at the same time denying production.<sup>1</sup>

For several reasons I have been compelled, much to my regret, to limit my field of investigation to a certain extent. Because of my ignorance of the languages, I could not incorporate—apart from such works as the translation<sup>2</sup> of the Abhidharmakośa by

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1. See chapter VI.
  2. Even though we are aware of the fact that great scholars may be subject to criticisms on the part of other scholars, or even though they themselves may feel inclined to revise their own works at a later stage, we may safely accept the highly critical translations by great scholars like De La Vallée Poussin as the source material for our knowledge of Indian and Buddhist philosophical developments.



De La Vallée Poussin from Chinese and Tibetan sources - any relevant material from Chinese and Tibetan texts in my thesis. Neither could I deal with the problem of the 'freedom of the will and determinism' in this context, inspite of the close connection of this problem with the concept of causation. Both Hume and the Buddhist philosophers discussed this problem at some length.<sup>1</sup> But the discussion of this topic will easily form the subject-matter of one whole thesis.<sup>2</sup> We are therefore forced to leave this topic out of the present thesis. For the same reason I could not afford an extensive discussion of the famous Indian, and especially Buddhist, doctrine of 'karma' in this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Action and its retribution are subject to the law of moral causation. Yet a discussion that could do full justice to this doctrine is not possible within the space-limits of the present thesis.<sup>4</sup> A great deal has been written on various other aspects of Buddhist causal theories. We did not make any use

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1. For Hume see his section, 'on Liberty and Necessity' (Enquiry, sec. VIII; Treatise Ek. II, part iii, secs. i and ii). For the Buddhist conception of the freedom of the will see for example Stcherbatsky's BL, vol. I, pp. 131 -134.
  2. For an account of the extensive literature this topic has given rise to in Western philosophy the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. II, pp. 372-373 can be consulted. The Encyclopedia provides an enormous Bibliography under the headings 'Ethical Determinism', 'Logical Determinism', 'Theological Determinism', 'Physical Determinism', and 'Psychological Determinism'. The Bibliography is too long to quote here.
  3. For a brief discussion of the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' theories of 'karma' see chapters IV and V, pp. 164-165, 200-203, 221, 240-246.
  4. Professor Ninian Smart has produced the following list of references on this topic in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. IV, p. 324:

(Continued on next page...)

of such a literature in our present thesis, because other scholars have already made exhaustive use of such materials.

We start our thesis with a critical analysis of Hume's theory of causation. In the second chapter we first introduce the theory of causation propounded by two Buddhist logicians, Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla. We then proceed to point out the striking similarity of this theory with that of Hume. Both Hume and these two philosophers strongly criticised concepts like causal power, production and agency. In their analysis, causal connections are reduced merely to relations of unvarying sequence. I have incidently tried to show that both Hume and these Buddhist philosophers failed in their attempts to give us satisfactory accounts of causation in the absence of the concept of causal efficacy.

Although Mill agrees with the view of Hume that a cause is merely followed by, and does not in reality produce its effect, his causal theory is an improvement upon that of Hume in certain respects. Firstly, he points out that a cause is necessarily dependent upon a set of positive and 'negative conditions' which are

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Dasgupta, S.N., A History of Indian Philosophy, vol. I, chapter IV.

Paranjoti, V., Śaiva Siddhānta, second edition, London, 1954, pp. 38f.

Parrinder, Geoffrey, Upanishads, Gītā and Bible, London, 1962, chapter IX.

Tucci, Guiseppa, Storia della Filosofia Indien, Bari, 1957, part II, chapter X.

Zimmer, H., Philosophies of India, New York, 1957, chapter IV, section 7.

as essential for the effect as the cause itself. Secondly, he insists that a sequence of events is not a causal sequence unless the antecedents of it are unconditionally followed by the consequents.

In the fourth chapter we critically consider the theories of the multiplicity of causal conditions (i.e. 'pratyayas'/ 'paccayas') introduced by the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools of Buddhism. They both agree with Mill that philosophically speaking a cause really stands for a complex set of conditions. With the help of their concepts of 'dominating-conditions' and 'general-causes' (see chapter IV, pp. <sup>181-28</sup>177-78) the 'Sarvāstivādins' even introduced the notion of 'negative conditions' which plays a major role in Mill's causal theory. Mill's view that a cause is "the sum total of the conditions, positive and negative together;... which being realised the consequent invariably follows," <sup>1</sup> can thus be said to be fully anticipated by the 'Sarvāstivāda' school. We incidentally try to show, contrary to Stcherbatsky's opinion, <sup>2</sup> that although Russell also rejected the concept of causal power, his theory of 'functional interdependence' (see chapter IV, pp. 207-12) has very little similarity with Buddhist causal theories.

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1. See SL, Vol. I, p. 383. See also chapter III, pp. 129-130.

2. See BL, I, pp. 119-145. See especially pp. 131, 142, 143, 144.

The Buddhist causal theory of 'dependent origination' has a 'special aspect' which explains how an individual is afflicted with suffering in his present life <sup>I</sup> as a result of the actions committed in his previous life under the influence of 'ignorance' and 'craving'. In its final formulation, this is known as the theory of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. In the fifth chapter we argue that the rudiments of the doctrine of denying causal operation and explaining causation solely in terms of conditions can also be traced in the theory of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. The relationship between these 'twelve causes' (i.e. 'members') can properly be analysed in terms of 'necessary and sufficient conditions' and 'that which they condition'.

The sixth chapter is devoted to showing the futility of any attempt to explain causation while at the same time denying causal power and production. In this context, we suggest that it is probably the realization of this futility which led the 'Mādhyamika' ('Śūnyavāda') school of Buddhism to deny causation itself from the standpoint of the Absolute.

Very recently some British and American analytical philosophers

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1. For slight differences of opinion on this matter see chapter V, pp. 220, n. 3; 222, n. 1.

have tried to prove that there is a fundamental distinction between the psychological reasons for actions and causes. No such distinction is in fact made in Buddhist philosophy. In the seventh chapter we point out that the absence of this distinction in Buddhist philosophy need not frustrate our attempt to compare Buddhist theories of causation with those of certain British empiricist philosophers. The distinction between reasons for actions and causes is not a fundamental one, and empiricist philosophers like Berkeley, Hume and Mill did not even make any implicit reference to it.

Towards the end of the thesis we have added an appendix to the chapter on Hume (ch. I). There we have tried to argue that Hume's position that causes do not have any logically necessary connection with their effects remain unaltered even today in spite of some fresh attempts by certain recent philosophers like Blanshard and Kneale<sup>1</sup> to prove that there are logically necessary relations between them.

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1. Kneale's presentation of this problem is couched in slightly different terms. See Appendix, pp. 253-258.

CHAPTER IHUME'S THEORY OF CAUSATIONSection 1Exposition of Hume's Theory

If we look at the world around us we come across a surprising number of regular (and ostensibly irregular) events. These observed regularities can be (and have been) used successfully to predict future events and to gain control over nature. There must be a reason why the juice extracted from a certain kind of herb (e.g. quinine) always brings down the temperature of a sick man. Could it be because that juice has some qualities which causes the dropping of the temperature in a sick man? If you once find out that this is so, you can use that knowledge in both predicting the future course of events and regulating nature to yield some desired results.

Although the concept of 'cause' has been the object of philosophical enquiry for centuries, yet we find that there are numerous problems regarding causality which do not yield to any easy solution. We are indebted to David Hume both for his brilliant solution of some problems connected with causality and for his painstaking, even if sometimes not altogether correct, analysis of other causal problems.

Hume sets about examining the idea of cause by searching for the 'impression' or 'impressions' from which it is

derived. The concept of cause, he notices, is extremely important in so far as our reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect.

"Let us therefore cast our eyes", Hume says, "on any two objects,<sup>1</sup> which we call cause and effect, in order to find that impression which produces an idea of such prodigious consequence".<sup>2</sup> It is obvious to him that no quality in any object can originate the idea of cause in our mind if only because "there is nothing existent either externally or internally, which is not to be considered either as a cause or an effect: tho' 'tis plain there is no one quality which universally belongs to all beings."<sup>3</sup> He decides that the idea of causation must therefore be derived from some relation among objects. Accordingly he decides to endeavour to discover that relation. Now there are mainly three such relations discoverable among causes and effects - viz., (1) their spatial and temporal contiguity; (2) the temporal priority of causes to effects; and (3) the  
4 necessary connexion between causes and effects. He not only gives, at one place, what purports to be an argument

1. Hume actually takes a 'cause' to be either an object or an event.

2. Treatise, p.75.

3. Ibid.

4. Throughout this chapter we have deliberately spelt the word 'connection' as 'connexion' for the sake of conformity with Hume's spelling of it in the Treatise and the Enquiry.

against considering the relation of spatial contiguity as being an essential element in causal situations<sup>1</sup>, but also realizes the relative worthlessness of the first two relations in a

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1. Discussing the relation of spatial contiguity of causes and effects Hume says, "Though distant objects may sometimes seem productive... they are.. found upon examination, to be linked by a chain of causes, which are contiguous among themselves and to the distant... We may therefore consider the relation of contiguity as essential to that of causation,... till we can find a more proper occasion to clear up this matter, by examining what objects are or are not susceptible of juxtaposition and conjunction". (*Italics, original. Treatise, p.75*). The "proper occasion" is referred to by Hume in the foot-note of Part IV, Sec.5. There he says on p.236, "A moral reflection cannot be placed on the right or on the left hand of a passion; nor can a smell or sound be either a circular or a square figure". Both passions, volitions, etc. on the one hand, and sound and smell on the other, enter into causal relationships. In the Treatise, Book II, Part III, Sec. III, where Hume declares that reason is the slave of passion, he describes our passions as those which move us to action. It is not the reasoning alone, but the desires and aversions excited by reason's conclusions, which move us to action. About sounds and smells, which, he thinks, cannot possess any shape or position, he writes, in Part IV, Sec.V, "Though an extended object be incapable of a conjunction in place with another that exists without any place or extension,\* yet they are susceptible of many other relations. Thus the taste and smell of any fruit are inseparable from its other qualities of colour and tangibility; and whichever of them be the cause or effect, it is certain they are always co-existent". (p.237). It does not, therefore, seem to be Hume's final opinion, that spatial contiguity is an essential part of the idea of causation. But we must make a final observation. Hume has indeed succeeded in showing that in certain cases it makes no sense to claim that the cause and its effect must be spatially contiguous. Yet he has not given us any clue to determine whether he thinks that there are any exceptions to the contiguity principle among those terms of a causal relation where one can sensibly speak of a spatial contiguity.

\*Hume is not quite right in claiming that sound and smell do not belong to any place. What he rightly claims is that they do not possess any shape.



causal situation as compared with the last one. "An object may be contiguous and prior to another, without being considered as its cause." But then "There is a necessary connexion to be taken into consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance...."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, he proceeds in his enquiry - what is the impression, or impressions, from which this idea of necessity may be derived?

Unfortunately, his immediate reaction to the enquiry is that "There are no ideas, which occur in metaphysics, more obscure and uncertain, than those of power, force, energy or necessary connexion."<sup>2</sup>

According to his official method of clarifying obscure ideas by referring to the "impression or original sentiments, from which the ideas are copied", he says, "to be fully acquainted, therefore, with the idea of power or necessary connexion, let us examine its impression".<sup>3</sup> But, surprisingly enough, Hume declares that "When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or

1. Treatise, p.77. Italics as in the original.
2. Enquiry, p. 61-62.
3. Enquiry, p. 63.

necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other".<sup>1</sup>

Now before we proceed to explain the statement mentioned above, it is necessary to draw attention to the following observations. Firstly, we must bear it in mind that Hume is here, as well as in many passages, equating terms like 'power' and 'force' with what is now known as 'logically necessary connexion' (even though in Hume's time the concept of logical necessity was not fully developed). The following quotation from the Treatise gives evidence of such an equation. "There is no object which implies the existence of any other....Such an inference would imply the absolute contradiction and impossibility of conceiving any thing different. But as all distinct ideas are separable, 'tis evident that there can be no impossibility of that kind".<sup>2</sup> Although there may be a relation between the concepts of force and necessity, yet their equation cannot be held to be self-evident. Secondly, Hume is here using the phrase 'necessary connexion' in a number of related, yet different senses. A connexion between two objects is necessary, according to Hume, either when it is possible to know the connexion without depending on experience; or when neither of the objects could be

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1. Enquiry, p.63

2. Treatise, p.86. Italics ours.

conceived to exist without the other; or when each one of them implies the other.

It is in the light of such observations that we are to understand Hume's remarks like "From the first appearance of an object, we never can conjecture what effect will result from it. But were the power or energy of any cause discoverable by the mind, we could foresee the effect, even without experience ....."<sup>1</sup> "...the inference we draw from cause to effect is not deriv'd.... from such a penetration into their essences as may discover the dependence of the one upon the other".<sup>2</sup>

The main point that Hume is trying to arrive at by the arguments employed above is that since all causal propositions are contingent statements about matters of fact, we could deny them all without fear of contradicting ourselves. Although false, it is nevertheless not self-contradictory to say that 'Xs do not cause Ys'. No causal statement is like an a priori truth of logic, whose falsity is inconceivable<sup>3</sup>. Since our knowledge of causes and effects is derived from experience we cannot infer effects from causes with apodeictic certainty<sup>4</sup>.

1. Enquiry, p.63. Italics as in the original.

2. Treatise, p.86.

3. Enquiry, p.164.

4. Ibid.

In order to appreciate the full value of Hume's arguments against 'necessary connexion', 'power', 'force' it seems worthwhile to look back at a very old theory strongly believed by many philosophers. According to this theory things behaved in the way they did because of their possessing a certain property called 'productive power'.<sup>1</sup> This 'productive power' was supposed to be hidden from our view. Now although this notion of hidden power had already been the target of philosophical criticism in the seventeenth/<sup>& eighteenth</sup>centuries<sup>2</sup>, yet it remained a favourite notion of those philosophers who endeavoured to seek a kind of certain knowledge of the future. For in order to know that a certain medicine will cure, we need only to ascertain that it possesses the hidden power of curing us. If we could somehow visualise this occult power we could be sure that the medicine would cure us and hence could predict the future with as much certainty as we know the present state of affairs.

This doctrine of hidden power is also connected with the theory that the 'real essence' of material substances is unknown to us. Since the natural operations of bodies and their interactions on one another emanate from such 'real essences', our want of precise knowledge of these 'real essences'

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1. 'David Hume', Basson, p.68.

2. Criticised by Locke and Newton. See Basson, David Hume, p.68.

also keeps us in an incurable ignorance about how these bodies bring about changes in others. If we could manage to have a glimpse of those 'real essences' of things, we should probably be able to find out the reasons why they behaved in their own peculiar ways. Statements describing the behavioural properties of those things would then appear as necessary propositions.<sup>1</sup>

Hume makes several points against such a theory of occult powers.

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1. Cf. John Locke, 'Essay', Bk. IV, Ch. 3, p. 160. "I doubt not but, if we could discover the figure, size, texture, and motion of the minute constituent parts of any 2 bodies, we should know without trial several of their operations one upon another, as we do now the properties of a square or a triangle. Did we know the mechanical affections of the particles of rhubarb, hemlock, opium, and a man, as a watch maker does those of a watch, whereby it performs its operations, ... we should be able to tell beforehand that rhubarb will purge, hemlock kill, and opium make a man sleep ..." (Italics as in the original).

Locke in fact distinguished between two senses of 'real essence'. He rejected the Aristotelean notion of 'real essences' meaning natural kinds. But he accepted as genuine the 'real essences' of individual substances or the insensible corpuscles of individual substances. Yet there is no contradiction in saying that Locke denied any 'hidden power' of substances and at the same time recognised 'real essences' which are unknown. The reason is that Locke was of the opinion that it is only in practice impossible to know the inner atomic structure of things. He acknowledged that with better scientific equipment we would probably come to know the corpuscular constituents of things which account for their particular behavioural properties. With present scientific advances we can, in fact, explain the particular behaviour of a particular thing from a study of its atomic structure. Thus even though he denied that there is no 'hidden power' of things, he could have still claimed that the structural properties of things which explain their behaviour are hidden from us (because, probably, of our lack of proper instruments of investigation).

The first point that Hume makes is that we never have any experience of such a thing as power in the things around us: "We never have any impression that contains any power or efficacy".<sup>1</sup> " ... if we ... ascribe a power or necessary connexion to those objects, this is what we can never observe in them".<sup>2</sup> " ... no existence certainly and demonstratively implies a power in any other object".<sup>3</sup> " ... nothing is more evident than that the human mind can't form such an idea of two objects, as to conceive any connexion betwixt them, or comprehend distinctly that power or efficacy by which they are united."<sup>4</sup>

What weight do these criticisms have against Locke's discussion of 'real essences'? Locke would have wanted to say that there is a ~~connection~~ necessary connexion between, for example, my seeing some object as red and the atomic structure of the thing being of such a nature that it absorbs all the other rays from the sun and reflects only one. He would have claimed that although we do not understand why that particular structure of the object makes us perceive it as red, there is a reason why this is so, because God can reveal it to us. (See Essay, Bk. IV, ch. 3, sec. 16. Sec. 28 suggests that God decides the connexion between perception and the atomic structure). The connexion between the perception and the atomic structure is thus (only in this sense) in principle understandable though not discoverable. But Hume would have said that there is no reason why X's having a particular composition makes us see it as red. (Talk of the 'atomic structure' of objects and the 'rays' of the sun, etc., does not imply the perception of the 'colour red'). The concept of colour is of a different

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1. Treatise, p. 161.

2. Ibid., pp. 168-169.

3. Ibid., p. 90.

4. Ibid., p. 161.

logical order from the concepts of the atomic or sub-atomic structure and that of the sun-rays). Hume would say that we can only claim that it always so happens that whenever our eyes come in contact with particular wavelengths of light, we see something as red. We can only claim that it so happens, but not <sup>explain</sup> why.

Now, before moving on to Hume's next point, it seems necessary to note here once again the curious way in which Hume is assimilating a host of different concepts like productive power, connexion and necessary connexion.

In many causal situations there are obvious physical connections like that between the pulling of the strings of a puppet and the consequent movement of the puppet. But Hume would not be compelled to acknowledge that link either as an instance of 'productive power' or as a 'logically necessary connexion'. There are also the most obvious manifestations of the physical strength and energy that men possess in cases where, for example, they pull heavy weights from the ground. But these would not qualify either as instances of powers in Hume's opinion, as they are neither connexions like bridges nor 'logical connectives' like 'implications.' What he interprets the advocates of, 'efficacious power' to be demanding to exist in causes is a sort of 'quality' which, even though it inheres in one substance, somehow also refers, necessarily, to another substance. This reminds us, to a certain extent, of the disastrous effects of the wrong identification of a relation with a quality which Julius Weinberg has shown in his book, 'Abstraction, Relation, and Induction'.<sup>1</sup> But one may well wonder whether those philosophers who believed in the 'power' of things to be the source of interactions meant 'power' itself to be an 'interaction', a kind of relation. We can elucidate our point with the help of an example. One billiard ball strikes another and causes it to move. The momentum and velocity of the first billiard ball might have been cited by those philosophers as instances of 'power' by virtue of which a relation, namely that of 'interaction,' is established between the first ball and the second.

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1. See the article, 'The Concept of Relation' pp 61-112. Passim.

Apart from the ambiguity in Hume's use of words like 'power' and 'necessary connexion', it is also not very clear from his writing whether what he means is that we do not see anything over and above the objects related by causal relationships and particular states of them. We see only salt and water and the dissolution of salt but nothing else which could be expressed by saying that water 'made' the salt to dissolve (the sense conveyed by most transitive verbs). If this is what Hume means, then it could very well be said that 'force' or 'power' is a functional concept and it is impossible to give an ostensive definition of it. Objects in which such functions are fulfilled may have no ostensible properties in common. We may search in vain for some qualities which all food has in common by virtue of which it nourishes.<sup>1</sup>

Now some people use ~~the help of~~ this concept of causal power or 'energy' in propounding their theory that similar causes produce similar effects. They not only claim that this cause produces this effect, but they also tend to believe that similar causes will always bring about similar results in the future because of their possessing similar 'energies'. But, as we have agreed that 'powers' do not lie in the sensible qualities of the cause, how do we know that future causes, which are

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1. Cf. David Hume, Basson, p.135.



recognisable, only by their sensible qualities, have similar 'powers'? Even if you somehow do prove that using this chemical compound in this soil helped the growth of this apple tree, how do you know that all such applications of this chemical compound would have the 'power' in future to help the growth of similar trees<sup>1</sup> (where you only perceive the resemblance of sensible qualities, but no 'power' as such)? And unless you know that, appeal to the concept of power only would be of no use for a causal enquiry.

Obviously, those who claim that similar causes bring about similar effects would then try to have recourse to the principle of the uniformity of nature. But Hume says that there can be no demonstrative argument to prove that unobserved instances will resemble observed instances. "We can at least conceive a change in the course of nature".<sup>2</sup> which sufficiently proves that such a change is not logically impossible or self-contradictory. Capacity to form a clear idea of anything is an undeniable evidence of its logical possibility, and proves that it is not self-contradictory. So the proposition that 'similar causes always produce similar effects' is not analytic, since it states a matter of fact about the universe which might conceivably be otherwise.

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1. Treatise, p.91.

2. Treatise, p.89.

Even if, for the sake of argument, we admit that such powers do exist in causes, it would be a thoroughly useless concept, in our causal enquiries. Even ordinary men constantly use such terms as 'cause' and 'effect' in their daily life. Yet they do not have to penetrate into the essence of 'causes'<sup>1</sup> in order to find out some such secret 'power'. They do not need to go to a scientist to determine whether this plant is dying because of the attack of insects. It is by experience only that they infer that this plant is going to die as it has been attacked by insects. They remember that every case of insect-attack on plants in the past has been followed by the subsequent death of those plants. "Without any further ceremony" they call the insect-attacks 'causes' and the subsequent dying of plants 'effects' and 'infer' the dying from a new case of insect-attack that they come across.

Besides, the notion of 'secret' power leads to some sort of conceptual absurdity. If we do not ever come across any such power in the world around us how can we form any concept of power at all? The word 'power' would not have any meaning at all: "We do not understand our own meaning in talking so".<sup>2</sup> Such an 'unobservable power' "will be of little consequence in the world"<sup>3</sup>. We will not be able to test individual cases with it in order to determine whether they are instances of causation.

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1. Treatise, p.86.

2. Treatise, p.168.

3. Treatise, p.168.

But it may be argued that although external objects do not serve as mines from which such metals as 'power' may be extracted, yet the mind might well serve as such a mine. After all, we are every day confronted with the force that our 'will' exerts in controlling the movement of the bodily organs and our thinking and imagination.

Hume disposes of <sup>an</sup> argument like this in the following way. Firstly, both the command of the will over body and thought are extremely 'mysterious'. How does the most refined thought actuate the grossest matter?<sup>1</sup> Whether any such mastery of the will over the idea is a reality or not, Hume says, he cannot conceive at all how the will commands the idea. Instead of denying any such command, he thus simply makes a weaker claim, "The manner in which this operation", i.e. 'the will commanding the idea' "is performed... is entirely beyond our comprehension".<sup>2</sup>

The influence of the will, both over the organs, and over thoughts, is limited. We cannot move certain organs of our body like the liver and the heart by our will. We are masters of our thoughts and sentiments at certain moments, and at other times we are not. It is only by experiments and observations that we know the limits of the will. But were we conscious of a 'power' or 'secret connexion' which binds them

1. Enquiry, p.65.

2. Enquiry, p.68.

together and renders them inseparable"<sup>1</sup>, we would have known the limits a priori.

"We learn from anatomy, that the immediate effect" of successful volition is not, as we think, our limbs themselves but "certain muscles, and nerves, and animal spirits" and so on<sup>2</sup>. But how could we make mistakes in this if what we knew was 'power' or a 'necessary connexion' which invariably implied the thing which is its effect?

As regards the theory of the "universal energy and operation of the Supreme Being, the theory of the occasionalists", Hume comments, "are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force by which... even the supreme mind operates either on itself or on body?"<sup>3</sup> After all, our idea of the divine power is built with the help of the materials we get in our reflections on our own faculties!

These arguments mentioned above form one more example of the fact that from the mere appearance of just one of the terms of the causal relation, you cannot logically infer the

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1. Enquiry, p.66.
  2. Enquiry, p.66.
  3. Enquiry, p.72.

other<sup>1</sup>.

It could be argued that the resistance which we sometimes feel external objects to put forward against us and the consequent exertion of our own force or power in conquering that resistance give rise to the idea of force. Hume's answer is that we attribute power to a vast number of objects where we cannot even imagine the subsistence of any resistance or exertion. Besides, even if, per impossibile, those objects do make any endeavour, since this sentiment of endeavour has no logical connexion with any event, it will not qualify as an instance of 'power' which 'implies' an effect.

The question then is, does it follow from all that has been said, that we have no idea of 'force' or 'necessity'? Hume of course does not claim that words like 'power' and

1. "It is only experience which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another." (Enquiry, p.164.)

The same principle which is at work behind the above statement prompts Hume to deny that even the proposition, 'every event has a cause' is a logically necessary proposition. It is only by experience that we learn that any particular event is a cause or an effect. The contradictory of any proposition of this sort is conceivable and hence logically possible. Just as there may be bachelors though every husband must have a wife; so there may be uncaused events though every effect must have a cause. (Flew, Hume's Philosophy of Belief, p.111). We must also bear in mind that what Hume meant to refute was not the contingent truth but only the putative logical necessity of the proposition 'every event must have a cause'. (Flew, <sup>op. cit.</sup> p.112).

'necessity' are meaningless. Let us try to follow then Hume's alternative explanation of the origin of the concept of 'power'.

The account Hume has given in the Treatise<sup>1</sup> is very interesting. He says that his search for the origin of the idea in the sphere where he expected to find it, had failed. Accordingly he dealt with two other questions in the hope of finding the origin of the idea in the answers to them. These questions are : "for what reason (do) we pronounce it necessary that everything whose existence has a beginning has a cause?" and "why do we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects?"

Neither of these propositions has, according to Hume, intuitive certainty.<sup>2</sup> He says that all the arguments by which philosophers have tried to prove the necessity of the proposition 'every event has a cause' beg the question<sup>3</sup>. Our belief in it, therefore, must arise from experience. But instead of examining directly how experience gives rise to it, he prefers to sink the question in the second question, since the answer to the second, he believes, will also serve as an answer to it. The connexion between the two questions is probably shown in Book I, Part III, Section XII of the Treatise<sup>4</sup>. There he says that the unscientific man admits of a certain amount of

1. I have followed Macnabb to a large extent here. See Macnabb, David Hume.

2. See foot-note 1, p.16.

3. Cf. Macnabb, op. cit., p.55, Treatise, pp. 80-81.

4. Cf. Macnabb, op. cit., p.56.

laxity in the operation of causes. He probably believes that causes might sometimes fail to function even without any impediment. But the philosopher or scientist believes in the complexity of natural operations, which, they think, might elude ordinary observation. They admit the possibility of counteracting causes as the explanation of the apparent causal irregularities. This possibility might be converted into a certainty by the observation that whenever an exact scrutiny can be made into cases of apparent causal irregularity, counteracting causes can always be discovered. From this the scientists probably make the 'maxim' that every causal connection is necessary. There is no need to point out that this is arguing for the universality of causation.

Let us therefore try to find the answer to the question: why do we think certain specific events to be causally connected, and what is the nature of the inference we make from the cause to the effect? Just what is there about a flame, that makes us infer that it will burn? The answer, according to Hume, does not consist in this that we see an implication between fire and heat and make a causal inference. It is experience of the constant conjunction between flame and heat in the past that makes us call the one 'cause' and the other effect and infer the one in the presence of the other. Now, "... 'tis plain, that from the simple consideration of one, or both these objects, we never shall perceive the tie, by which they are united".<sup>1</sup> But suppose, we come across several instances in

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1. Treatise, p.162.

which the same objects or events are always conjoined together. We then immediately begin to infer the one from the other. So, in order to understand the idea of power, we must consider our experience of the multiplicity of conjunctions of similar objects or events. Again, "this repetition of similar objects in similar situations, produces nothing new...in these objects".<sup>1</sup> "Yet the observation of this resemblance produces a new impression in the mind".<sup>2</sup> After the observation of the conjunction of a multiplicity of similar objects, "we immediately feel a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant".<sup>3</sup> "This determination is the only effect"<sup>4</sup> of the resemblance; and therefore must be the same with power or efficacy".<sup>5</sup>

Let us elucidate this. We have seen so far that Hume refused to admit 'logically necessary connexion' as being essential to causation. He probably did realize that in the final analysis the conditions about the spatial contiguity of causes and effects and the temporal priority of causes can be maintained only at the cost of a tremendous strain on the common usage of the terms, 'cause' and 'effect'. The most important condition a case of causation has to satisfy, however, is,

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1. Treatise, p.164. Italics as in the original.

2. Treatise, p.165. Italics as in the original.

3. Ibid.

4. Hume *presumably* means by 'effect', 'the constant conjunct'.

5. Treatise, p.165.



according to him, that of constant conjunction. Causes should always (constantly) be followed by (conjoined with) effects. We express doubts about whether an event which is, by popular conception, supposed to be the cause of another event is really so, if in some cases it is not followed by its putative effect.<sup>1</sup> Events 'X' and 'Y' are causally related only when X is unvaryingly followed by Y. Every occurrence of a member of the class of events X must be immediately followed by the occurrence of a member of the class of events Y in its immediate spatial vicinity.<sup>2</sup> It is this idea of unvarying sequence that is expressed by Hume's definition of a cause as "an object, followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects, similar to the second".<sup>3</sup> In the Treatise Hume wrote: "We may define a cause to be 'an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are plac'd in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter'.<sup>4</sup> But then the question arises, if this is so, how do we form an idea of 'necessity' then? Hume's answer to such a question is roughly as follows.

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1. Lucas, 'Causation', Analytical Philosophy, First series, p.32.
  2. Robinson, 'Hume's Two Definitions of Cause', PQ, 1962, p.169.
  3. Enquiry, p.76. Italics as in the original.
  4. Treatise, p.170.

The origin of the idea of a 'necessary connexion' can be explained in terms of certain habits of expectation. Men become accustomed to finding certain changes constantly conjoined with certain others. For example, we are habituated to finding certain experiences, such as that of throwing a piece of paper into the flames, followed by the experience of its burning. These associations, thus established in our minds, are followed by a 'habitual expectation of certain impending events upon the experiencing of others.' The idea of necessary connexion is, grounded, according to Hume, upon this habit of expectation or customary transition of the imagination. On perceiving X (cause), we feel compelled to think of or imagine immediately its usual associate Y (effect); and this felt compulsion, which is in the mind of the observer, we mistakenly think to lie in the objects themselves of which we are compelled to think.

We must, at this stage, pause in order to appreciate the value of the method Hume has here adopted. Hume found that the concept of necessary connexion or power of a cause is a very unclear concept. People speak frequently about this and argue about this, without having a clear conception of what it is they are speaking about. No question has caused more dispute among both ancient and modern philosophers than this one concerning the efficacy of causes. "But before they entered upon these disputes, methinks it would not have

been improper to have examined what idea we have of that efficacy".<sup>1</sup> Now, the controversy is about whether there is any 'power' or 'necessary connexion' in cases of causation. For settling that dispute we have to understand what 'power' or 'necessary connexion' means. Hume has noticed that previous attempts to clarify the meaning of the word 'power' by defining it formally have been unsuccessful in so far as they all employed synonymous terms like 'energy', 'agency' in the definitions. So, instead of searching for the idea in the definitions, Hume suggests the new method of looking for it in the impressions from which it is originally derived!<sup>2</sup> Before asking whether only moving bodies, or only wills really have 'power', which is a metaphysical question, let us ask just what it is about these things that makes us say they have power: What is the form of the experiences we have when we say that 'X has power'? This sort of method reminds us, to a certain extent, of Wittgenstein. The following quotation from Pitcher's book will help us to see the similarity between the method just now observed and Wittgenstein's : "The semantic aspect of the use of words is one on which Wittgenstein places some importance. If we are troubled about the meaning of a word or group of words, he often urges us to look at the actual

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1. Treatise, p.156.

2. Treatise, p.157.

circumstances in which they are used. Here is an example: 'Let us see what use we make of such an expression as 'This face says something', that is, what the situations are in which we use this expression, what sentences would precede or follow it'<sup>1</sup> (of what kind of conversation it is a part)'<sup>2</sup>

In any single instance of causation there is nothing that could suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion. But when several uniform sequences of events are presented to us, we begin to "entertain the notion of cause and connexion".<sup>3</sup> "After a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist".<sup>4</sup> We therefore feel a connexion between one idea or impression and another. Our imagination moves<sup>5</sup> from one idea or impression to another impression or idea invariably associated with it. This 'transition' of our imagination is the impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion. The mind has no rational control over such a 'transition' of the imagination. It is in a sense inescapable. We feel forced or 'determined' to think of them together.

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1. Pitcher quotes this passage from Wittgenstein's Blue and Brown Books, p.179.
  2. The Philosophy of Wittgenstein, p.237.
  3. Enquiry, p.78.
  4. Enquiry, p.75. Italics *ours*. This belief is, according to Hume's technical terminology, the same as an 'idea'.
  5. This movement or 'transition' is the 'product' (i.e. in fact follows) the habit of seeing two objects or events always associated.

In accordance with our experience that 'the appearance of a 'cause' always conveys the mind, ...to the idea of the effect', Hume gives a second definition of cause as "an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other".<sup>1</sup> In the Treatise the corresponding definition runs as follows: "An object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it in the imagination, that the idea of one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other".<sup>2</sup>

In the Treatise<sup>3</sup> the above definition is described by Hume as a definition of causation as a natural relation. (Although the corresponding definition in the Enquiry bears no such label). The former definition of causation in the Treatise which we have quoted on page 52 is, according to Hume, a definition of causation as a philosophical relation. These two definitions, according to him, present different views of the same subject from different points of view. Philosophical relations hold between things, loose and separate. Natural relations obtain between ideas which become associated because of observing the objects of these ideas in a particular relation.<sup>4</sup> The second definition is

1. Enquiry, p.77. Italics as in the original.
2. Treatise, p.172. Italics as in the original.
3. Treatise, p.170.
4. Flew, op. cit. p.120.

is introduced in the Treatise probably as an attempt to explain why the first definition appears to be inadequate. The first definition undoubtedly gives an analysis of causation, in terms of uniformity of succession. But if regular succession is all that is involved in cases of causation, why do we feel as if we are ignoring one essential element of causation, viz. that of 'necessary connexion', or the inevitability of the occurrence of the effect given the occurrence of the cause? This is explained by Hume by saying that people's feeling of inadequacy arises as a result of their confusing the feeling of being unavoidably led to think of something, with an inevitable relation between two extra-mental entities. We feel a compulsion to think of the effect when we are confronted with a cause. We misinterpret it as compulsion on the part of the cause to produce the effect. We do so misinterpret it precisely because we feel compelled to expect the effect when we have an impression of the cause. At least one reason for the introduction of the second definition in the Treatise therefore appears to be to explain why the uniformity view appears to many people to be unacceptable. It appears unacceptable because we misinterpret the 'feeling of compulsion'.

But although the purpose of the second definition of the Treatise is clear, yet the purpose of distinguishing it from the first definition of the Treatise by calling it a definition of causation as a natural relation is extremely unclear.

One purpose could be the following: Hume's real definition of cause is the first one. He anticipated the general dissatisfaction at considering the first of these definitions as exhaustive. So he tried to justify the first definition by saying that people's dissatisfaction is due to a misconception only. The second definition thus appears really to be only a justification of the first and not a definition by itself. Probably, by introducing the justification in the definition, he tried to make the definition look more powerful. But he cannot obviously include the justification in the definition itself without being involved in difficulties. So he made it appear as if it were a definition, only looked at from a different point of view. Accordingly, the first definition defines causation as a 'philosophical relation' inasmuch as the terms of the relation are separate things; and the second one defines causation as a 'natural relation' inasmuch as the terms of the relation are associated ideas (cf. "an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it in the imagination...").

This wrong transfer of the 'feeling of compulsion' to external objects occurs, Hume says, because of the fact that "the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any external impressions which they occasion, and which always make their

appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses".<sup>1</sup>

This case of projection or wrong application of attributes is a quite common phenomenon in our daily life. We say of a particular piece of music that it is gay or melancholic. What we actually mean is that the music is of a sort that normally produces happy feelings or sad feelings when one listens to it. We do not mean that inert sounds can be cheerful or gloomy.<sup>2</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that Hume's theory of causation has certain unique merits. But we must at the same time acknowledge that both his interpretation of causation as unvarying sequence and his interpretation of 'necessary connexion' as the 'determination of thought' to pass from causes to effects and vice versa are open to criticisms. Let us first look at the criticisms of his interpretation of 'necessity'.

Critics have either complained that Hume has misrepresented the origin of the idea of necessity or said that 'necessity' has really crept in disguise into his account of the origin.

It could be said that words like 'determine' which Hume uses in his accounts of such an origin are themselves

1. Treatise, p.167.

2. Cf. Basson, op. cit., pp.76-77.



suggestive of 'necessity'. But, if we look deeper into such accounts we shall see that what he means by saying that habit necessarily determines us to entertain a particular idea is that our idea of one object follows the presentation of an impression in our mind with the extraordinary promptness and naturalness which is characteristic of habitual actions. Habit leads us, as it were, to a particular idea rather than another. This 'determination' does not imply any 'logically necessary connexion', because by saying that an idea 'follows' an impression one merely expresses a 'contingent' relation between the idea and the impression. It may be false that this relation holds. But it is nevertheless not self-contradictory. In the case of 'determination' it is custom which prevents us from thinking of the contradictory of the relation between two ideas. Whereas in the case of 'logical necessity' it is 'inconceivability' or 'self-contradiction' which makes it impossible to think of the contradictory of the relation between two ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Whitehead has charged that Hume has only substituted one 'necessary connexion' for another in his account and there is, therefore, an infinite regress in his account.<sup>2</sup> But a careful scrutiny in fact reveals that the

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1. Macnabb, <sup>op.cit.</sup> p.113.

2. Process and Reality, p.196.

'necessary connexion' between flame and heat is really explained in terms of a feeling accompanying the transition from the impression of flame to the idea of heat. The feeling of compulsion is another name for the realisation of the 'customary transition of thought' from the impression of fire to the idea of heat. The feeling of compulsion is thus separate from the 'necessary connexion' which is supposed to exist between two or more extra-mental objects or events.

Passmore charges Hume with inadequate representation of the idea of necessary connexion. He says that Hume's main task is to explain what the sentence 'cause is necessarily connected with effect' means. He explains it as: 'a person necessarily thinks of an effect when he encounters a cause'. Now, if 'necessarily thinks' means 'a person always thinks of an effect when he is confronted with a cause' then this is purely a statement of 'constant conjunction' and the words 'necessary connexion' either mean 'constant conjunction' or they become meaningless. If, on the other hand, we take 'necessary connexion' to refer to 'something over and above' constant conjunction, then we are left in the dark about what that 'something over and above' signifies.<sup>1</sup> Professor Flew has pointed out that the proposition Hume is trying to explain

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1. Passmore, Hume's Intentions, p.76.

by the words 'a person necessarily thinks of an effect when he encounters a cause' is not, as Passmore thinks, 'a cause is necessarily connected with its effect'. Hume is here really concerned with the meaning of the proposition 'X is the cause of Y'. The latter proposition means at least that 'X is always conjoined with Y'. But it also means something more. It is this 'something more' which Hume is trying to explain in terms of words like, "We feel a new sentiment or impression".<sup>1</sup> This impression is only the alleged consequence of habitual association and the generator of the idea of necessary connexion, since he is not explaining that idea, contrary to what Passmore thinks, by the words 'a person necessarily thinks of an effect when he encounters a cause'.

Moreover, Hume is denying that there is any necessity that X should produce Y. (He is of course not bothering to explain the trivial necessity involved in the proposition, 'a cause produces its effect'.) So since there is, according to him, no necessity that X should produce Y, Hume is not even trying to explain that necessity.

However, Hume can certainly be charged with one defect. We agree with Professor Flew that the proposition, 'X is the cause of Y' means, according to Hume, 'X is constantly conjoined with Y', plus 'something more'. Now if this 'something'

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1. Flew, op. cit., p.122. Italics as in the original.

refers to 'a new sentiment', and if it is true that Hume claimed this 'sentiment' to be the parent of the idea of necessary connexion, then Hume certainly is giving an inadequate account of the origin of that idea. Professor Flew himself remarks a few pages later, "whatever sense might be found for necessity by referring the idea back to some putative impression of habitual association, it certainly could not then be construed as logical necessity"!<sup>1</sup>

Thus it cannot be doubted that Hume's account of the origin of the idea of 'necessary connexion' does not perform the function that it is supposed to perform. The sort of 'necessity' with which Hume was concerned in trying to explain the origin of the idea of necessary connexion is really 'logical'; whereas the 'necessity' that we feel in our minds is just psychological. Thus the two 'necessities' cannot be identified. This leads to the question concerning the actual source of our idea of necessity with which we invest the cause-effect relationship. We can try to give such an account in the following way.

There are some universal propositions whose negation involves self-contradiction. Such are, for example, tautologies like 'all books have pages'. We might call them

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1. Flew, *op.cit.*, p.124. Italics as in the original.

necessary universal propositions. It is possible to deduce subjunctive conditional statements<sup>1</sup> from them.

Now we sometimes employ some contingent universal generalizations in such a way that they permit us to infer non-logical subjunctive conditionals from them. (A non-logical subjunctive conditional statement like 'if their party machine were not superior they would not have won the election' is to be distinguished from a necessary subjunctive conditional like 'if anything were not a male it would not be a husband'. 'X's being a husband without being a male' is logically inconceivable. But although false, yet it is not self-contradictory to think of 'X's winning the election without having a superior party machine'.). In this way these non-logical generalizations resemble the necessary generalizations to some extent. Now this manoeuvre cannot, of course, of itself, transform either the non-logical universal statements or the corresponding subjunctive conditionals into necessary propositions. Yet, the manoeuvre involved cannot but by itself endow these non-logical universal statements with a factitious simulacrum of logical necessity<sup>2</sup>. Professor Flew suggests that this simulacrum of logical necessity is projected out onto the world, where it may become a second source of the

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1. A subjunctive conditional statement is a statement like, 'if something were (or were not) to have happened, something else would (or would not) have occurred'.
  2. Flew, *op. cit.*, p.136.

illusion that the authentic original is to be discovered there.<sup>1</sup>

### Section ii

#### Major Defects in Hume's Analysis of 'Causation' as 'Constant Conjunction'

We have seen the arguments Hume used to deny the existence of any 'necessary connexion' between causes and effects. Now, the question is, whether Hume admitted the possibility of any internal connexion at all between a cause and an effect,<sup>2</sup> in spite of his denial of the possibility of any 'necessary connexion' between the two. The answer is clearly 'no'. There are two main reasons that are responsible for such a negative answer. The first reason is the wrong identification which Hume probably made of the evidence we have for, the statement, 'A is the cause of B', with the meaning of, 'A is the cause of B'.<sup>3</sup> Surely, all the evidence we might conceivably have for the above statement is experimental and observational. And experiment and observation only reveal the constant conjunction which consists in all instances of A hitherto being followed by B. But this, even omitting 'hitherto', does not, by any means, exhaust the meaning of the proposition 'A is the cause of B'.

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1. Flew, op. cit., p.136.
  2. Such that in the absence of the connexion the cause or the effect must be substantially altered.
  3. Flew, op. cit., p.133.

The meaning of 'A is the cause of B' refers, invariably, to a connection between A and B. That connexion could, in a way, be referred to by saying that subjunctive conditional statements could always be deduced from causal statements. So the sort of connexion exemplified by subjunctive conditional statements must essentially be discovered from any causal situation whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

Another reason for this denial of any connexion is, probably, Hume's theory of psychological atomism. He believed that since experience can be analysed into particular atomic units, therefore experience itself consists of nothing but 'entirely loose and separate' bits of consciousness. And it is nonsensical to speak of any 'internal' relation between entities which are by nature separate. Accordingly, it is quite possible to think of the objects or events that occasion these experiences as being themselves loose and separate. There is no connexion between them even when we call one of them 'cause' and another its 'effect'. This sort of distorted picture of the mind could very easily lead to claims like, "All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another, but we can never observe any tie between them. They seem conjoined but never connected".<sup>2</sup> But it is a mistake to

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1. Flew, op. cit., p.136.

2. Enquiry, p.74.

think that because something can be analysed in terms of discrete elements, therefore, it is nothing but those elements. A geometrical proof can be analysed into separate verbal and non-verbal symbols. But it would be nonsensical to suggest that there is no connexion between its initial premises and its conclusion. We may analyse our experience into discrete elements. But the experience itself is flowing and continuous.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, there are many causal statements where the language of 'unvarying sequence' or 'constant conjunction' simply fails. There are, what might be called 'historical causal statements'.<sup>2</sup> For example, no possible formulation of the statement, 'President Kennedy's death was caused by shots fired at him by Oswald' can allow the deduction of a statement of 'unvarying sequence' from it. The shooting and the subsequent death of the president are events that occurred only once in the history of the universe. One cannot possibly say that these events are constantly conjoined.

One might try to overcome this difficulty by saying that 'a' was the cause of 'b', provided that 'a' was immediately followed by 'b', and that things similar to 'a' are always followed by things similar to 'b'. But the question then arises, whether this similarity is exact or only one of

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1. Flew, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

2. See Collingwood, Metaphysics, pp. 286, 290.



degree. It cannot be exact, because 100% similarity is only another name for identity. Therefore, events exactly similar to the shooting and the subsequent death of the president are those identical events themselves. (Unless the universe is reduplicated in time or space). Neither can it be partial similarity, because a dramatisation of the shooting of the president need not be followed by a feigned (dramatised) death of the president.<sup>1</sup> The only way out of this dilemma seems to be to say that events similar to causes are followed by those similar to the relevant effects if and only if they are similar in some relevant respects. But this will only take us back to where we started, because these 'relevant respects' seem only to be another name for 'causally relevant respects'.

Hume might have realized that statements of 'constant conjunction' do not equal causal statements. So he probably wanted to avoid saying that causation is nothing but 'constant conjunction' by defining a cause at least in one place<sup>2</sup> as "an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second. Or, in other words, where if the first object had not been, the second never had existed". Yet the supplementary clause, which he treats as if it were equivalent to the main

1. Cf. the article, 'Causation' in 'The Encyclopedia of Philosophy', p.60.
2. Enquiry, p.76.

clause, cannot really be equivalent to the main clause. The main clause is the statement of 'constant conjunction'; the subordinate states a subjunctive conditional statement.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, it is not possible, contrary to what the theory of constant conjunction attempts to do, to give any valid account of causation while at the same time denying 'production'. The concept of production is so intimately bound up with the concept of causation that in its absence the whole superstructure of the concept of causation would seem to tumble down. The notions of agency and production<sup>2</sup> are fundamental factors constituting the concept of cause as it is used in the different branches of study. R. G. Collingwood and Douglas Gasking<sup>3</sup> have argued quite persuasively that causes are always elements by means of which one can bring about or prevent certain other conditions.

Denial of 'agency and production' is connected not only with denying, as Hume has done, internal connexions, but also, I think, with the denial of substances. Denial of

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1. Flew, op. cit., pp. 130-131.
  2. We do not have to argue, I hope, at length, to point out that the notions of agency and production are inseparably connected. Production is necessarily a process initiated by a producer. A producer, again, is an agent who brings about certain changes.
  3. Collingwood, Metaphysics, pp. 285-340; Gasking, Mind 1955, 'Causation and Recipes'. For a similar discussion of the essentially practical utility of causes as 'means' to produce some desired results see also 'The Philosophy of Science', Toulmin, pp. 120-124.

the intimate connexion between the agent and the object acted upon would, of course, destroy the concept of production. But if we have only some logical connexions, but no substantival entity, we would have no producers, no agents, and consequently no production either. An 'agent' is, by popular conception, 'one who, or that which, acts'. And this conception very often brings to our mind the picture of a substantival entity - even very much like a human being - using its energy in bringing about something. Thus a certain kind of mosquito, for example, is an agent which engages itself in certain activities that result in the bringing about of malaria in a certain man. If instead of substantival things there were only a collection of fleeting qualities, it would have been difficult to say that someone or something is an 'agent' responsible for a certain action of bringing about. It is my friend Pamela, for example, who wakes me up every morning. Now, we could not say that a collection of colours, shape, size and weight of a particular determination (i.e. such qualities as appropriately describe Pamela) wakes me (described similarly only with the help of qualities that properly describe me) up (or produces a state of wakefulness in me)!<sup>1</sup> In fact, we have become so unalterably habituated to describing causal situations with the help of words denoting substances, that even if we just try to express a causal situation with the help of fleeting qualities only, we shall end up with contradictory statements! The descriptions will correspond to absurd situations!

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1. It could have been said that the presence of a collection of colours etc. is followed by a state of wakefulness in a certain other collection of colours etc. (i.e. those qualities which appropriately describe me). But this would not be equivalent to saying that the former collection produces a state of wakefulness.

Thus, if we had no substantival entities, then we would no longer be able to use the language of a 'producer' and the 'produced'. Hume denied material as well as mental substances. With the denial of substantival entities the concept of agency and consequently the concept of productive force dwindles into nothingness. We cannot, unfortunately, devote much time to the discussion of Hume's denial of substances. All we can do here is primarily to refer the reader to a few sources both in Hume's original writing as well as in some commentarial literature.<sup>1</sup> In the Treatise he writes: "We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities".<sup>2</sup> His discussion about material substances is very brief. He probably thought that in view of what Berkeley had already said of the rejection of the idea of material substance, he need not give any elaborate reasons himself for rejecting this idea. His refutation of mental substances is comparatively more elaborate. He says in the Treatise, "The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away... The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place, where these scenes are

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1. Macnabb. op. cit., p.139f.

2. Treatise, p.16.

represented..".<sup>1</sup>

Since we shall argue at length against the possibility of explaining causation in the absence of the concept of production in chapter VI , we shall not spend any more time on this.

The theory of the denial of agency gives us the scope for comparing Hume's theory of causation with relevant Buddhist theories. In the next chapter we shall therefore try to compare Hume's theory of causation with that propounded by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalāśīla.

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1. Treatise, p.253.

CHAPTER II

POINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN HUME'S THEORY AND THE  
CAUSAL THEORY PROPOUNDED BY ŚĀNTARAKṢITA AND KAMALAŚĪLA

Section i

Circumstances in which Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla<sup>1</sup>  
Denied Causal Efficacy

One of the corner-stones of the entire structure of Buddhist philosophy is the emphatic denial of the concept of substance. The 'Upaniṣads' and the Brahmanical systems believed in permanent physical and spiritual substances immutable amidst their outer modifications. For several reasons Buddhist thinkers unanimously rejected such a concept of an enduring and immutable substance. The reasons are as follows.

The Buddhists explained human 'suffering' as the result of wrong evaluation.<sup>2</sup> We suffer as a result of our 'craving'. We 'crave' because we erroneously believe ourselves to be real 'self-existing' beings confronted by an external world presenting us with 'self-existing' objects. If we could realize

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1. Śāntarakṣita critically analysed the concepts of cause and effect in his Tattvasaṅgraha. His pupil Kamalaśīla's commentary on this work is known as the Tattva-saṅgraha-pañjikā.
  2. For this and some of the reasonings cited in this paragraph see Chapter V, p.246. Examples of wrong evaluation are: taking what is really transitory as eternal ('anitye nityam iti evaṃ yadi grāho'), what is really painful as pleasant ('duḥkhātmake skandhapañcāke yaḥ sukhaṃ iti viparīto grāhaḥ'). See MKV, p.460.

that the things we crave for are nothing 'in themselves', we could release ourselves from the grip of incessant 'craving'. So they theorised that there are no objects existing 'in themselves' in the external world. And they reformulated this theory as: there are no 'substantial objects' in the external world. We also strive to achieve things for ourselves. If we could realise that what we think of as 'our own selves' are in reality no 'self-existing' beings, we could also liberate ourselves from the clutches of 'craving'. And they took a similar step further from the statement, 'there is nothing called ones own self' in reality, to the conclusion, there are no 'selves' in reality i.e. there are no 'soul substances'. The Buddhists denied permanent <sup>h</sup>psychical substances or souls also because they believed that the concept of a permanent unchanging soul is contradictory to the concept of moral progress or the principle of retribution. Spiritual life would be meaningless if we adhere to such a concept of an eternal and unchanging soul. We would, if we adhere to such a concept of a soul, be neither the better nor the worse for our moral actions.

In the absence of the concepts of substances or things over and above qualities the whole superstructure of the concepts of agents and production seems to tumble down. It is Irena who switches on the radiator! It is the alarm-clock that wakes me up! If instead of these things there were only a collection of fleeting qualities, it would have been

impossible to say that someone or something is an 'agent' who brings about certain changes.<sup>1</sup>

But although the Buddhists deny 'agency', it must be remembered that causal explanations play a very vital role in their philosophy. Accordingly, they had to devise a special theory of causation which would not need the concept of agent. It will therefore be interesting to have a look at the theories of causation proposed by Buddhist philosophers. We shall, in this chapter, examine in particular the theory propounded by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.

#### The Buddha's Great Discovery

One of the great discoveries the Buddha is supposed to have made consists of the pattern according to which change takes place in things. Change is not haphazard or accidental. It takes place according to the law which is referred to by the Buddhists as the law of 'dependent origination' (Sanskrit, 'pratītya-samutpāda', Pāli, 'paṭicca-samuppāda').

Thus according to the Buddha there is no accidental circumstance; everything in the world is causally conditioned. The significance of the discovery is such that, according to Buddhist texts, he who perceives the law of

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1. See Chapter I, p.70.



'dependent origination' sees the truth, and he who sees the truth perceives the Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

The general formula of causality is often stated in the following way.

(a) Pāli version.

"Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imasya uppāda idaṃ uppajjati. Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati."<sup>2</sup>

(b) Sanskrit version.

"Imasya sati idaṃ bhavati; imasya asato idaṃ na bhavati;<sup>3</sup> Imasyotpādād idaṃ utpadyate; imasya norodhād idaṃ niruddhati."<sup>4</sup>

These may be generally rendered into English as: if this is present, that comes to be; from the arising of this that arises. If this is absent, that does not come to be; on the cessation of this, that ceases.

The full meaning and all the implications of these formulas cannot be clear if we do not keep in mind that they are

1. MN, I, 191; and SN, IV, 120.
2. MN, I, 262-264; SN, II, 28, 70, 78, 96; Udāna, p.2.
3. At MKV, p.9, we find a slightly different construction of the first part of the formula using the locative absolute: 'asmiṃ sati idaṃ bhavati.'
4. Mahāvastu, II, 285, which seems to be the only complete statement whereas in the other places only the first part of the formula is to be found.

intended to repudiate and replace other theories of causation which existed at the time when Buddhist philosophy was being developed in India. I find myself obliged, therefore, even at the cost of a little digression from the main topic, to give a brief introduction to these rival theories.

Causal Theories Buddhism Intended to Refute .

Buddhism rejected in particular two causal theories that were dominant in India at the Buddha's time, the theory of 'pariṇāma-vāda' or 'satkārya-vāda' of the 'Sāṅkhya' school and the theory of 'ārambha-vāda' or 'asatkārya-vāda' or the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' school. A third theory which Buddhism rejected (which was not really all that popular in India) is the theory of 'yadrochā-vāda' of the materialists.<sup>1</sup>

According to the theory of 'satkārya-vāda' the effect ('kārya') is supposed to exist ('sat') already, in an unmanifest form, in the material cause ('samavāyi-kāraṇa' or 'upādāna-kāraṇa'). The example of the transformation ('pariṇāma') of milk into yogurt is often quoted by the 'Sāṅkhya' philosophers in their arguments seeking to prove the pre-existence of the effect in the material cause. Milk (material cause) itself changes into yogurt (the effect). The effect is not, in substance, different from the

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1. i.e. the 'Cārvākas'. See pp. 81-82.

material cause.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Sāṅkhya' philosopher observes that if the effect is not already present in the material cause, why do people require, for example, milk, and not something else when they wish to produce yogurt? If the effect is absent in the material cause, why does a potter have to depend on clay when he wishes to make a jar? Causation or creation (of the universe), in the analysis of the 'Sāṅkhya' philosophers, is simply another name for the process of the acquiring of a new appearance by a previously existing entity.<sup>2</sup>

Now although the 'Sāṅkhya' and the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' systems agree that the 'nimitta-kāraṇa' (signifying both the efficient and the 'instrumental' cause) and the 'asamaṃyāyi-kāraṇa',<sup>3</sup> are different from the effect, the 'Naiyāyikas' advocate the absolute difference of the 'effect' from the material cause ('samavāyi-kāraṇa'). They say that the existence of the effect in the material cause prior to the actual production of the effect is impossible. In fact, the jar, a previously non-existing ('asat')

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1. "Kāraṇaṃ eva kārya-rūpeṇa pariṇamate iti ... dadhi kāryāntaraṃ dugdhād bhinnaṃ ca na bhavati iti." Nyāya-kośa, p.735, Bhimācārya Jhalkikar, ed. Vasudevshastri, Abhyankar, Bombay Sanskrit Series No. XLIX, Poona, 1928.
  2. See e.g. Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha, Appaya Dikṣita, pp. 58-61 in this connection.
  3. It is difficult to give an English equivalent of this technical Sanskrit term. The conjunction of the threads (i.e. the fact of their being together) that is necessary for the production of a piece of cloth is cited as an example of it. See Foucher's Le Compendium des Topiques, pp.103, 105 for free translations of the term 'nimitta-kāraṇa'.

object is produced in the clay, or in the parts of a pot, (i.e. in its material cause). The cause and the effect are both real and different from each other.<sup>1</sup> If we assume the (substantial) identity of the cause and the effect, how are we to explain the difference in the purposes served by the two entities, the cause and the effect? Why can we not bring water in a lump of clay rather than in a pitcher made of clay if we assume the identity of the cause and the effect? If the pre-existence of the effect in the cause is accepted, the 'Naiyāyikas' would say, everybody should somehow be able to show the huge Indian fig tree ('nyagrodha') existing in an unmanifest form in the seed (the material cause).

There is no doubt that the 'Nyāya-vaiśeṣika' philosophers and the 'Sāṅkhyaists' are at cross purposes on this issue. If an object is unmanifest<sup>2</sup> (as the effect is, in the material cause, according to the 'Sāṅkhya' philosopher) how on earth can it be amenable to sense-perception even before it manifests itself as an effect (as the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' philosophers believe it to be)? Moreover, identity of the substance of two objects does not by any means imply their identity in all respects. Why should the pot and the clay then, which have only the same material, serve identical purposes (as the 'Naiyāyikas' would have it)? So the

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1. Advanced Studies in Indian Logic and Metaphysics, pp. 7-8.

2. This and the following point refers to the arguments in the preceding paragraph.

'Naiyāyika's' criticisms of the 'Sāṅkhya' standpoint do not seem to have much force. The criticisms of the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' standpoint by the philosophers of the 'Sāṅkhya' school, seem also, on the other hand, to miss the point. Because, even if it be true that the atomic components of both the cause (i.e. clay) and the effect (i.e. the pitcher with a particular shape, size and serving a particular purpose) are the same, yet that does not prevent the philosophers of the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' school from arguing that the effect in its particular form is not present in the material cause. Because the effect in its present concrete form (i.e. the pitcher having the particular shape, size, colour that it has, and serving the purpose that it in fact serves), cannot by any means be said to be already present (even in an unmanifest form) in its material cause, the clay. Philosophers of the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' school can, therefore, explain why, for example, one always has recourse to milk alone when one wishes to make yogurt in spite of the difference between milk and yogurt (each having its particular taste, consistency etc.) in all respects other than their atomic components.

The whole issue can perhaps be described, in terms of modern philosophical discourse, as the issue as to whether what we call a new 'production' is really only the end-product of a long process of development. The example of a rose-bud and the rose which blooms from it can be used here to illustrate our point. Is the blooming of the rose an absolutely new beginning? Does the rose come out of nothing or was it already present in an

unmanifest form in the bud from which it is ultimately produced? Clearly, everything depends on what we mean by the words 'unmanifest form'. Let us assume that the 'unmanifest form of the rose' means 'the bud'. Then of course, it would be nonsensical to say that the rose-bud (which is what we mean by the words 'unmanifest form of the rose') did not exist before the rose, which blooms out of it. This may thus seem to be a case against the 'Naiyāyikas' who insist on the effect's not existing before its actual appearance. Yet the 'Sāṅkhyists' cannot be supposed to have won their case by this point. <sup>reason is that</sup> The / although the rose-bud, the designate of the words 'the unmanifest form of the rose', must be granted to precede the rose, yet the proposition, 'the rose existed in the rose-bud' would not make much sense either; because the blooming of the rose must be supposed to take place at a certain time on a certain day (although it may be difficult to pin-point the exact time of the blooming). So it would be nonsensical to claim that the rose, which came into existence, say on the 15th of June, between 5 and 6 o' clock in the morning, existed in the bud which existed, say from the 15th of May to the 14th of June.

A third theory ('yadṛcchā-vāda')<sup>1</sup> advocated haphazard production and denied all strict causal laws. The

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1. See p.71.

Buddhist philosopher denied all these theories and said : Not from one's own self, not from another self, nor without any (strict) causal laws. In reality they are not produced at all; they arise in functional<sup>1</sup> dependence upon their causes. ('Na svato, na parato, nāpi ahetutaḥ, pratītya tat samutpannaṃ, notpannaṃ tat svabhāvataḥ.').<sup>2</sup>

The Buddhist formula of causation which we have considered on page 76 beginning with the statement, 'If this is present, that comes to be, and if this is absent that does not come to be' seems to express the idea of 'constant conjunction'. If fire should be the sole cause of heat, then if fire is there heat will always be conjoined with it; if fire is absent, no heat will follow.

This analysis of the notion of causation seems to be a natural consequence of denying 'agents'. If you deny that there are any switches the turning of which to the 'on' position produces heat in the room, and also that there is any one to turn the switch to the 'on' position, we should have to analyse the causal situations involved here in terms of the 'constant conjunction' of certain events such as the being of the switches (described with the help of qualities that appropriately describe

1. For further comments see Chapter IV, pp.208-212.
2. BL, vol. I, p.122.

switches) in the 'on' position with certain others such as the illumination of the room (described also with the help of relevant qualities). Although concepts like agent, production and efficacy have been implicitly denied in all schools of Buddhism, nowhere have they been so explicitly and emphatically denied as in the causal analysis of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.

The above discussion will at once, I believe, remind readers of the Humean analysis of causation as it has been presented in chapter I.<sup>1</sup> In An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding David Hume finally proposed to eliminate the idea of 'causal efficacy' or 'power' from the conception of causation altogether, maintaining essentially that causes and effects are merely changes that we find 'constantly conjoined'.<sup>2</sup> We should not, according to Hume, explain changes in terms of causes having the power to produce them. We should, instead, simply note that certain changes are, in fact, found to be unvaryingly conjoined with others.

But before embarking on a programme of comparing the theory of causation advanced by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla with relevant Humean theory, it is necessary to complete the picture of the background in which Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla rejected production, efficacy etc. with a few more details.

1. See Chapter I, pp. 36-48, 52 esp.

2. See Sections 4-7 of the Enquiry.



Four Noble Truths

Buddhism is centered around the problem of human suffering and the way to bring about the cessation of suffering. The doctrine ('dharma')<sup>1</sup> taught by the Buddha can be summed up in what is known in Buddhist circles as the 'four noble truths', affirming that (1) life is permeated by suffering or dissatisfaction (Sanskrit, 'duḥkha',<sup>2</sup> Pāli 'dukkha'); (2) the origin of suffering lies in 'craving' or 'grasping' (Sanskrit, tr̥ṣṇā, Pāli 'taṇhā'<sup>3</sup>); (3) the cessation of suffering is possible through the cessation of 'craving' and (4) that there is a way to the latter which consists in the practice <sup>of</sup> a certain type of spiritual discipline.

Buddhism claims that all existence involves suffering, either actually or potentially. But although there is suffering in this world, yet it can be helped, because it is due to certain conditions. Popularly speaking, suffering is caused by 'desire' or 'craving', especially the desire for the

1. 'Dharma' also refers to the ultimate 'elements' constituting the phenomenal world. They are, so to speak, the 'noumena' whose 'manifestations' constitute the phenomena. Stcherbatsky translates 'dharma' as 'mathematical point-instants' in Buddhist Logic. See BL, vol. I, p.142. The reason for such a translation is, that they are endowed with the minimum possible (theoretically) extension and duration. Hence the application of the epithet 'mathematical'. See CCB, p.37. See also pp.86f below.
2. Stcherbatsky translates 'duḥkha' as 'unrest'. <sup>See</sup> CCB, P.48 especially n.3.
3. Etymologically 'tr̥ṣṇā' means 'thirst'.

continuance of pleasant experience; which is frustrated by the objective circumstances putting impediments to such a continuity of pleasant experience. Extinction of suffering is possible through the extinction of its cause, 'desire'. 'Desire' in its turn is due to our attaching wrong values to things of whose essential nature we are completely ignorant. Real knowledge consists of our viewing things as being neither the source of pleasure nor of pain. Painful and pleasant experiences are our subjective reactions to things. Things in themselves are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Thus if we can get rid of our wrong notions about things and come to know their essential nature<sup>1</sup> we shall no longer crave for them nor suffer consequently.<sup>2</sup> The conviction that 'knowledge' or 'prajñā' (Pali 'paññā') can remove the root of suffering, ignorance ('avidyā', Pali 'avijjā'), is the beginning of spiritual discipline.

1. It is interesting to note, in this connection, remarks made by Edward Conze in his Buddhist Thought In India, p.65, "as one accustoms oneself to disentangling sensory data from their often hidden emotional and personal associations, they are placed into an emotional void, and seem almost as they are in themselves — nothing in them desirable or to be sought after. He\* seizes only on that which is really there." (Italics as in the original). See also Conze's Buddhist Meditations, p.79.

\* Conze is probably referring to the Buddhist monk practising meditation.

2. According to some interpretations aging and death represent special forms of suffering. According to certain other interpretations life itself is suffering. For different forms of suffering consult Chapter V, pp.226-227.

No wonder that in a system like Buddhism the study of the concept of causation plays a very vital role. In 'Theravāda' Buddhism there are two different forms of the theory of causation ('pratītya-samutpāda' = 'dependent origination'), known as a 'special one' and a 'general one'.<sup>1</sup>

The 'special theory' can be taken as explaining how concepts such as merit, demerit, moral retribution, bondage, deliverance etc. are possible in the absence of the concept of a permanent self or ego. The 'general form' of the theory attempts to explain how all phenomena in general, including such psychological phenomena as sense-perceptions, ideas and volitions as well as all physical phenomena are possible without the existence of any permanent substances. Every individual fact, every 'point-instant' of reality is conditioned, according to this theory, by a sum total of causes and conditions.

The expression 'point-instant of reality' is the English equivalent Stcherbatsky uses in discussing the nature of what is technically known in Buddhist philosophy as 'dharma's'.<sup>2</sup>

According to the early Buddhist philosophers every such 'dharma',

1. See BL, vol. I, pp. 135-141. The 'special theory' refers to what we have termed, 'the theory of the twelve-membered dependent origination' in chapter V.
2. See BL, vol. I, p.119. These 'dharma's' are also identified with 'kṣaṇas' (moments). See CCB, pp. 37, 42. In CCB (e.g. p.37) Stcherbatsky refers to them as 'points in time-space'. Cf. p.13, n.1.

(i.e. 'point-instant') arises in dependence upon a 'totality of causes and conditions' to which it necessarily succeeds.<sup>1</sup>

But we must stop at this stage and explain what is meant by the expression 'point-instant of reality' or 'dharma' here.

#### The Conception of 'Dharma' in Early Buddhism

We have already seen<sup>2</sup> that the consensus of opinion on the part of the ancient Buddhist scholars is that substantial entities - both physical and mental - are not ultimately real.

Buddhist philosophers replace the soul by a series of psychical states rigorously conditioned as to their nature by certain causal laws. Such a conception of series of psychical states and the laws governing them is sufficient to account for, according to them, spiritual progress and change, inasmuch as each succeeding state (good or bad) in such a series arises depending on the moral quality of the states preceding it.

Not only do the Buddhists deny spiritual substances and maintain that what we take as 'self' can be analysed without residue into several mental states, 'thought' and 'its concomitants' ('citta' and 'caittas')<sup>3</sup>, but even physical substances are reduced

1. BL, vol. I, p. 119.

2. See pp.73-74 above.

3. See chapter IV, p.155, n.1 for an account of these terms.

by them into numerous evanescent particular states.

Everything is thus analysed into streams of ultimate elements; and such an analysis gives rise to a pluralistic ontology. These elements are the only entities that are really there (as contrasted with the things of everyday experience). They are the 'dharma's' (Pāli 'dhammas').<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the presentations of the objects of our everyday experience are, Buddhist philosophers hold, shot through with misconceptions. Our greed, aggressiveness, etc., stemming from our 'ignorance', distort our normal vision of these objects. The actual facts distinct from the fabrications of our imagination and false constructions are the 'dharma's'.<sup>2</sup>

These 'point-instants' are classified in Buddhist works in many different ways. The classification that is common to all Buddhist schools is that into (i) the 'five constituents' ('skandha')<sup>3</sup> of a person; (ii) the 'twelve sources of perceptual

1. "Dhāriyanti vā yathā sabhāvato." See Atthasālinī, p.39. "Those states which are borne according to their own characteristics". Cf. The Expositor, I, p. 50.
2. For a fuller exposition of the concept of 'dharma' see Stcherbatsky's CCB, passim, and Conze's BTI, pp. 96f.
3. Etymologically the word 'skandha' means 'heaps' or 'groups'. See BTI, p. 107. Hence the word 'pañca-skandha' can also be translated as 'the five complexes' or the 'five aggregates'.

(and intuitive) knowledge'<sup>1</sup>; and (iii) the 'eighteen elements'.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of the division of 'dharma's' into the 'five constituents' is to explain that the so-called 'person' is no unified substantial being, but only a mere conglomeration of separate constituents. "As the stars in a constellation do not really belong together, but it is we who have arranged them into an arbitrary unit," so also what is popularly known as a 'person' "is a mere conventional grouping of disparate elements all of which belong to one of the five groups known as the 'skandhas'."<sup>3</sup> Of the five, only one, i.e. (i) 'form' or 'matter' ('rūpa'<sup>4</sup>)

1. i.e. the 'twelve āyatanas'. See chapter V, pp.236-237 for a detailed discussion about the 'sources of perceptual (and intuitive) knowledge'.
2. i.e. the eighteen 'dhātus'. For the different meanings of the word 'dhātu' consult Edgerton's Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, pp. 282-284. Among the five different meanings of the word 'dhātu' two are relevant to our thesis. One of them, the sense with which we are concerned here, is, according to Edgerton, that of "psycho-physical constituent elements of the personality in relation to the outside world." (p. 283, italics as in the original). Another sense, relevant for our thesis is, 'sphere, region, world, state of existence.' In this sense the 'dhātus' are supposed to be three: (i) 'rūpa-dhātu', 'ārupya-dhātu' and dharma-dhātu'. We have referred to these three 'dhātus' in Chapter IV, p.196, n.2,3.
3. BTI, p. 107.
4. For another different meaning of the word 'rūpa' see p.96, n.1.

constitutes the physical constituent of a person. The psychological aspects of a person's being is explained as consisting of (ii) 'feelings' ('vedanā'<sup>1</sup>), (iii) perception (and conception) ('saṃjñā'), (iv) 'volitions' and other mental faculties ('saṃskāra')<sup>2</sup> and (v) 'consciousness' ('vijñāna').<sup>3</sup> The 'five constituents' are described in the Visuddhimagga<sup>4</sup> as those which 'define the limits of the basis of grasping after a self, and what belongs to a self.'<sup>5</sup>

The 'dharmas' have been classified into the 'twelve sources of perceptual (and intuitive) knowledge' from, as is obvious from the very name of the class, the epistemological point of view. The six 'internal' ('adhyātma') 'sources' correspond to the five sense-organs and, what is known in Buddhist philosophy, as the 'faculty of intellection', ('mano-indriya').<sup>6</sup> The six 'external' ('bāhya') 'sources' are the corresponding objects of the five sense-organs and 'the faculty of intellection'. This classification is thus concerned with the origin of 'thought (or consciousness) and its concomitants'<sup>7</sup>, and views them as happening because of the 'correlation' of sense-organs and their corresponding objects.'

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1. See chapter V, pp.230-33 for a detailed analysis of 'feeling'.
  2. For the analysis of this term see chapter V, pp.240-245.
  3. For a detailed analysis of 'consciousness' see chapter V, pp.238-240.
  4. Visuddhimagga, p. 478.
  5. BTI, p. 107.
  6. See chapter V, p.235.
  7. See chapter IV, p.155, n.1.

The class of the 'twelve sources' seems, at the outset, to overlap with that of the 'eighteen elements', inasmuch as the first twelve items of the 'eighteen elements' are a repetition of the items listed under the 'twelve sources'. The remaining six items comprise the particular kinds of knowledge (or 'consciousness')<sup>1</sup> resulting from the correlation of the six 'internal sources' and their corresponding objects. Hence the question naturally troubles one: what is the view-point from which this classification is made? Stcherbatsky suggests the following:

"Buddhist philosophy is an analysis of separate elements ... which unite in the production of one stream ('santāna') of events. The unphilosophic mind of common people supposes this stream to represent a personality or an individual ('pudgala'). Viewed as components of such a stream, the elements are called 'dhātus'.<sup>2</sup> Just as different metals may be extracted out of a mine, just so does the stream of an individual life reveal elements of eighteen different kinds (dhātu='gotra')<sup>3</sup>."<sup>4</sup>

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1. 'Vijñāna'. See the analysis of 'vijñāna' in chapter V, pp. 232-240.

2. The etymological meaning of the Sanskrit word 'dhātu' is metal.

3. Stcherbatsky refers here to AK, I, p. 37. See also n.3 of that page 37 (of the AK) by De La Vallée Poussin.

4. CCB, p.9.



The difficulty with this suggestion, granting the fact it has faithfully followed the Abhidharmakośa, is that the eighteen items listed under this class do not seem to exhaust the diverse aspects of an individual life. The aspects neglected correspond to the emotional and volitional aspects of a man, which is taken care of in the classification of the 'five constituents'.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Conze has tried to analyse another view-point from which this classification could possibly have been made.<sup>2</sup> In his opinion the purpose of this classification is to 'bring home' the truth of 'phenomenalism'. With the help of the example of a visual perception of an orange he has illustrated how the Buddhist philosophers wanted to say that the 'orange', as a datum of experience, should not be mistaken for the objective fact 'orange', as it is 'out there'.<sup>3</sup> "No one can get at the object as it is by itself, but only at the 'orange' as modified and falsified by subjective processes."<sup>4</sup> The ulterior motive of this analysis by Buddhist thinkers is, in Conze's opinion, advising the 'mistaken man' to focus his attention on his subjective factors, if he wants

1. See pp. 89-90.
2. See BTI, pp. 109-110.
3. If we properly analyse a visual perception of an orange, we would find, according to Buddhist views, no objective fact called 'orange', but merely the sense-organ, its corresponding object (which is only a sense-datum), and the perceptual knowledge arising out of the 'correlation' between these two.
4. BTI, p. 109.

to get rid of suffering. "The average worldling has got into the habit of thinking that his happiness depends on manipulating objects. Buddhism believes him to be wrong, and expects better results from focussing attention on the subjective factors which are usually ignored."<sup>1</sup>

This analysis of the view-point fits well with the general programme of Buddhism of rejecting the concepts of substantial individual beings and physical objects, and Egos, and egoism. The analysis into the class of the 'five constituents' is meant to explain away the concept of a 'person'. The analysis of the 'twelve sources' should make it clear to a person like me who is used to thinking in terms of 'myself' only, that "It is wrong for me to regard 'my' thoughts as free creations of 'my self', or 'consciousness'."<sup>2</sup> The analysis of the 'eighteen elements' is, on the other hand, supposed to convey to us the message that there is nothing like 'the object out there' in the physical world.

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1. BFI, p. 110.

2. BFI, p. 110.

Section ii

Critical Examination of the Causal Theory Propounded  
by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla

Having given a very brief account of the meaning of the word 'dharma', we can now come to analyse the theory of causation propounded by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Their theory of causation is a consequence of their doctrine of 'universal momentariness' as exemplified in their doctrine of the 'dharmas'. If things or persons are (in the ultimate analysis), series of momentary existences (i.e. of 'dharmas') how can they have any time to produce anything? Hence they claim that there is nothing called 'production' in reality. There is neither any 'agent' nor any 'causal efficacy'. A thing or an event only arises depending on certain other conditions. But the cause does not 'produce' the effect. At the meeting point of several series of momentary events another series of momentary events starts which is ordinarily known as the 'effect'. In what follows we shall critically consider this unique theory of causation and see whether any convincing account can be given of 'causation' while at the same time denying the concepts of production, agent, and efficacy.

A very illuminating account of the theory of causation can be found in the 'Tattva-saṅgraha' of Śāntarakṣita and its commentary (Pañjikā) by Kamalaśīla. We shall concentrate here on some relevant portions of this book.

In the Tattva-saṅgraha-panjikā Kamalaśīla tries, basing his arguments on those of Śāntarakṣita, to establish the validity of their theory by considering first some possible objections to it (by the 'Māyāyikas' presumably). These objections arise from the momentary nature of the causes advocated by them. Since the future event is not yet in existence and the past event is defunct and hence bereft of causal efficacy, neither the future nor the past event can be supposed to bring about the present event. The present event also, being momentary, is absolutely destroyed in the next moment. Hence it will no longer remain in existence in order to exert its causal influence on the effect which invariably succeeds the cause. It might be argued by the Buddhist philosopher that there is no need for the cause's exerting any influence on the effect; the mere antecedence of the cause is sufficient to establish the causal situation. But the opponent urged that the Buddhist philosophers would be led to an absurd position if they argued that the precedence of the cause is enough to establish a causal situation. Mere antecedence is not enough. If it were so, we would be led to absurd consequences. An instance of such an absurd consequence is a case where we shall be forced to call the colour, for example, which exists in an earthen pitcher, before it is destroyed by burning, the 'cause' of the smell which one

gets as a result of the burning.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, since the Buddhist philosophers say that our illusion of the continued existence of a colour, for example, is due to the continuous flow of homogeneous colour-moments, the preceding colour-moments in that series would become the cause of the succeeding colour-moments. The Buddhist philosopher is thus placed between the horns of a dilemma. He has to admit either that the effect is produced out of a cause which is destroyed. Since production out of a non-existent cause is an absurdity, he cannot admit the first alternative. If, on the other hand, he admits the second alternative, then he will be bound to grant more than a moment's existence to its cause, and hence bound to give up the doctrine of momentariness.<sup>2</sup>

Not only will it be impossible for the Buddhist philosophers to establish the relation of cause and effect it will be equally impossible for them, says the opponent, to show any means by which we can cognise such a relation. The causal relation is normally detected by perception. When we perceive that an object or event follows another constantly and disappears

1. TSP, pp. 168, lines 25-p. 169, line 5. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 289. The Sanskrit text of the TSP, is liable to a different interpretation if we translate the word 'rūpa', occurring in it, as 'form' rather than 'colour'. The interpretation which one may then formulate is possibly something like the following. The form or the shape which the earthen pitcher has, prior to its being smashed by a club, is the cause of the smell one can get from the particles of the destroyed pitcher, filling the air.
2. TSP, p. 169, lines 12-22. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 290.

whenever the preceding one disappears, we know the former object or event to be the 'effect' of the preceding one. But if 'causes' and 'effects' are momentary, we shall not be able to perceive them. Perception requires that there should be a 'correlation' between the sense-organ and the relevant object.<sup>1</sup> And perception of the object follows as a consequence of this 'correlation'. But if everything is momentary, then the object will disappear as soon as the 'correlation' takes place, and hence, in the absence of the object, the perception itself, which follows this 'correlation', will no longer be possible. Hence neither the 'constant conjunction' of the cause with the effect, nor the disappearance of the cause and the effect can be perceived.

Impossibility of perception can be demonstrated from the momentary nature of the cognising subject also. Since the cause and its effect exist at successive moments, the cogniser of the causal relation must have two successive perceptions. And he is required to relate the two successive perceptions in one single perception; otherwise he will not have the notion of the cause and the effect being related. But how will he be able to perform that impossible trick without foregoing his momentary nature?<sup>2</sup>

Certain other mental phenomena, such as, memory and recognition, which presuppose causal operation, will also be

1. See chapter V, p.234

2. TSP. p. 169, line 23 - p. 170, line 14. Jha's translation, p. 291.

incapable of being explained by the assumption of universal momentariness. Memory and recognition are necessarily due to previous perception. But if the object is destroyed as soon as it is perceived, how can (e.g.) recognition expressed in the form, this is the same object I have seen before, be possible? It may be argued by the Buddhist philosopher that identity of the object is not necessary for recognition. Hair and nails are constantly being cut and they grow again as soon as they are cut. Thus though the hair and the nails which were cut are, strictly speaking, different from the hair and the nails which grow again, we tend to ignore the difference and think that they are the same on account of the extremely close similarity between the two. But even if we grant purely for the sake of argument that the identity of the object is not a sine qua non of recognition, what about the identity of the subject? Is it not a necessary condition of recognition that the subject that is recognising is the same as the subject that has seen the object on a previous occasion? For similar reasons, the Buddhist philosophers who adhere to the doctrine of momentariness will be unable to account for the process of remembering. Phenomena such as the arising of desire for the taste of a fruit on the mere sight of it<sup>1</sup> will be equally inexplicable from the standpoint of the doctrine of momentariness.<sup>2</sup>

1. Presupposing that the seer has tasted fruit of the same kind on a previous occasion.

2. TSP. p. 170, line 15-p. 171, line 5. Jha's translation pp. 292-293.

We shall now examine the answers that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla gave to the objection we have just displayed.

To the first objection, that the Buddhist position implies the absurdity of the effect's coming into existence from a defunct cause, they give the following reply. In their view the effect comes out of the cause while the latter is still in existence. In the actual words used by Śāntarakṣita, "what happens is that the effect comes into existence at the second moment, through its dependence<sup>1</sup> upon the cause which has come into existence as the first moment and has not yet become destroyed; so that when the effect comes into existence, it does so from the cause while it is still undestroyed at the first moment."<sup>2</sup> Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla argue that it is even necessary that the effect comes into being through its dependence upon a preceding cause that has ceased to exist at the time the effect appears. Otherwise, in their opinion, we shall have an absurd theory that the effect comes into being at the same time as the cause. Simultaneous beginning of the cause and the effect is impossible in their opinion; because if the 'effect' is already existing, what will the cause bring about?<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they would argue, if it is possible to produce

1. Italics ours.

2. TSP, p. 175, lines 1-3. Jha's translation, pp. 292-293. Italics, original, except for the one marked in n.1. above.

3. TSP, p. 175, lines 4-5. ("Satyāṃ api cānuvṛttau na tadāniṃ tasya kāraṇatvaṃ.")



what is already existing, then there would be an equal possibility of its being produced once again and so on ad infinitum.<sup>1</sup>

But have Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla answered the objection satisfactorily? One wonders if they have! Everything depends, of course, on what they mean by the 'dependence of the effect on the cause'. There are some obvious cases of physical dependence. For example, a building is said to 'depend' on the foundation. Here the word 'depend' is used in the sense of being 'supported by'. But in all the cases of physical support the object supported and that which supports it both exist at the same time.<sup>2</sup> Such cases of dependence will obviously not help the authors who want to prove that the momentary effect comes into being in the second moment depending on the cause existing (only) in the first moment. The word 'dependence' is used in another sense as well. This sense is demonstrated by propositions such as 'the success of the Tory party in the next election depends on their having a good party machine'. Here the word 'depends' is used in the sense of being 'caused by'. Even if Kamalaśīla uses the word 'depends' in this sense, he will not be able to establish anything

1. TSP, p. 175, lines 9-10.
2. For example, the foundation and the building must co-exist at one time or another in order that the former may support the latter. The foundation is of course laid before the building is erected on it. But at the time when the foundation actually supports the building, both of them must be existing. Such cases of dependence will not help the authors concerned because, in their view, the cause cannot, and must not exist at the time the effect comes into being.

with this sense of the word, inasmuch as the whole point at issue is, whether the effect can be caused by an entity that is defunct when the effect arises.

The sense of 'dependence' which Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla did probably have in mind is something like the following: the 'action' of the cause due to which the effect comes into being starts at the first moment, when the cause is still in existence. Only in this sense can the effect be said to come into existence by 'depending' on the cause which existed and was destroyed at a previous moment. But if this is the sense, then they will have to admit causal efficacy ; and they can no longer escape the situation by saying that causal efficacy is nothing but the precedence of the cause (see p. 95 above, and pp. 104-106, 114f below).

Nor is the objection advanced by the authors against the theory of simultaneous beginning of cause and the effect a sound one. Simultaneous causation does not, contrary to what Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla would have us believe, imply that the effect exists 'already'. It only implies that the effect comes into being at the same moment as the cause and that if the cause did not come into being, the effect could not come into being either. The authors have distorted the position of the advocates of simultaneous causation by playing upon the words 'already existing' ('anuṣṭtau'). The expression 'already existing' ('anuṣṭtau') has a double sense, viz., 'existing at the same time as' and 'existing before'. It

goes without saying that the authors have illegitimately chosen the second sense to represent the stand-point of the advocates of the theory of simultaneous causation. But the sense these advocates have in mind is the first one.

The authors, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, accuse the advocates of the theory of simultaneous beginning of the cause and the effect of anthropomorphism. They say that there is no need to suppose, as the advocates of the theory of simultaneous causation would have it, that the cause grabs hold of the effect like a pair of tongs and then 'works' on it. Nor does the effect come into being like a sweetheart caught up in the tight embraces of her lover.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that the uncritical mind of the man in the street may entertain anthropomorphic ideas like the above ones when he thinks<sup>2</sup> that the cause must originate at the same time as the effect, in order that it may operate on the effect. Yet, if we probe deep into the matter, we shall see that no such anthropomorphic ideas are essential for maintaining the theory of the simultaneous origin of the cause and the effect. The stand-point of the advocate of the theory of simultaneous causation can be summed up in

1. TSP, p. 176, lines 8-14. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 302.
2. If he is bothered at all about the so-called philosophical questions about the time when the cause must come into being in order that it may 'operate' on the effect! One wonders whether the ordinary man spends his time in 'idle speculations' such as these!

a proposition such as, 'a cause is that by producing which we get something else at the same time.' The turning of the key and the opening of the lock may be used as an example. No such anthropomorphic ideas as we have just discussed need therefore be introduced in order to prove this theory.

Not only do the Buddhist philosophers argue that the cause need not and cannot co-exist with its effect, they also say that they do not see any necessity why the cause must exert its influence on the effect. In fact there is no 'causal operation', distinct from the cause, anywhere in this universe. We can speak of the 'agent' and the 'patient' in a metaphorical way only. These words do not stand for any objective reality.<sup>1</sup>

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1. "Yāvataṁ nirvyāpāram evedaṁ viśvaṁ, na hi paramāṛthataḥ kaścit karitā karma vāsty, anyatra dharma-saṅketāḥ iti samudāyārthaḥ." TSP, p. 176, lines 14-15. Jha's translation, p. 302. Jha in fact translates the last part of the sentence, "na hi paramāṛthataḥ kaścit . . . dharma-saṅketāḥ . . ." as "there is, in reality, no 'active agent' or 'objective' at all, . . . apart from 'convention' . . ." He has translated the word 'saṅketa' as 'convention' and not as 'metaphor'. The relation between these two translations of 'saṅketa' can be shown by saying that the conventional way of speaking is sometimes not true if it is taken literally. Conventional language is sometimes true only if we do not take it literally, but as an expression of some other idea underlying it. It is in this sense comparable to a metaphorical expression which has some other significance underlying its apparent and direct meaning.

But if there is nothing called 'causal efficacy', how will the Buddhist philosopher then explain such colloquial expressions as, 'the fire produces the smoke'? Kamalaśīla replies, that sentences such as 'the cause produces the effect' are only metaphorical expressions of propositions such as, 'the effect arises depending on the cause'.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the word 'depend' only signifies, in this context, that 'the effect always arises immediately after the cause'. And what is meant by the words 'the cause acts on the effect' is nothing but 'the cause is always conjoined with the appearance of the effect'.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the hypothesis of a 'functioning' of the cause in addition to its existenceitself is an unwarranted assumption. We must point out a possible misconception a reader may have from comments like this. He may think, at this stage, that the authors like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are not really rejecting concepts like 'production and efficacy'. What they are rejecting is only the existence of things or substances which produce something else by virtue of certain qualities known as 'causal operations'. In their opinion there are no substances.

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1. "Janayatīty upalakṣaṇam. Tattadāśrityotpadyata ityapi vijñeyam." TSP, p. 176, lines 24-25. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 303.
  2. "Idam eva hi kāryasya kāraṇe 'pekṣā yat tadanantara-bhāvitvam, kāraṇasyāpi kārye'yam eva vyāpāro yat kāryodaya-kāle sadā sannihitatvam." TSP, p. 177, lines 11-12. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 304.

The so-called substances are, if analysed logically, streams of 'flashes of energy' (i.e. streams of 'dharmas'). However, the Buddhist philosophers do admit that one 'stream of energies' (i.e. the logical analysis of one particular thing) causes another 'stream'. So a reader may think that since 'energy' represents a sort of activity, and since the Buddhist philosophers show that one 'stream of energies' causes another, therefore they do admit 'causal operations' which produce effects. What they do deny is that this 'operation' should be a property of a thing called 'cause'. In their opinion, 'actions' or 'energies' themselves produce certain effects.

But if we look deeper into the causal theories of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla we shall see that the line of argument referred to above is based on a misconception of their position. It is true that these philosophers do analyse what is popularly known as one thing producing another as one 'stream of energies' being causally responsible for another. But we must remember two points in this connection. Firstly, what Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla really mean by the expression 'being causally responsible for' is merely 'being constantly followed by'. And to say that something is being constantly followed by something else, is not the same thing as saying that the former produces the latter. Secondly, it is true that the 'dharmas' are 'energies' and, loosely speaking, some sort of 'activities'. Yet these 'energies' are not the same as 'causal operations' in the present context. To say, as

Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla did, that some energies are being constantly conjoined with certain others is not equivalent to saying that the former are producing the latter. The expression 'causal efficacy' is a technical expression used only in the context of production. It refers only to the 'productive power' of a producer-cause.

The theory of a 'causal efficacy' distinct from the cause itself, has been invented by the advocates of causal efficacy, Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla claim, to explain immediate production of the effect. But the hypothesis of a causal efficacy is not at all necessary. The temporal precedence of the cause is sufficient to account for the immediate succession of the effect. To quote the actual words of Kamalaśīla, "What is it that is called the 'operation' of the cause? It is that immediately after which the effect secures its appearance, and as a matter of fact, the effect appears immediately after the existence of the cause; hence it is existence itself which may be called the 'operation'."<sup>1</sup>

Now this is, to me, a very strange argument! The question is, what is it that is known as causal efficacy? Causal

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1. Jha's translation, p. 305. For the original text see TSP, p. 177, lines 4-6. "Vyāpāro nāma kāraṇasya ka ucyate? Yad anantaram eva kāryam udayam āsādayati, kāraṇa-sattānantaram eva ca kāryam udbhavatīti sattaiva vyāpāra-sābda-vācya'stu."

efficacy' is undoubtedly a functional concept, and it would be difficult to give an ostensive definition of it. But we can say, without the slightest hesitation, that this functioning of the cause is introduced in order to explain the fact called 'production'. Surely, temporal succession cannot by any means explain 'production'.<sup>1</sup> We can use an example here to illustrate our point. Suppose we have two clocks on the table. We make clock one a split second faster than clock two. Now every ticking of clock one will be followed by the ticking of clock two. But it would be absurd to conclude from this that the ticking of clock one is producing the ticking of clock two. Thus we can see no truth in the proposition, 'causal efficacy is nothing but "that immediately after which the effect secures its appearance".<sup>2</sup>

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla have ruthlessly criticised this concept of causal efficacy which, according to them, has neither the sanction of logic nor that of experience. They bring out a series of objections against this concept.

What is the factual evidence on which this hypothesis of a causal efficacy', as a factor distinct from a cause, is based? Surely, this mysterious entity called 'causal efficacy' is not

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1. Although the product may succeed the producer .

2. See previous page and Jha's translation, p. 305.



amenable to sense-perception.<sup>1</sup> What is perceived in a causal situation is nothing but the 'constant conjunction' of the cause and the effect. In fact, for determining the causal relation between two objects we only depend on the positive and negative concomitance of these two objects. Whenever we discover that an object comes

1. Cf. "Bhāve sati hi dr̥śyante bijād evāṅkurodayāḥ.

Na tu vyāpāra-sadbhāve bhavat kiñcit samīkṣyate."

(TSP, p. 177, verse 523.)

"As a matter of fact, it is on the existence of the seed itself that the sprout is seen to appear.

On the other hand, nothing is seen as coming into existence on the existence of an 'operation'."

(Jha's translation, p. 305.)

"Adr̥ṣṭa-śakter hetutve kalpyamāne'pi neṣyate.

Kim anyasyāpi hetutvaṃ viśeṣo vā'sya kas tataḥ."

(TSP, p. 178, verse 524)

"If you assume the causal character of the (entity called) 'efficacy', when this 'efficacy' is not perceptible,

Then why do you not assume the same of something else also?

(or) what is so special about this ('efficacy')?

(Translation ours. See Jha's translation, p. 305.)

The intended meaning of the second argument is: the advocates of causal efficacy assume that efficacy produces. Yet, Śāntarakṣita points out, this efficacy is never perceived. There are so many things in the world who do not cause anything. But can one not argue, Śāntarakṣita asks, that even these things produce, although their efficacies are not perceived?

Note the remarkable similarity of these arguments with that of Hume. (See ch.I, *passim*, pp.41,43 esp.)

into existence if and only if<sup>1</sup> another is present we call the latter the cause of the former. If this is the case, why should we attribute the causal character to a mysterious entity called 'causal efficacy'? Why not attribute the causal character to the cause itself?<sup>2</sup> Since all that is amenable to sense-perception is the unvarying sequence of two objects and that unvarying sequence alone is the criterion of the causal relation, what is the use of invoking the existence of an 'occult power'?

Again, does this 'efficacy' produce the effect through the medium of another 'efficacy' or not?<sup>3</sup> If it does, then the causal character should be imputed to that other efficacy. And this latter efficacy will also, in that case, depend on another efficacy to bring about the effect. The same argument would apply to the third 'efficacy', and hence we shall be faced with a vicious infinite regress ('anavasthā'). If, on the other hand, we hold that this 'efficacy' produces the effect by its mere 'existence', then by the same logic, it may also be argued that the cause itself produces the effect by its mere existence. And the hypothesis of an

1. i.e. the former never appears when the latter is absent. We must point out that this argument does not take into account the possibility of plurality of causes. (See chapter III, p. 139). If an event is capable of being caused by different causes on different occasions, then one can no longer claim that if one of the causes is absent, the event must be absent too.
2. TSP, p. 177, lines 13-17. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 304.
3. The underlying idea is, anything that produces must have an additional property called 'causal efficacy', which enables it to be a producer.

additional efficacy will be entirely futile.<sup>1</sup>

Our answer to the first of these objections to causal efficacy is simply this, that efficacy is a functional concept and it is impossible to give an ostensive definition of it. Objects in which such functions are fulfilled may have no ostensible properties in common. We may search in vain for some perceptible qualities which all kinds of food have in common by virtue of which they 'nourish'. We shall search in vain for some ostensible property called 'efficacy' in causes.

In answer to the second objection we may say that, causal efficacy certainly does not require another efficacy in order to perform its task. Just as glue attaches a stamp to an envelope without depending on some other glue to attach it to the stamp, so efficacy itself produces an effect without the help of another efficacy. But it does not follow from this that the cause should also be able to produce something without productive energy. The cause is, logically speaking, a different kind of entity from its efficacy. Therefore, if the efficacy can produce something by itself, it does not follow, from the same logic, that the cause can also produce something by itself, without its efficacy.

A similar attempt to demonstrate the logical absurdity involved in the assumption of a 'causal energising', with

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1. TSP. p. 178, lines 1-17. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 306.

the help of a dilemma, is discernible in the following argument.

"That particular entity" Kamalaśīla argues, "which is of the nature of the 'causal efficacy', is it something different from the thing to which it belongs or is it non-different from it? ... If it is something different, then the thing itself cannot be the cause, as the causal character belongs to the 'efficacy'."<sup>1</sup> If it is non-different, then of course we shall have no ground on which we can demand a separate entity called 'efficacy', as the thing called 'cause' will itself be enough for our purpose.

It may, however, be contended that the thing called 'cause' and this 'productive power' together will constitute the cause; and neither of them will be able to produce anything in isolation. But Kamalaśīla jettisons such an argument by saying that, "that however is not possible; because there can be no relation between things which do not help one another."<sup>2</sup> This is undoubtedly a very strange argument. Firstly, in what sense is Kamalaśīla claiming that a thing and its efficacy do not help one another? Secondly, why on earth can there be no relation between things which do not help one another? A cigarette- case and a paper-weight lying on the same table, although they do not

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1. TSP. p. 179, lines 4-7. Translation ours. Cf. Jha's translation, p. 307.

2. Jha's translation of TSP, p. 309. For the original text see TSP. p. 179, line 8. "Parasparānupakāriṇoḥ sambandhāsiddheḥ".

help one another in any way, nevertheless do have a spatial relationship with each other. We may at most say that if two entities are entirely opposite in their nature, then the two cannot be connected together by a common bond (although they may be related by the relation of difference at least). But are the things called 'cause' and its 'productive power' possessed of contradictory characteristics?

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla observe that one is bound to recognise causation without causal efficacy in the field of epistemology at least. Perception, inference etc. are recognised as 'means of right cognition'<sup>1</sup> in Indian philosophy. Because of these 'means of correct cognition' we are able to have particular perceptual or inferential knowledge. Now if perception, inference etc. can be 'means of right cognition', and in the opinion of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, be therefore 'causes' of particular 'cognitions'<sup>2</sup>, without the help of any additional entity called 'efficacy' ('vyāpāra')<sup>3</sup>, why cannot other causes also produce their effects without causal efficacy?<sup>4</sup>

1. These 'means' are known as 'pramāṇas'. The word 'pramāṇas' is translated in various ways. They are sometimes translated as 'means of right cognition' (see TSP, Jha's translation, p. 308) and sometimes as 'ways of knowing' (see D. M. Datt's Six ways of Knowing, passim).

2. See footnote next page.

3. See footnote next page.

4. See footnote next page.

But we must point out, <sup>that</sup> Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are here twisting the meaning of the phrase 'means of right cognition' as 'cause of right cognition' to suit their particular purpose. Causes of our particular perceptual knowledge, for example, are in fact our sense-organs, their corresponding objects, and a certain 'correlation' of them. Now firstly, we must all agree, that our

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2. (Footnote for previous page)

'Means' may sometimes be the same as 'cause'. For example, we can say that 'putting the kettle on fire is a means of boiling it'. This can be rephrased as 'putting the kettle on fire is the cause of its boiling'. But the sense in which perception and inference are said to be the 'means' of right cognition is not this sense. Perception is described as the 'means' in the sense that it is a 'way' of knowing correctly, i.e. it is one of the various 'forms' of correct knowledge. Just as there are different ways in which one can take a bath, e.g. one can take a shower-bath or one can wash himself in a bath-tub, so there are different ways in which valid knowledge in general is possible. These different 'ways' really correspond to different 'kinds of'. But because there is some connection between 'ways' and 'means', Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla therefore probably interpret 'ways of cognition' as 'means of cognition'. And because there is connection, in some cases, between 'means' and 'cause', Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla therefore take perception and inference to be causes of valid cognition.

3. (Footnote for previous page)

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla quote philosophers like Kumārila Bhaṭṭa in support of their argument. (See TSP, p. 179).

4. (Footnote for previous page)

TSP, p.179, lines 17-26. Cf. Jha's translation, pp. 307-308.

sense-organs are active in every case when we perceive something. Secondly, although we may not know what exactly happens when we perceive something, we must all agree that there is some 'process' or other which is present in every case of perception.

Anyway, the authors reject the utility of the concept of causal efficacy and say that, 'the only basis for the relation of cause and effect consists in immediate sequence, and not in any efficacious action'.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the objection that if mere sequence is considered to be the sole criterion of causation any arbitrary sequence would have to be regarded as a causal sequence, Śāntara-kṣita and Kamalaśīla give the following reply. 'We do not say that mere immediate sequence is the basis of the cause-effect relationship. Rather, what we do say is that one thing is to be regarded as the cause of another when the latter is always found to appear in immediate sequence to the former. One thing is regarded as the cause of another when the latter is found to appear in immediate sequence to the former only.'<sup>2</sup> Thus although

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1. "Ānantaryakamātram eva kārya-kāraṇa-bhāva-vyavasthā-nibandhanam na vyāpāra." TSP. p.180, line 7. Cf. Jha's translation, p.309.
  2. "Na hi vayam ānantarya-mātram kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvādhigati-nibandhanam brūmaḥ. Kiṃ tarhi? Yamniyatam. Tathāhi-yasyaivānantaram yad bhavati tattasya kāraṇam iṣyate." TSP. p.180, lines 19-20. Free translation ours. Cf. Jha's translation, pp. 309-310.

smoke is, in some cases, seen to follow the presence of certain animals such as cows, horses etc.,<sup>1</sup> yet it is not caused by those animals, because smoke is not always found to follow the appearance of those animals. Sometimes these animals may be present, yet there may not be any smoke in the vicinity. Moreover, smoke does not appear only in the presence of these animals. It appears even when these animals are absent.

We should note the striking similarity of arguments such as these with Hume's statements equating causation with 'constant conjunction'. Compare these arguments, for example, with the remarks of Hume in the Enquiry and Treatise (which we quoted in Chapter I), where he takes a cause to be 'an object', followed by another, all the objects resembling the first being

1. The allusion is probably to cases where farmers in India burn sulphur and other chemical compounds in the evening, in stables and cowsheds, to get rid of mosquitos. Although the smoke arising from the fire is concomitant with the presence of cows and horses in these cases, yet that smoke is not caused by these animals. Another possible allusion is to the case where the washerman kindles a fire to boil the dirty linen when he comes home with his donkey. Donkeys are used in carrying dirty linen in India. Although they are (nearly) always present when the linen is boiled, and hence concomitant with the smoke coming out of the fire, yet they are not causing the smoke. See Dasgupta's A History of Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p.466.



followed by objects, resembling the second.<sup>1</sup>

But we must reiterate what we have already stated a few pages before,<sup>2</sup> that 'constant conjunction' is not a criterion of causal connection. Causal connection is impossible without production and two events may be 'constantly conjoined' and neither of them may be the producer of the other. A detailed argument showing that the theory of 'constant conjunction' cannot give a satisfactory account of causation has been given in Chapter I (pp. 67-72). Another detailed argument demonstrating the impossibility of giving a valid account of causation while at the same breath denying production will be given in Chapter VI.

The objection that their theory of causation will make perception impossible, really stems, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla argue, from a misconception of their real stand-point. It was objected that since the object will disappear after the 'correlation' between it and the sense-organ, perception, which must take place only after this 'correlation', will be without an object.<sup>3</sup> But Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla say that difficulties of explaining perception exist both for those who believe things to be permanent and those who advocate universal momentariness. There are two possible theories of perception. According to one theory

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1. Cf. Enquiry, p.76.

2. See p.107

3. See p.97.

consciousness reveals the object without itself undergoing any transformation whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> In the technical terminology of Indian philosophy this is known as the theory of 'nirākāra-jñāna'.<sup>2</sup> According to the other theory external objects leave their impressions on consciousness, and what we know directly is only these impressions. This is known as the theory of 'sākāra-jñāna'.<sup>3</sup> Now both these theories are beset with particular difficulties. If we accept the theory of 'sākāra-jñāna', then perception will always be indirect and we will not have a clue as to what the real nature of external objects is like. Not only that, we shall have the absurd consequence of making consciousness itself a variegated entity (inasmuch as, according to this theory, consciousness undergoes various changes in response to the 'impressions' which are, so to speak, impressed on it). If, in order to avoid this difficulty, we declare that consciousness only reveals the objects (like a search-light) without itself undergoing any transformation (i.e. the first theory), then we shall not be able to explain the variety of our perceptions; because since consciousness itself is one indeterminate entity, completely independent of the numerous objects, there will be no connection between consciousness and the objects. And

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1. The analogy of a search-light revealing things without itself undergoing any change, will perhaps make the point clearer.
  2. Literally, 'theory of consciousness without any form'.
  3. Literally, 'theory of consciousness with a form'

hence we shall be unable to explain the variety of our perceptions. Thus, whether you accept the theory of 'sākāra-jñāna' or that of 'nirākāra-jñāna' you are faced with insoluble difficulties. Since the opponents, who believe in non-changing substances, have to accept one of these alternatives they cannot escape the difficulties of explaining perception themselves. Why then should they charge the upholders of the doctrine of momentariness with inconsistency? However, both the theories of 'sākāra-jñāna' and 'nirākāra-jñāna' are, with their particular difficulties explicable in terms of the doctrine of universal flux. Accepting the doctrine of 'nirākāra-jñāna' the Buddhist philosopher can explain a particular perception as something that is engendered by a common set of antecedent causes which ushers into existence the object and the perception as co-products at one and the same time.<sup>1</sup> Accepting the doctrine of 'sākāra-jñāna', they would, on the other hand, say that as what is perceived is only the 'impression' that an object leaves on consciousness, the presence of the object at the time of perception is no longer necessary. The

1. The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux, p.78.

See also TSP, p.181, lines 10-12. "Pūrvakebhya eva svahetubhyas tathā tat jñānam upajāyate, yena sa samāna-kāla-bhāvi-rūpādyevāvabudhyate nānyat. Tadbodhātmakevaiva tasyotpannatvāt."

Cf. Jha's translation, p. 311. According to Jha's interpretation, the antecedent causes produce perception in the 'form of a perception of an object existing at the same time as itself.'

presence of the impression will suffice for the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

If we look deeper into the arguments discussed above, ~~we shall see that the authors~~ Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla have contradicted even the common-sense conception of perception in these arguments. Even according to common-sense, perception is brought about by processes involving some sort of 'correlation' or other, of the sense-organs and their corresponding objects. But in saying that 'the particular perception of an object is engendered by conditions which usher into existence the object and the perception as co-products at the same time', Kamalaśīla has contradicted even that common-sense conception. Moreover, by introducing the concept of the 'impression' of the object, the author has only side-stepped the problem of how perception

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1. One should not think that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are claiming here that if one accepts the theory of momentariness, then one would be in a position to explain perception in a way that does not involve him into the problem about the indirectness of perception mentioned on p.117. They are merely saying that even if one believes in non-changing substances one will have difficulties about explaining perception; inasmuch as he would have to accept either of the two theories of 'sākāra-jñāna' and 'nirākāra-jñāna', both of which have some defects. So the difficulty about explaining perception exists whether you believe in momentariness, or in non-changing substances. Both the theories of 'sākāra-jñāna' and 'nirākāra-jñāna' are however explainable, with their particular difficulties, in terms of momentariness. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are thus not here trying to solve the problem, how perception can be direct, when what we directly know are only the 'impressions' of the objects.

is possible when the object is destroyed. Because, assuming that the 'impression' is left by the object on the consciousness at a particular time, and that perception of the 'impression' takes place at the next moment,<sup>1</sup> we shall be forced to admit that the momentary 'impression' will be destroyed at the time the perception is produced. So in the absence of the 'impression' itself even the perception of the 'impression' will be impossible.

Not only is there no difficulty about explaining perception, there is neither any difficulty, according to the authors, in explaining memory, recognition etc. either. It is by no means necessary that the person remembering must be identical with the person who experienced before. If they are the same in every respect then, the authors argue, remembrance itself will be impossible; because if the experiencer remained strictly identical, then he could not logically be said to remember. For the logical descriptions of 'the person who has experienced something in the past' and 'the person who remembers this experience later', must have some differences in spite of their being descriptions of the same person at different times. As a matter of fact, psychical phenomena are strictly governed by the law of causation. What happens in reality is that remembrance comes about in that same psychical continuum (or chain or

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1. Since the effect always succeeds the cause according to him, and since the 'impression' is the cause and perception the effect in this case.

series='santāna') in which its seed has been laid by an antecedent experience.<sup>1</sup> Since recognition and the other mental activities we have discussed on p. 97-98 are all based on memory, there is no incongruity in explaining them from the stand point of the doctrine of mementariness.<sup>2</sup>

But have the authors really been able to give a valid explanation of remembrance? In our opinion it is essential that the person who remembers a certain fact is identical, with the person who experienced it on a previous occasion despite the fact that the two different descriptions of the identical person at different times do have some logical differences. Otherwise we shall be faced with the contradiction that a person remembers what another has experienced. The reason why the Buddhist philosopher is reluctant to admit their identity is that, according to him, identity is not compatible with any sort of change whatsoever. He contends that the alteration of any particular quality of a particular object implies a total alteration of the object itself. But there is, as a matter of fact, a whole philosophy behind the proposition that 'a thing can

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1. "Yatra santāne paṭīyasā'nubhavenottarottara-viśiṣṭa -tara-tama-kṣaṇotpādād-smṛtyādi-bījamāhitam tatraiva smaraṇādayaḥ samutpadyante nānyatra pratiniyatatvāt kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvasyeti samāsārthaḥ". TSP, p.184, lines 6-8. Cf. Jha's translation, p.315.

2. Cf. TSP, p.184, line 9. Cf. Jha's translation, p.315.

survive the alteration of some of its properties'.<sup>1</sup> And as long as the Buddhist philosophers have not refuted the claim of these philosophers successfully, we cannot say that the Buddhist philosophers have been able to answer the objection brought against their stand-point. It is not very clear what Kamalaśīla means by a 'santāna' or 'psychical continuum' or 'chain'. If, per impossible<sup>i</sup>, he means by it something over and above the discrete mental states, then he will be in a better position to explain memory. If, on the other hand, he means by it the flow of ever-changing discrete states, then he cannot escape the charge that he is making the contradictory statement that the person who remembers is one person and that he that has experienced is another.

We have examined the arguments of Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla in quite some detail. Our examination has revealed to us that they have not been able to give a satisfactory explanation of causation. The main reason for this failure is their denial of the concepts of agency, production and efficacy. Causation has been reduced by them to 'constant conjunction' or 'unvarying sequence'. And it is our contention that causation cannot be analysed, without residue, in terms of 'constant conjunction' or 'unvarying sequence', inasmuch as such an analysis leaves out of account a vital aspect of

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1. Aristotle's philosophy is, for example, ~~is~~ behind such a proposition. See his treatment of 'substance', 'quality', 'accident' in various places of his Metaphysics and Posterior Analytics.

causation, viz. the aspect of production. Without the concept of production the whole superstructure of the concept of causation would seem to tumble down. Events that are 'constantly conjoined' or 'unvaryingly precede or succeed one another' are not necessarily related by the relation of the producer and the product. The authors have tried to give some explanation of causation while at the same time denying production, agency and causal efficacy (and reducing causation to 'unvarying sequence'). We have examined their arguments in detail and have found them unconvincing. We shall argue at length against the attempt to explain causation while at the same breath denying production in Chapter VI.

### Section iii

#### Similarity Between Hume's Causal Theory and that Propounded

#### by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla

We have so far seen how Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla have tried to formulate a theory of causation while at the same time denying production and causal efficacy. The same attempt is noticeable in Hume's reasonings as well, as is evident from our discussion of Hume's theory of causation in Chapter I. Hume has relentlessly argued that an occult entity like causal power is not amenable to sense-perception in any case of causation.<sup>1</sup> It is in

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1. See Chapter I, pp. 36-41, 42-43, 45 esp.



the same spirit that Śāntarākṣita argues, that if you attribute a mysterious property called 'efficacy', to the thing known as the 'cause' when no such 'efficacy' is in fact detected by the senses, then why do you not attribute such a property to many other things which are evidently not causes?<sup>1</sup>

Rejecting the utility of the concept of causal power or operation, Kamalaśīla has argued that the only basis for the relation of cause and effect consists in immediate sequence.<sup>2</sup> He has qualified this statement later by adding that, only that sequence is causal, which is constant as well.<sup>3</sup> And we should note the striking similarity of arguments such as these with Hume's statements equating causation with constant conjunction. Compare these arguments, for example, with the following remarks of Hume in the Enquiry and Treatise.<sup>4</sup> In the Enquiry he writes, a cause is "an object, followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects, similar to the second."<sup>5</sup> In the Treatise again, he writes, "We may define a cause to be an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedency and

1. See p.102,n.1 and TSP, p. 178, verse 524.
2. See p.114 and TSP, p. 180.
3. See pp.114-115, and TSP, p. 180.
4. We have already quoted these arguments in Chapter I. See p.52.
5. Enquiry, p. 76. Italics as in the original.

contiguity to those that resemble the latter."<sup>1</sup> Again, he writes in the Treatise, "It is experience of the constant conjunction between flame and heat in the past that makes us call the one 'cause' and the other effect."<sup>2</sup>

Both Hume on the one hand, and Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla on the other, denied causal operation, efficacy, and as a consequence, concepts of agents and production. In our view rejection of concepts of agents and production in both Hume's philosophy, and in that of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, is no accidental coincidence. It is prompted by, among other reasons, the rejection of the concept of non-changing substances which Hume and Buddhist philosophers including Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla held in common.

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1. Treatise, p. 70.

2. Treatise, p.164. Italics ours.

CHAPTER IIIMILL'S THEORY OF CAUSATION.Section iExposition of Mill's Theory

In discussing Hume's theory of causation we have seen that he rejected the concept of causal efficacy and reduced causal relations to relations of uniform sequence between events. But Hume took far too simple a view of what it is that is found to recur in causal sequences. He so often wrote as if it were pairs of single events which are related by way of unvarying sequence. Mill corrects this naive view and rightly insists that, "It is seldom, if ever, between a consequent and a single antecedent, that this unvarying sequence subsists. It is usually between a consequent and the sum of several antecedents; the concurrence of all of them being requisite to produce, that is, to be followed by, the consequent."<sup>1</sup>

Mill is not, in effect, abandoning Hume's 'unvarying sequence view' of causation, but rather trying to reformulate it in a more accurate way. We frequently speak of a single event as causing another. Yet we never find that whenever a single event occurs it is 'invariably' followed by another. If a person dies from eating a certain

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1. SL, vol.I, p.378.

food, we call the eating the cause of his death. Yet there need not be any invariable connection between someone's eating this food and his subsequent death. But of course, "there certainly is, among the circumstances which took place, some connection or other on which death is invariably consequent; as for instance, the act of eating of the dish, combined with a particular bodily constitution, a particular state of the present health, and perhaps even a certain state of the atmosphere; the whole of which circumstances perhaps constituted in this particular case the conditions of the phenomena, or in other words, the set of antecedents which determined it, and but for which it would not have happened." <sup>1</sup> Thus what causal generalisations inform us of is simply that an occurrence of a given kind regularly follows when a complex set of conditions is satisfied. Each of the members of this complex set of conditions, from which we usually select one as the cause, is required to complete the set. Each is, in a sense, in the same position with regard to the effect. Each is equally necessary to bring about the effect.

Mill claims that there is no philosophical justification for the distinction between the cause and conditions which we ordinarily make. The lack of any philosophical

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1. SL, vol.I, p.367. Italics as in the original.

ground for the distinction between the cause and the conditions of an event, he says, is shown by the "capricious manner" in which we select <sup>1</sup> one of the conditions from a set and designate it 'the cause'. <sup>2</sup> He considers the case of the falling of a stone in water, and shows that numerous conditions can be singled out and called the cause of the stone's falling. <sup>3</sup> Take for example, the condition of the presence of the earth. It can be said with full propriety that the fall of the stone is caused by the earth or by a power or property or force exerted by it. Then there is another condition that the stone must be at a particular

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1. Although Mill calls this selection "capricious", yet he admits that common-sense adheres to some principle or other in its choice of one condition among many as a 'cause'. Usually, people call that particular condition a 'cause' "whose share in the matter is superficially the most conspicuous." (SL, vol. I p.381) And this mostly happens to be the proximate event occurring immediately before the effect. Yet he warns us that we must not think that in the employment of the word 'cause' one always adheres to this or any other rule. (SL, vol. I, p.391) In the footnote on p.372 of The System of Logic, vol. I, he suggests that people usually designate those factors of a causal situation 'conditions' which they are already aware of in their causal enquiry. In contrast, those factors which they require to be informed of as formerly unknown to them in their causal enquiry, they tend to call 'causes'. "When in the inaccuracy of common discourse we are led to speak of some one condition of a phenomenon as its cause, the condition so spoken of is always one which it is at least possible that the hearer may require to be informed of."
  2. SL, vol. I, p.380.
  3. SL, vol. I, pp. 380-381.

distance from the earth so that the earth's attraction preponderates over the attractive power of some other body. Accordingly we may correctly say that the cause of the stone's falling is its being within the sphere of the earth's attraction. Moreover, it is a further condition of the stone's reaching the bottom of the water that its specific gravity exceed that of the surrounding fluid. Thus one can easily mention this fact about the stone's specific gravity as the cause of its falling.

A cause is thus, philosophically speaking, the totality of a set of conditions, which being fulfilled, the event invariably follows. This set need not consist of positive conditions only. It may contain negative conditions as well. By 'negative conditions' is meant the absence of any 'preventing' or 'counteracting causes'. For example, if a garrison of soldiers is defeated by the sudden attack of the enemy at night, it is possible that the garrison would not have been defeated if the sentinel had not been off his post. His being off his post was no producing cause, but the mere absence of a counteracting cause, and hence the 'negative condition' of the garrison's defeat. The sets of conditions responsible for the consequent occurrences of events always include one or more 'negative conditions' as well (a special enumeration of which is generally very prolix). In accordance with this, Mill defines a cause as "the sum

total of the conditions, positive and negative together; the whole of the contingencies of every description, which being realised the consequent invariably follows."<sup>1</sup>

We should also bear in mind that we must not, as Hume seems to have done,<sup>2</sup> confine the word 'cause' to events or objects only. The word is in fact applicable to persistent states as well. Among the conditions bringing about, for example, an accident, we can very easily include such states as the icy condition of the road where the accident took place. Mill, in his discussion of the causal conditions of a phenomenon, insists on this particular feature of them, and offers an account of how people resort to various logical fictions like that of a 'force' in order to avoid the necessity of calling antecedent states of phenomena their causes.

People usually think that since the states or other conditions of an effect may have pre-existed for an indefinite length of time before the effect actually comes into being, therefore they cannot be supposed to bring it about. They seem to precede the effect and wait for the advent of that event which was requisite to complete the required concurrence of conditions. As contrasted with them, the change or event which takes place immediately before the effect appears, seems to be a "condition the fulfilment of which complets the tale."<sup>3</sup> As soon as it occurs, "no

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vol. 1,  
1. SL, p.383.      2. See Ch.I, Passim. See specially p.34,n.1.  
3. SL , vol.I, p.379

other cause is waited for, but the effect begins immediately to take place."<sup>1</sup> For all these reasons they prefer to bestow the title of a 'cause' on an event which implies a change in the preceding circumstances rather than on a static entity. Thus instead of saying that the earth causes the fall of bodies, "they ascribe it to a force exerted by the earth, or an attraction by the earth, abstractions which they can present to themselves as exhausted by each effort, and therefore constituting at each successive instant a fresh act."<sup>2</sup> But though we may think proper to ascribe the title of 'cause' to that one condition, the fulfilment of which completes the tale, this condition has, Mill says, actually no closer connection to the effect, than any of the other conditions. In his own words, "the production of the consequent required that they should all exist immediately previous, though not that they should all begin to exist immediately previous."<sup>3</sup>

Causal relations are thus analysed by Mill in terms of invariable succession between sets of antecedent conditions, (be they events or objects or states), and consequent phenomena. In doing so, he is remaining true to the tradition

1. SL, vol. I, p.379

2. SL, vol. I, p.382. Italics as in the original.

3. SL, vol. I, p.366, 1868 edition<sup>(only)</sup>. Italics as in the original.



which he inherits from his empiricist predecessors<sup>1</sup> like Hume and Berkeley. Causes do not, according to Hume and Berkeley,<sup>2</sup> possess any 'force' or 'efficacy'. And the necessity that is traditionally thought of as characterising the causal relation does not lie in the terms of the relation<sup>3</sup>, but in a law, a uniformity, or a rule under which the terms are subsumed.<sup>4</sup> Hume, in particular, and Berkeley, both held that the so-called causal relation between phenomena consists only of succession between them.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Like Hume, Mill also explains that the word 'produces' means nothing but 'is followed by'. See SL, vol. I, p.378. See also p.126, present chapter.
  2. Berkeley, Principles, XXV and XXVI.
  3. For Berkeley, see Principles, XXI and XXV.
  4. For Berkeley, see Principles, XXXI.
  5. We must speak here with some reservation as far as Berkeley is concerned. Natural phenomena are, according to Berkeley, 'causes improperly so called'. The only true cause, according to him, is God. For only conscious beings, creatures having intentions and exercising their wills, can properly be said to make things happen. It makes no sense to ascribe real 'power' or 'agency' to inanimate things. But it is clear that a man does not himself make, for example, the idea of boiling water ensue upon the ideas of fire and heat. He has no control over them. These ideas must therefore be caused somehow. Berkeley comes forward with the theory that they are caused by God. But although it is an absurdity to say that one idea makes another idea occur, we can very well treat the occurrence of certain ideas as signs that other ideas will occur subsequently. This is so because God's operations are regular and uniform. As Berkeley says, "Now the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the laws of nature: and these we learn by experience, which teaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such ideas, in the ordinary course of things." (Principles, sec. XXX). Italics as in the original.

The empiricist philosophers are, at this stage, faced with a difficulty. If causal relations are equivalent to unvarying sequences between phenomena, are we to suppose, in that case, that any case of unvarying sequence would qualify as a case of causal connection? Such an objection was in fact brought by Thomas Reid against the view of interpreting causal relations in terms of unvarying sequence. Reid argued<sup>1</sup> that if we define causation in terms of 'invariable sequence', then it would imply that night is the cause of day, and day the cause of night, inasmuch as these phenomena have followed one another from the beginning. "But it is necessary," Mill says, "to our using the word cause, that we should believe not only that the antecedent always has been followed by the consequent, but that as long as the present constitution of things<sup>2</sup> endures, it always will be so. And this would not be true of day and night."<sup>3</sup> Night and day could, under some imaginable circumstances, cease to follow one another without any violation of the ultimate laws of nature. Their succession is not an ultimate fact but derivative.

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1. This argument of Reid is in fact presented here in the form in which Mill quotes it in his SL, vol. I, p. 390.
  2. By 'the present constitution of things' Mill means the 'ultimate laws of nature as distinguished from the derivative laws and their collocations'. SL, Vol. I. p. 391, foot-note.
  3. SL, vol. I. p. 391.

Certain additional conditions need to be fulfilled if day is to follow night. These additional conditions are factors like 'the existence of the sun (or some such luminous body) above the horizon'; there being 'no opaque medium in a straight line between the (luminous) body and the part of the earth where we are situated.'<sup>1</sup> Day will follow night if and only if these conditions are fulfilled. The day's succeeding the night is thus conditional. If the conditions which make day possible (such as, the sun's being above the horizon, there being no intervening object between the sun and the earth), had not been fulfilled, then we might have had night eternally. Night will thus not be followed by day under all circumstances. If, on the other hand, the conditions which make day possible had been fulfilled perpetually, then we would have had day only, without any night to follow it.

If a case is to be, on the other hand, a case of causation, the consequent will have to follow the antecedent under all circumstances. And this is possible only if the consequent follows the antecedent unconditionally. Strictly speaking, an antecedent is not an 'invariable' one if it is not unconditional as well.<sup>2</sup>

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1. SL, vol.I, p.391.

2. SL, vol.I, p.393. "Let me add, that the antecedent which is only conditionally invariable, is not the invariable antecedent."

"Invariable sequence, therefore, is not synonymous with causation, unless the sequence, besides being invariable, is unconditional".<sup>1</sup>

"We may define, therefore," Mill says, "the cause of a phenomenon, to be the antecedent, or the concurrence of antecedents, on which it is invariably and unconditionally consequent."<sup>2</sup>

We must pause here a little in order to ascertain the full significance of the words 'invariably' and 'unconditionally' in this context. It is obvious that Mill is trying to make a distinction between two senses of the word 'invariable'. One sense is that in which Mill is speaking of a sequence being 'conditionally invariable'.<sup>3</sup> [In this sense we should, strictly speaking, only use the word 'unvarying' ; because if a sequence is dependent on certain conditions, then a report of that sequence is not a report of what would have happened under any conditions, actual or possible. Hence the word 'invariable', which has a modal sense, i.e. which refers to what must happen, under any circumstances, actual or imaginary, cannot be applied to such a sequence.] The sense in which a causal sequence is 'invariable'

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1. SL, vol.I, p.392.

2. SL, vol.I, p.392. Italics as in the original.

3. See p.134, n.2.

in Mill's opinion is, on the other hand, that in which the consequent will always follow the antecedent as long as the present constitution of things endures.<sup>1</sup> And this invariability of sequence can be found, in his opinion, only in cases where the antecedent and consequent are unconditionally related.<sup>2</sup> But the question is, what does Mill mean by an antecedent that is 'unconditionally and invariably' followed by a consequent? Mill possibly means by this an antecedent that not only is followed by its consequent in this actual world of ours, but will be so followed even in all physically possible worlds which have the same laws of nature as ours. A sequence is invariable and unconditional if it holds good in any possible worlds, including even worlds which have different initial conditions from our world, but nevertheless have the same laws of nature as ours. But one thing is certain. Mill does not mean by an invariable sequence a sequence that is to be found in all physically possible as well as logically possible worlds; because a logically possible world may not only have different initial conditions from ours, but even different laws of nature from ours. An invariable sequence is, in accordance with Mill's use of the term 'invariable', confined to worlds which must have the same laws of nature as our own.

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1. See p. 133 .

2. See p. 134 .

So far we have written as if Mill had defined causation solely in terms of 'invariable sequence' or 'succession' of phenomena. But Mill has in fact observed that cause and effect are not always successive, but can be contemporaneous as well. In some cases, the cause may cease to exist when the effect appears. For example, the striking of the match is no longer there when the ignition comes about. Yet, the cause need not always perish when the effect comes into existence. As a result, the cause is bound to co-exist with the effect in those cases. Examples of such cases of the contemporaneity of the cause and the effect are cases where parents may just co-exist with their offsprings, but are not causally active any more. There are also certain cases which seem to imply not only that causes may, but also that they must, be contemporaneous with their effects. For example, the temperature which forces up the mercury in a thermometer, must be continued in order to sustain it in the exact position. The question then arises, can we, in that case, insist on causation being confined to cases of successive phenomena alone?

Some cases of simultaneous causation need not obviously bother Mill. Such are cases where the cause need not necessarily disappear as soon as the effect comes into being, and where the continuance of the cause which brings about the effect is necessary

to the continuance of the effect itself; because, in such cases, the effect need not necessarily come into being at exactly the same time as the cause. The case which does bother Mill then is that in which "an effect may commence simultaneously with its cause."<sup>1</sup> How can he insist on the temporal precedence of the cause in the face of such an example?

Mill ultimately has to grant that temporal succession is not a distinguishing mark of causation. He grants that "there certainly are cases in which the effect follows without any interval perceptible by our faculties." Yet, he maintains that, "even granting that an effect may commence simultaneously with its cause, the view I have taken of causation is in no way practically affected."<sup>2</sup> "I have no objection to define a cause, the assemblage of phenomena, which occurring, some other phenomenon invariably commences or has its origin. Whether the effect coincides in point of time with, or immediately follows, the hindmost of its conditions, is immaterial. At all events it does not precede it."<sup>3</sup> Yet, in spite of all this, Mill always refers to causation as 'invariable and unconditional sequence' giving one thereby the impression that he regards

1. SL, Vol. I p. 397.

2. SL, Vol. I, p. 397.

3. SL, Vol. I, p. 397.

succession as the fundamental element in causation.

Mill warns us that we must not think that an event of a given kind must always be brought about by one set of conditions only. In fact an event of a particular kind may be caused by several phenomena at different times. The effect 'a', may sometimes arise from A, and sometimes from B. "Many causes may produce motion: many causes may produce some kinds of sensation: many causes may produce death. A given effect may really be produced by a certain cause, and yet perfectly capable of being produced without it."<sup>1</sup>

### Section ii

#### Defects in Mill's Theory of Causation

Although Mill's analysis is in many ways a remarkable improvement on that of Hume, yet we must admit that it suffers from some major defects as well. In our opinion these defects stem mainly from Mill's denial of concepts like production and efficacy. Denying such concepts, Mill tries to define causation in terms of 'invariable and unconditional' sequence or relatedness.

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1. SL, vol. I, p.505.



Yet, we shall see that Mill will have to encounter insuperable difficulties if he attempts to do such a thing. If, on the other hand, he could have justified admitting concepts like production and producer,<sup>1</sup> then he would not have to have recourse to such an artificial device as 'invariable and unconditional relatedness'. He could have analysed causal relations in a much more realistic way.

In the following pages we shall mention a few of those defects (depending to a considerable extent on the account given of them by Professors Hart and Honoré).<sup>2</sup>

In the first place, we must note that Mill's ideal of 'invariable and unconditional sequence' of phenomena can never be achieved in practice. Even a scientist can hardly discover causal uniformities that will hold good even if all other initial conditions, apart from the conditions that are followed by the effects, were different. In order to be able to find such a set of conditions as will be unconditionally and invariably followed by a certain effect, he will have to say that all other conditions (all other

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1. Mill's rejection of the concept of production is evident from his analysis of the word 'produce' as 'to be followed by'. See p.126. See also SL, vol.I, p.378.

2. See 'Causation in the Law', Hart and Honoré, pp. 20-23, 29, 42.

things, events or states), apart from those specified in the set, are irrelevant for the production of the event. But even if we succeed in discovering some persistent feature of the universe say, for example, the motion of the planets, it will be impossible to say that if this were to change, some causal generalisation or other will not be affected thereby, and so whether a full statement of the generalisation should include it. And it is quite possible that many similar states are still undetected to this day, as cosmic radiation was till recently.

Moreover, one will be faced with a very serious difficulty if one regards Mill's analysis of causation as an account of common-sense notions of causation. The unqualified definition of cause in terms of invariable sequence does not correspond to the way in which causal notions are sometimes used by the ordinary man. An ordinary man does, for example, on some occasions, specify the icy condition of a road as the cause of an accident. When he does so, he is not, by any means, making statements like, 'whenever there is an icy patch on a road, it invariably causes an accident.' Of course, universal statements of that sort can be formulated, even in those cases, by taking into consideration other necessary conditions,

such as a particular speed with which the car is to be driven, absence of certain counteracting causes and so on. But when an ordinary man specifies a cause in the way we have referred to above, he merely means that the icy patch is the unusual factor which is causally responsible for the accident. He does not consider as causes the other necessary conditions which are present in all cases of accidents due to the icy conditions of the roads. Instead, he picks out that unusual factor which is present only in the case of the accident, but not in that of the normal happening, and calls it the 'cause'.

Singular statements are not, for the above reason, considered unjustified if statements of 'invariable and unconditional sequence' cannot be produced in their defence. No one will, for example, consider a layman's statement that a fall on the staircase caused the fracture in a man's leg unjustified or unwarranted, if there is no proposition of the form that 'falls of such a kind are invariably and unconditionally followed by fractured legs of such a kind', which can be produced to defend his causal statement.

As a matter of fact, a layman does not even always know all the conditions that need to be fulfilled if a fall is to result in a fracture. Mill's suggestion, therefore, that common-sense

'selects' one single condition from among a set of jointly sufficient conditions as cause is very misleading. What usually happens is that, after causes have been identified, we gradually come to know, through experience and possibly by being told by experts, that there were, in the causal situation, certain other conditions without which the particular effect might not have taken place. We call a particular thing or event 'cause' from the start, before we come to know of the other necessary conditions. When we learn later, for example, that the fall would not have been sufficient to produce the fracture unless the bone was of a particular structure and the fall was of a particular character, we do not abandon our initial causal statement. We simply have to admit that we were ignorant of these further conditions about the structure of the bone and the particular character of the fall, and yet we called the fall the cause of the fracture.

1. See p.128.

CHAPTER IVPOINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN THEORIES OF CAUSATION INTRODUCED  
BY MILL AND RUSSELL AND RELEVANT ASPECTS OF BUDDHIST CAUSAL  
THEORIES.Section iEmphasis on the Multiplicity of Conditions in both Mill's Theory  
and in the Causal Theories Developed by 'Theravāda' and  
'Sarvāstivāda' philosophy.

Mill's view of causation, as presented in the last chapter is very similar in many respects to the different causal theories developed by various Buddhist schools of thought. To start with, rejection of concepts like causal power and production is a common feature of the causal theories developed by all schools of Buddhism and those developed by philosophers of the empiricist tradition like Hume and Mill.<sup>1</sup> Both these sets of causal theories have stressed that the pivotal point of causation is not production

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1. Rejection of the concepts of production and efficacy is explicit in the school to which Sāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla belonged. The 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools, however, did not deny production and efficacy explicitly. Yet they have completely omitted these concepts from their causal explanations.

but simply 'unvarying succession' or 'constant conjunction'.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from this general resemblance, the causal theories advanced by certain schools of Buddhism resemble Mill's causal theory in certain specific points. For example, the point on which there is a close similarity between Mill's causal theory and the theories developed by the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools is their emphasis that the causal relation does not subsist between pairs of single events or objects, but that "it is usually between a consequent and the sum of several antecedents that this relationship subsists". This sum of antecedents is, in Mill's special terminology "the conditions of the phenomena, ... but for which it would not have happened."<sup>2</sup> The cause is, according to Mill, one of the conditions of this set, which common sense singles out and calls the cause, ignoring the other factors or conditions which are equally necessary for the production of the thing called 'effect'.

Mill was virtually<sup>3</sup> the first among British empiricists to turn our attention to this important aspect of causation, namely, that the 'concurrence' of both that which is popularly called the

1. Mill and some Buddhist schools (see ch. III, pp.137-38; present chapter, pp.158, 189-190) admitted the possibility of the simultaneous origin of the cause and the effect in some cases.
2. See SL, vol.I, p.367.
3. Hume sometimes vaguely spoke about them (as the 'occasions' of occurrences). See Treatise, Book I, part III, p.171.

cause and those which are called the conditions, is 'requisite to produce, that is, to be followed by the consequent'.<sup>1</sup> It is in the same spirit that the Buddhist philosopher says, "no one thing comes from one (other) single thing: from a totality everything arises." ("Na kiñcid ekam ekasmāt, samagryāḥ sarva-sampatteḥ").<sup>2</sup> This 'totality' consists of 'conditions', or, what is technically known in Buddhist philosophical terminology as 'pratyayas' (Pāli, 'paccayas').

The 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers introduced a very subtle point at this stage about the nature of conditions which is not very clearly stressed in the 'Theravāda' philosophy. They pointed out that the assemblage of conditions responsible for the emergence of a particular 'dharma' consists not only of the presence of some conditions, but also of the absence of certain preventing conditions (known in Mill's philosophy as the 'negative conditions' of an effect). And there seems to be a remarkable agreement between Mill and the Buddhist philosophers on this point that the causal phenomena responsible for the emergence of an effect invariably contains, besides a group of positive conditions, some negative

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1. See SL, Vol.I, p.367.

2. Nyāyabinduṭīkā, see BL, Vol.I, p.127.

conditions as well. The idea of a 'negative condition' is suggested in the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophy with the help of the 'general cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') and 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya').

We shall discuss in detail the concept of a 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') and 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya') later.<sup>1</sup>

But in order to show that the 'Sarvāstivāda' school anticipated Mill's concept of a 'negative condition' we need first to give a critical analysis of the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' theories of conditions.

#### Section ii

#### Critical Analysis of the 'Theravāda' Theory of the Multiplicity of Conditions.

The definition of a 'cause' as the sum total of several factors led to further developments in the 'Theravāda' theory of causation. The 'Theravādins' analysed twenty four ways in which something may condition, or be causally responsible for, the emergence of something else. Accordingly, the 'Theravādins' recognised twenty four conditions or 'paccayas'. Before we undertake a critical analysis of these 'paccayas' (conditions), we would like to make an

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1. See pp. 177-79, 182-88.



important observation regarding the 'Theravāda' analysis of 'paccayas' (conditions). The different categories of 'paccayas' were enumerated by the 'Theravāda' philosophers in accordance with the different questions that arise in our mind regarding the nature of the relationship between the cause and the effect. But the 'Theravāda' enumeration of the 'paccayas' suffers from the following defect:

Certain things and events are grouped by the 'Theravāda' philosophers under one category of 'paccaya' because they condition certain other things and events in a particular way. For example, certain things and events condition their effects by preceding them and helping these succeeding factors to come into existence. Certain other things and events, on the other hand, condition the existence of their effects at exactly the same time as they themselves come into being. Hence from the temporal point of view the 'Theravādins' enumerated two categories of conditions ('paccayas'), (5) 'the immediately antecedent-condition' and (6) 'the simultaneous-condition'. (See p.152). The enumeration of these two categories of conditions thus owes its origin to the question, what sort of temporal relationship a cause has to its effect? But one may also want to know, what other relationships there may be between the cause and the effect? In answer to such a question the 'Theravādins' say that certain things and events cause their effects in such a way that the effects alone depend on their causes

in a unique way. Such things and events are said by the 'Theravāda' philosophers to act as (8) 'supporting-conditions'. However, certain other things and events, the 'Theravādins' say, are in the relation of mutual dependence with their effects. Such things and events act as 'mutuality-conditions'. (See pp. 159-160 in this connection). Now it may very easily be the case that the same things and events which have been grouped under one of the two categories of 'paccayas' made from the temporal viewpoint, may also be grouped under one of the two categories made from the point of view of the nature of the dependence of the effect on the cause. (See pp. 158<sup>6c</sup> and 166 in this connection.) In this way, the different classes of conditions sometimes tend to overlap.

#### The Twenty Four 'Paccayas' (Conditions).

In the 'Theravāda' literature speculations about <sup>the</sup> different 'paccayas' are embodied in the work called the 'Paṭṭhāna'.<sup>1</sup> We

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1. The full name of the book is 'Paṭṭhānapakarana' or 'Mahāpakarana', and it is the seventh and the last book of the 'Abhidhamma-pitaka'. The 'paccayas' have also been enumerated succinctly by Nyānatiloka, in his Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka. I have referred mainly to this book and the Visuddhimagga in my exposition of the 'paccayas'.

shall do well to remember that the following classification of the different conditions was chiefly concerned with mental processes and their conditions, because of the overriding importance of mental attitudes in their systems. The four 'pratyayas' mentioned in the 'Sarvāstivāda' work, 'Abhidharmakośa recur in both 'Sarvāstivāda' and 'Theravāda' classification of conditions. In our analysis of the 'Theravāda' enumeration of the conditions we shall mark these four conditions with asterisks. It seems that the four 'pratyayas' represent a very broad classification of conditions while their sub-divisions, either in the form of further 'pratyayas' or in the form of 'hetus' (causes) provide a more detailed analysis of the different conditions.

The twenty four conditions mentioned by the 'Theravādins' are as follows:

1. Root-condition ('Hetu-paccaya')
2. Object-condition ('Ārammaṇa-paccaya)
3. Dominating-condition ('Adhipati-paccaya')
4. Antecedent-condition ('Anantara-paccaya')
5. Immediately antecedent-condition ('Samanantara-paccaya')
6. Simultaneous-condition ('Sahajāta-paccaya')
7. Mutuality-condition ('Aññamañña-paccaya')
8. Supporting-condition ('Nissaya-paccaya')
9. Decisive supporting-condition ('Upanissaya-paccaya')

10. Prenascent-condition ('Pure jāta-paccaya')
11. Postnascent-condition ('Pacchā jāta-paccaya')
12. Repetition-condition ('Āsevana-paccaya')
13. Action-condition ('Kamma-paccaya')
14. Retribution-condition ('Vipāka-paccaya')
15. Nutriment-condition ('Ahāra-paccaya')
16. Predominant-condition ('Indriya-paccaya')
17. Meditation-condition ('Jhāna-paccaya')
18. Path-condition ('Magga-paccaya')
19. Closely associated-condition ('Sampayutta-paccaya')
20. Dissociated-condition ('Vippayutta-paccaya')
21. Presence-condition ('Atthi-paccaya')
22. Absence-condition ('Natthi-paccaya')
23. Disappearance-condition ('Vigata-paccaya')
24. Non-disappearance-condition ('Avigata-paccaya').

\*(1) 'Root-condition' ('hetu-paccaya') is the first of the twenty four conditions enumerated in the 'Paṭṭhāna'. This is described in the Visuddhimagga as a condition which helps the arising of a state in the manner of a root ('mūla').<sup>1</sup> Greed ('lobha'), hatred or aversion ('dosa')<sup>2</sup> and delusion ('moha') are described in the Paṭṭhāna

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1. VM, vol. I, p. 533.

2. Sanskrit 'dveṣa'.

as the roots of demeritorious ('akusala') phenomena. The underlying significance is probably this: Life is seen in Buddhism as 'unrest' ('dukkha');<sup>1</sup> and the 'root-cause' or ultimate cause of this 'unrest' is viewed as consisting of demeritorious factors like greed, aversion, and delusion. Meritorious events and phenomena are, on the other hand, rooted in the contraries of this triad, viz, absence of greed, absence of aversion, and absence of delusion. The 'root-condition' can thus be viewed as the primary cause of a series of secondary causes which result ultimately in the origination of a particular effect.

Another strand in the meaning of this 'root-condition' is that states which are rooted in these conditions are very firmly fixed, like trees with deep roots.<sup>2</sup>

The classification of events, states, etc. into the other twenty three conditions has been made from different viewpoints. Sometimes the classification is made from the epistemological position. The \*(2) 'object-condition' and the (16) 'pre-dominant-condition' correspond to this viewpoint. Sometimes the enumeration of conditions is made with the object of explaining the continuity and maturity of

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1. Sanskrit 'duḥkha'. See CCB, pp.48f.

2. VM, p.533.

thought-processes. The (4) 'antecedent'-, \*(5) 'immediately antecedent'-, (12) 'repetition'-, (22) 'absence'-, and (23) 'disappearance-conditions' correspond to this view-point. At other times the enumeration of conditions is made from the point of view of determining the time of the origination of the effect. While some conditions cause their effects as soon as they themselves come into being (viz. the (6) 'simultaneous-conditions'), others, [e.g. the (10) 'prenascent-conditions'], invariably precede their effects. Another enumeration of conditions is prompted by the motive of showing that whereas in the majority of cases the effect comes into being through its dependence on the conditions (e.g. as in the case of the effect of a (8) 'supporting condition'), in some cases (e.g. in that corresponding to (7) the 'mutuality-condition'), the condition and the effect are interdependent. Classes of \*(3) 'dominating'- and (9) 'decisive supporting-condition' are brought in to explain the phenomenon of the strong influence exerted by certain conditions on their effects.<sup>1</sup> Although usually conditions help the conditioned by their presence (e.g. the (21) 'presence'- and the (23) 'non-disappearance-conditions'), some help the arising of the conditioned phenomena by their absence (e.g. the (22) 'absence'- and the (24) 'disappearance-conditions'). We must also point out that

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1. See p.161, n.1.

sometimes the 'Theravāda' scholastics have unnecessarily multiplied the categories of conditions<sup>1</sup> by creating a contrary to almost every class of positive conditions they could discover. Thus corresponding to the (21) 'presence-condition' and the (10) 'prenascent-condition' they have the (22) 'absence-condition' and the (11) 'postnascent conditions'. We should make a detailed analysis of the remaining twenty three conditions in order to appreciate their full significance.

Of the two categories named from the epistemological view-point, \*(2) 'object-condition' ('ārammaṇa<sup>2</sup>-paccaya') is described as that condition which helps the origination of perceptual processes like seeing, hearing, smelling. Thus the objects of these processes (together with other factors) help their origination. Objects like colour, form, sound, smell are therefore described as 'object-conditions' in 'Theravāda' works. 'Object-conditions' of abstract thinking are however, according to 'Theravāda' philosophy, abstract ideas.

The etymological meaning of 'ārammaṇa-paccaya' is however 'supporting-condition'. This special designation of this category is due to the fact that conditions like colours, forms, sounds,

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1. See p.162<sup>163</sup>- below.

2. Sanskrit 'ālambana'.

abstract ideas are described in 'Theravāda' works as 'supporting' the respective mental phenomena arising due to them. Thus it is stated in the Visuddhimagga, 'Just as a weak man gets up and stands upright with the support of a stick or a rope, so a particular consciousness' and its 'concomitants'<sup>1</sup> arise and continue to exist depending on supports like form (or colour).<sup>2</sup>

The second category corresponding to the epistemological view-point is that of (16) the 'predominant-conditions' ('indriya-paccayas'). This class refers mainly to the five sense-organs as opposed to their corresponding objects.

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1. 'Citta' and 'cetasikas' (Sanskrit 'caitasikas'). According to the 'Theravādins' a 'particular consciousness' ('citta') is invariably accompanied by a number of 'concomitant mental phenomena' ('cetasikas'). Whenever there is a particular act of consciousness it is accompanied by certain mental phenomena like 'feeling' ('vedanā'), 'conception' ('saññā', Sanskrit 'saṃjñā'), 'volition' ('cetanā'), 'correlation of the sense-organs and their corresponding objects' ('phassa', Sanskrit 'sparśa'). These 'concomitant mental phenomena' are called 'cetasika dhammas' by the 'Theravādins'. They are well described by Macgovern in A Manual of Buddhist philosophy (see pp.137-162). Such a theory of 'concomitants' probably arises from observations of the form that cases of bare and simple intellectual awareness are extremely rare. Intellectual awareness is so intimately bound up with aesthetic appreciation, feelings and conative responses, that it is extremely difficult to disentangle the purely intellectual aspects of our awareness from its usual associates, viz., aesthetic appreciation, feelings and conative responses.
  2. VM, p.533. Translation ours.



We have already said (see p.153) that five factors explain the continuity and maturity of thought-processes. The first of them consists of the (4) 'antecedent condition' ('anantara-paccaya'). This condition refers to a phenomenon which aids other succeeding phenomena by its proximity. There is a certain order in our thought-processes. The 'antecedent-condition' is introduced to explain this order. The previous stages of a particular thought-process help the next ones by preceding them; for without their doing so, the due pattern of the thought-process cannot be maintained.<sup>1</sup> If some other extraneous element intervened, for example, between the particular stages of our perception from the first moment of the 'correlation' of the sense-organ and the object,<sup>2</sup> to the final full-fledged perception,<sup>3</sup> we could not have the particular perception that we do in fact have.

The \*(5) 'immediately antecedent-condition' ('samanantara-paccaya') is a collective name of all those elements of a particular 'stream of thought' which precede their successive elements absolutely immediately<sup>4</sup> (i. e. with nothing in between) and help the continuity

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1. See BII, pp.152-153.
  2. See Ch. V, pp.234-235.
  3. This is obviously the account of perception according to 'Theravāda' philosophy.
  4. As opposed to the 'antecedent conditions' which refer merely to the preceding elements.

of the 'stream'.

Another factor which explains the maturity of a thought-process or a mental phenomenon is the (12) 'repetition-condition' ('āsevana-paccaya'). This refers to a phenomenon (repetition) which facilitates certain mental processes like learning and remembering by frequency.<sup>1</sup> Another example of this conditioning is the way the frequent making of meritorious volitions facilitates the making of similar meritorious volitions in the future.<sup>2</sup>

The (22) 'absence condition' ('natthi'-, [Sanskrit 'nāsti'] paccaya)<sup>3</sup> and the (23) 'disappearance-condition' ('vigata-paccaya')<sup>4</sup> refer to those mental events which have just happened, and which assist those which immediately follow them by simply disappearing and making room for them. They too explain the continuity and development of particular thought-processes. These two conditions are introduced to emphasise the point that the preceding mental events must disappear if the following ones are to appear.

Considering the time of the origin of the conditioned,

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1. GAP, p.104, VM, p.538.
  2. Still another example is the way practice of meritorious actions facilitates acting in a meritorious way in the future.
  3. GAP, p.108, VM, p.541.
  4. VM, p.541.

conditions may be classified, as we have already remarked,<sup>1</sup> either into (6) 'simultaneous' - ('sahajāta' -), or into (10) 'prenascent' - ('purejāta' -) 'conditions' ('paccayas').

The flame of the lamp and the light emanating from it is used as an example of such a case of simultaneous conditioning. The four 'constituents of a person'<sup>2</sup> which represent (only) the psychical aspect of an individual are described as conditioning each other as 'simultaneous-conditions'. The four 'ultimate material elements'<sup>3</sup>; the two constituents of the 'psycho-physical complex' ('nāma-rūpa') at the time of conception; the four 'ultimate material elements and the 'elements derived from them'; a particular consciousness and its 'concomitants' ('citta-cetasikas') etc. are described as being related by this relation of 'simultaneous-conditioning'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See p. 158.

2. See Ch. II, pp. 89-90.

3. All schools of Buddhism agree that every material element falls into one or other of two categories: (i) the ultimate ('mahābhūta'), and (ii) the derived ('bhautika'). They generally agree that the 'ultimates' are four in number - earth, water, fire and air. (Each of these four however has a special significance for the Buddhists, which is different from their significance for the other schools of Indian philosophy.) Regarding the enumeration of the 'derived material elements' there is not much uniformity among the schools of Buddhism, though they all include the five sense-organs and their corresponding objects in the lists of the 'derived material elements'.

4. VM, p. 535; GAP, p. 101.

As opposed to a 'simultaneous-condition', a (10) 'prenascent-condition' ('purejāta-paccaya') precedes the conditioned.<sup>1</sup> The different sense-organs, their corresponding objects and the heart<sup>2</sup> are said to be the 'prenascent-conditions' of perception and thought.

Regarded from the point of view of the form of dependence of the conditioned on the condition, we can enumerate two types of conditions, viz., (7) 'mutuality-condition' ('aññamañña-paccaya') and (8) 'supporting-condition' ('nissaya-paccaya'). Whereas the 'mutuality conditions' are described as conditions which help each other<sup>3</sup>, the 'supporting-conditions' are said to be those which help others in the manner of foundations ('adhiṭṭhāna') or supports ('nissaya'). An example of this phenomenon of supporting is the way the earth or a piece of canvas provide support for a tree or an oil-painting.<sup>4</sup> Although the phenomenon of supporting can be said

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1. VM, pp.641-642; GAP, pp.103-104. This condition resembles the 'antecedent' - and 'immediately antecedent-conditions' in respect of precedence only. However, unlike these two conditions, the 'prenascent-condition' was not introduced by the 'Theravādins' to explain the maturity and development of thought-processes.
  2. The heart is presumably the 'faculty for intellection' in this context.
  3. For example, three sticks are described in the VM (p.535) as helping each other to stand on the ground (the sticks are supposed to prop up one another). In the same way, the 'four psychical constituents of a person', the 'ultimate material elements' etc. are also described (see VM, p.535; GAP, p.101) as mutually conditioning each other.
  4. See VM, p.535.

to provide a unique example of unilateral dependence, yet the 'Theravādins' also say that the four 'psychical constituents' and the four 'ultimate material elements' mutually support each other, and hence are 'supporting conditions' of one another. One naturally keeps on wondering what, in that case, would be the justification for creating a separate category of 'mutuality-condition'? Could this category of 'condition' not be said to represent an aspect of the category of 'supporting-condition'? But perhaps the 'Theravādins' are using the word 'support' in a metaphorical sense here. What they really mean is probably that the 'four psychical constituents' 'support' each other in the sense that they cause each other to go on existing; each of them is the cause of the continued existence of the other. (The earth does not cause the tree to come into existence. It merely causes the tree to go on standing in an upright position.) As contrasted with this, 'mutuality-conditions' cause one another to come into existence. (Yet we wonder whether two or more things can properly be said to cause each other to come into existence. See Chapter V, p.263.)

Although the (9) 'decisive supporting-condition' ('upanissaya-paccaya') is said only to explain the extreme form of dependence<sup>1</sup> exhibited by a 'supporting-condition', yet a deeper

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1. 'Bhuso nissayo upanissayo', VM, p.536.

scrutiny reveals that this condition is really a 'powerful'<sup>1</sup> condition. Such a 'decisive support' is possible in three ways, viz, (i) 'decisive support by way of object' ('ārammaṇūpanissaya-paccaya'),<sup>2</sup> (ii) 'decisive support by way of antecedence' ('anantara-upanissaya-paccaya'),<sup>3</sup> and (iii) 'decisive support by way of habit' ('pakata-upanissaya-paccaya').<sup>4</sup> The first one corresponds to the powerful way certain objects of thought attract our attention. Performances of noble acts like charity have, for example, such a noble quality about them, that they have a tremendous impact on our thinking, and we keep on thinking about them even after we finish such performances. The second one is said to refer to only an 'intense form' of the conditioning exhibited by the 'immediately antecedent-condition'. (iii) 'Decisive support by way of habit' refers to the overwhelming influence of habits on a man's conduct.

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1. One wonders whether this admission of the concept of power would be a case against the 'Theravāda' causal theory which agrees with the general Buddhist trend of explaining away causal power or efficacy. But perhaps the 'Theravāda' philosopher even explained the word 'forced to' as nothing but mechanical reaction of a sort under certain circumstances. In other words, admission of such a concept of power need not force them to admit a producer which produces something. But one wonders whether 'power' can really be explained in such a mechanical way.
  2. VI, p. 536.
  3. VI, pp. 536-537.
  4. VI, p. 537.

Another condition which is brought in to explain what is commonly known as the phenomenon of 'something exerting a strong influence on another' is the \*(3) 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-paccaya'). One form of this conditioning is the way certain factors like 'intense desire to act' ('chanda') are said to be concomitant with every act of consciousness and exercise dominating influence on a man's whole psychological being.<sup>1</sup> Another form of it is the way certain objects condition certain forms of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

We have already remarked on p.155 that a particular act of consciousness is always associated with some 'concomitant mental phenomena' like 'feeling', 'volition' etc. If a particular act of consciousness and an associated 'concomitant', e.g. 'feeling' have the same object, the same 'point d'appui' ('āśraya') and if they arise and disappear together, then they are said to be (19) 'closely associated-conditions' ('sampayutta<sup>3</sup>-paccaya') of one another.

The constant effort of 'Theravāda' scholastics to find

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1. Such a conditioning is the peculiarity of a 'simultaneous dominating-condition' ('sahajāta<sup>~</sup>adhipati-paccaya'). For a fuller account see VM, p.534.
  2. Such a conditioning is the peculiarity of a 'dominating condition by way of object' ('arammaṇādhipati-paccaya'). For a fuller account see VM, p.534.
  3. Sanskrit 'samprayuktaka'. See VM, pp.539, 540, GAP, p107. For a fuller account see pp.97-99 below. The 'point d'appui' of a perception is the corresponding sense-organ.

a contrary to every condition imaginable led them to introduce the class of (20) 'dissociated-condition' ('viprayutta<sup>1</sup>-paccaya') as contrary to the condition mentioned above. [This effort resulted also in the introduction of the (21) 'presence-' and (24) 'non-disappearance-conditions'<sup>2</sup> as contraries to the (22) 'absence-' and (23) 'disappearance-conditions', about which we have already spoken on p.153.] The underlying idea is that whereas the category of 'closely associated-condition' provides example of the close interaction between certain 'dharmas' (viz. an act of consciousness and the 'concomitants' with which it is inseparably connected), the category of 'dissociated-condition' refers to the way a certain 'dharma' conditions another without being inseparably connected or interconnected with it. For example, an object is the condition of the corresponding perception. There is no close interaction between the object and the perception. The object exists in its own right whether the perception exists or not. Besides, the 'point d'appui' of a perception is a sense-organ. The 'point d'appui' of an object, on the other hand, is the stuff of which it is made.

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1. Sanskrit 'viprayukta<sup>a</sup>'.
  2. For (21) 'presence-' ('atthi-', Sanskrit 'asti-') and (24) 'non-disappearance-' ('avigata) conditions consult GAP, p.109; VM, p.541.



Two conditions refer to Liberation and the means to achieve it. Those factors that help one to states of meditational trances, e.g. 'critical investigation' ('vitakka'),<sup>1</sup> 'critical analysis' ('vicāra'), 'concentration' etc., are said to be (17) 'meditation-conditions' ('jhāna<sup>2</sup>-paccaya').<sup>3</sup> Those factors that lead one to Liberation,<sup>4</sup> and those that lead one away from it,<sup>5</sup> are referred to as (18) 'path-conditions' ('magga-' [Sanskrit 'mārga'] 'paccaya').<sup>6</sup>

Conditions that refer to the retribution of voluntary actions are the (13) 'action-conditions' ('kamma-paccaya')<sup>7</sup> and (14) 'retribution-conditions'<sup>8</sup> ('vipāka-paccaya'). Since we shall speak at length about 'voluntary actions' ('karma') and its

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1. Sanskrit 'vitarka'.
  2. Sanskrit 'dhyāna'.
  3. See GAP, p.106. 'Vitakka' and 'vicāra' merely prepare one to enter into a meditation. They probably do not persist in a state of deep meditational trance.
  4. E.g. 'wisdom', 'critical investigation' etc.
  5. E.g. 'erroneous views' etc.
  6. See VM, p.539.
  7. See VM, p.538; GAP, pp.104-105.
  8. See VM, p.538; GAP, p.105.

retribution in chapter V<sup>1</sup> we shall not spend more time on this topic here. Neither shall we spend more time in elucidating the concept of a 'retribution-condition', inasmuch as we shall discuss the main implications of this concept in our elucidation of the (5) 'retribution-condition' ('vipāka-hetu') of the 'Sarvāstivādins'.<sup>2</sup>

Both the contrary of the tenth condition,<sup>3</sup> the (11) 'post-nascent condition' ('pacchājāta<sup>4</sup>-paccaya') and the (15) 'nutriment-condition' ('āhāra-paccaya')<sup>5</sup> are brought in to explain the continued existence of things that have already come into existence. The 'nutriment-condition' however explains especially the upkeep of the body.

We would like to round off the present discussion of the conditions by pointing out the major defect of the theory of the 24 'paccayas', which we have already hinted at while we were examining the 'paccayas'.

The defect consists in this that the categories of 'paccayas' are not mutually exclusive. In the case of many

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1. See chapter V, pp. 221f, 240-245.
  2. See pp. 200-203 below.
  3. I.e. the 'prenascent-condition', see VM, pp. 537-538.
  4. Sanskrit 'paścāt'.
  5. See VM, p. 538.

categories of 'paccayas', their differentiae have not been clearly enunciated. And the result of this has been that we come across many items which can be put with equal justification under more than one category. But if the items listed under one category can also be listed under another category, what justification shall we have for calling them 'separate categories'? Certain particular categories of 'paccayas' like the 'aññamañña' ('mutuality') and the 'sahajāta-paccaya' ('simultaneous-condition') will illustrate our point.

Certain items that have been conventionally listed under the (6) 'simultaneous-condition' ('sahajāta-paccaya'), have equal reasons for being listed under the (7) 'mutuality-condition' ('aññamañña-paccaya'). The items concerned are factors like the four 'psychical constituents of a person', the four 'ultimate material elements', and the two constituents of the 'psycho-physical personality' ('nāma-rūpa')<sup>1</sup>. The same is true of the 'dominating condition by way of object' ('ārammaṇādhipati-paccaya')<sup>2</sup> and the 'decisive supporting condition by way of object' ('ārammaṇūpanissaya-paccaya')<sup>3</sup>. It would be quite possible to find objects

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1. See p. 153.

2. See p. 162, n. 2.

3. See p. 161.

which can be classified under both these categories. Similarly, an item that has been conventionally listed under the 'prenascent-condition'<sup>1</sup> can also be listed under the 'object-condition',<sup>2</sup> the 'predominant-condition',<sup>3</sup> and the 'decisive supporting-condition'.<sup>4</sup> The items concerned are factors like the sense-organs and their corresponding objects.

This division of the conditions into twenty four categories is a catalogue of the distinctions broadly marked out by the language of familiar life. It is like a division of animals into men, vertebrates, quadrupeds, horses, asses, and ponies.

### Section iii

#### A Critical Analysis of the 'Sarvāstivāda' Classification of Causes ('Hetus') and Conditions ('Pratyayas')

In the place of the twenty four conditions ('paccayas') enumerated by the 'Theravāda' philosophers, the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers distinguished only four conditions ('pratyayas') and analysed two of them into six different causes ('hetus'). The four conditions

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1. See p. 159.
  2. See pp. 154-55.
  3. See p. 155.
  4. See pp. 160-61.

('pratyayas') are: (1) the 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya'), (2) the 'immediately-antecedent-conditions' ('samanantara-pratyaya'), (3) the 'object-condition' ('ālambana-pratyaya'), and the (4) 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya'). The 'Sarvāstivāda' analysis of the causes and conditions is more systematic compared to the 'Theravāda' one, in that the different categories of causes and conditions are mutually exclusive. This analysis does not contain any overlapping categories like the (21) 'presence'- and (24) 'non-disappearance-conditions'. Instead of multiplying the number of conditions in accordance with as many view-points as they could discover, the 'Sarvāstivādins' sometimes merged different connected view-points into one and named one category of condition corresponding to it. [An example of such a category is that of the 'simultaneous-cause' ('sahabhū-hetu') (see pp. 188-190 below) whose members are both simultaneous and mutual causes of one another. In this category are merged the 'simultaneous-condition' and the 'mutuality-condition' of the 'Theravādins. ] As a result the 'Sarvāstivādins' arrived at a more precise classification of causes and conditions.

The Four Conditions.

The (1) 'cause-condition ('hetu-pratyaya') is really a collective name of a group of five causes ('hetus'), namely, 'simultaneous-cause ('sahabhū-hetu'), 'homogeneous-cause' ('sabhāga-hetu'), 'closely associated-cause' ('samprayuktaka-hetu'), 'retribution-cause' ('vipāka-hetu') and 'all pervading-cause' ('sarvatraga-hetu').<sup>1</sup> So the nature of this condition will become clear when we examine the causes ('hetus') after our enumeration of the conditions. And we shall refrain from making any comments for the present.

The 'immediately antecedent-conditions' ('samanantara-pratyaya') refer to those momentary constituents of a stream of thought which are immediately followed by similar momentary constituents. They are the antecedent mental conditions which explain the uninterrupted flowing of a particular stream of thought.

'Immediately antecedent-conditions' refer only to those phenomena which are immediately followed by similar phenomena. In fact, the Abhidharmakośa gives the following etymological explanation

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1. See AK, II, p.300. The 'general cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') is not included in the 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya'). It is said to come under the 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya'). See AK, II, pp.307-309.

of this condition: "This sort of condition ('pratyaya') is called 'samanantara-pratyaya'<sup>1</sup> because it gives rise to similar ('sama') and immediate ('anantara') events ('dharmas')." <sup>2</sup> Now the question arises, whether the preceding changing states of material objects can be regarded as 'immediately antecedent-conditions' of their succeeding states? Obviously the 'Sarvāstivādins' want to restrict the application of the term 'immediately antecedent-condition' only to the mental world. Yet they make use of some artificial devices in order to achieve this result. First they try to argue that only those states can be said to act as 'immediately antecedent-conditions' which are immediately followed by subsequent states. In so far as there is usually a considerable lapse of time between one state of a material object and its next changed state, the former cannot be the 'immediately antecedent-condition' of the next one.<sup>3</sup> Yet sometimes there may be instantaneous changes in material objects. For example, there may be instantaneous changes in a place due to a sudden explosion. However, <sup>the</sup> 'Sarvāstivādins' would not be

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1. We would like to point out that literally this term means, 'similar and immediately antecedent condition'.
  2. AK, II, p.300. De La Vallée Poussin in fact translates the word 'sama' as 'égaux'. But in our opinion the word 'similar' brings out the intended meaning of the argument much more clearly than the word 'equal'.
  3. See AK, II, pp. 300 f.

compelled to call the state before the explosion an 'immediately antecedent-condition,' because the condition of the place before and after the explosion are far from being similar. One may still produce examples of changes in material things which are both extremely rapid and similar. For example, if a man is running very fast, the different states of his body change very rapidly and uniformly. The 'Sarvāstivādin' may still try to save himself by saying that the speed at which the different states of that man are changing is still much slower compared to that at which one mental state is instantaneously replaced by another. Changes in the mental world are really and truly instantaneous. Yet it would not be that difficult to find examples of similar and instantaneous changes even in the material world! The 'Sarvāstivādin' will in that case be forced to say that no state of a material object can be called the 'immediately antecedent-condition' simply because this name is, by definition, applied only to mental states that are followed by other similar mental states.

Another question still needs to be answered. A 'dharma' is an 'immediately antecedent-condition' if it gives rise to a similar 'dharma'. But what determines whether a particular mental



state is similar to its preceding mental state? Of course the simple answer that the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosopher can, and should give is simply that one mental state is similar to its preceding state if they both have one identical object. Yet this simple answer is hidden under the following intricate arguments the 'Sarvāstivādin' brings forward by using the 'Sarvāstivāda' technical terminology.

One may ask, if a mental state accompanied by 'critical investigation' and 'critical analysis' is followed by another which contains none of these 'concomitants', can the former still be regarded as the 'immediately antecedent-condition' of the latter?<sup>1</sup> The 'Sarvāstivādin' says that the former will be an 'immediately antecedent-condition' of the latter as long as the latter does not contain any 'feeling' contrary to that accompanying the former.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that, if the subsequent consciousness has a contrary feeling, then one can no longer be said to be conscious of the same object that one was conscious of before. Consequently, the subsequent consciousness can no longer be similar to the preceding one. For example, when I perceive a rose I usually have a pleasant

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1. See AK, II, pp.301 f.

2. This argument is couched in slightly different terms in the AK. We are here only trying to give what we think is the gist of the argument. For the original arguments see AK, II, p.302 f.

feeling. If my feeling changes, if I have a painful feeling, then I can no longer be said to perceive the same rose.<sup>1</sup> Thus if the consciousness is to be the consciousness of one identical object, it cannot be replaced by a contrary feeling. All these intricate arguments merely amount to saying that a succeeding consciousness is similar to its preceding one if both of them are consciousness of one identical object.

The 'Sarvāstivādins' believe that the last thought or consciousness ('citta') and the last 'concomitants of consciousness' ('caitta') of the saint at the moment when he is liberated are not the 'immediately antecedent-conditions' of some other mental state.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that, since the passions of the saint, as well as his actions are all exhausted at this stage, no further consciousness and 'concomitants of consciousness' are born after his last consciousness and its 'concomitants'. But the 'Sarvāstivādins' are faced with a difficulty at this stage. They apparently designated this last

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1. What obviously is true is that if I have a pleasant feeling now while perceiving a rose, then this perception would not be the same perception of the rose if the associated feeling were to have changed into a painful one. What is doubtful is, whether I can no longer be said to perceive the rose if at a later moment I have a painful feeling, or if I feel bored. It may be that the rose may remind me later on of a sad occasion (e.g. a funeral where roses were used). I may thus be feeling sad while looking at the same rose that I am seeing now.
  2. AK, II, pp.300, 305.

consciousness and its 'concomitants', 'mind' ('manas').<sup>1</sup> But they are supposed to have taught that one should understand by 'mind' ('manas') the consciousness which has just disappeared and which serves as a 'point d'appui' ('āśraya') for the following consciousness. Now it could be urged by an opponent that since no consciousness follows the last consciousness of a saint, this last consciousness must be called neither 'mind' ('manas') nor 'immediately antecedent-condition'. And yet the 'Sarvāstivādins' consider it as being 'mind' ('manas').<sup>2</sup>

The 'Sarvāstivādins' say in reply that the case is not really the same! 'What constitutes the mind ('manas') is not activity ('kāritra'), not the actual supporting of the subsequent consciousness. It is (really) the quality of being a 'point d'appui' for this consciousness; that this one should be born or should not be born is of little importance. The last consciousness of the saint is a 'point d'appui'. If a subsequent consciousness which was to appear, supported by this 'point d'appui', does not appear, it is for want of other causes necessary for its appearance. On the contrary,

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1. Since the 'Sarvāstivādins' do not recognise any substantial entity called mind, mind is analysed by them to consist only of consciousness and 'concomitant mental phenomena' like feeling, volition etc.
  2. AK, II, p.305.

what makes a 'dharma' the immediately antecedent-condition' of the following 'dharma' is activity. Once this condition has conditioned its effect, nothing in the world can prevent this effect from coming into being. Therefore, the last consciousness of the saint is rightly named 'mind', and it is not an 'immediately antecedent-condition'.<sup>1</sup>

What the author of the Abhidharmakośa, Vasubandhu, is driving at is possibly this. Certain things receive particular designations solely because of certain functions they perform. For example, if an individual is to be called a friend, he must perform certain acts or other (e.g. he must help the person whose friend he is). If on some occasions he does not help his friend we shall hesitate to call him a 'friend'. As contrasted with this, certain things receive special designations solely because of their possessing certain qualities. The possession of these qualities may (and does) enable them to perform certain acts as well. But their performance of such actions is not the only criterion for their receiving their special designations. As a result, we would not hesitate to apply these designations to them if we do not see them

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1. AK, II, p.305.

performing these actions at certain times. For example, we call a certain thing a table solely because it has certain qualities (e.g. it has a particular shape). The possession of these qualities, (i.e. the table's being a piece of furniture consisting of a top of a particular shape, supported by legs of a particular shape), enables the table also to act as a support for other things. But even if a table never supports anything at any point of its whole history of existence, that fact will not prevent us from calling it a table.

In the same way a particular antecedent is called an 'immediately antecedent-condition' solely because of its function<sup>1</sup> of projecting subsequent conscious events. If it does not always perform this function we can legitimately refuse to call it an 'immediately antecedent-condition'. As constrained<sup>s</sup> with it, a 'mind' is called a 'mind' solely because of certain qualities. These qualities may enable it also to support subsequent acts of consciousness. But if, because of certain counteracting factors, it is prevented from being such a support, we shall still keep on calling it a mind.

The scope of the (3) 'object-condition' ('ālambana-pratyaya')

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1. Admission of such a concept of 'causal functioning' may not be inconsistent with the 'Sarvāstivāda' programme of explaining causation solely in terms of conditioning, if the 'Sarvāstivādins' argue that the 'functioning' simply consists in being followed by the relevant thing.

is much wider compared to the 'immediately antecedent-condition', inasmuch as almost everything is described to be, either actually or potentially, an object of cognition or 'object-condition'.<sup>1</sup>

An 'object-condition', which is described as that which helps a cognition to arise, is not just a sensation, but a sensation interpreted by applying a concept to it. Accordingly, visible objects, audible objects, smells etc. are the 'object-conditions' respectively, of processes like the visual, auditory and olfactory perceptions. And abstract ideas ('saṃjñā'), 'thing in itself' ('dharma'), 'feeling', 'volition' etc. are objects of those forms of consciousness which are not based on the functioning of our sense-organs. Both the 'conditioned' ('saṃskṛta') and the 'unconditioned' ('asaṃskṛta') 'dharmas' can act as 'object-conditions'.

Although the 'dharmas' co-existing with a particular consciousness cannot act as 'object-conditions' of that consciousness, they can very well act as its (4) 'dominating-conditions' ('adhipati-pratyayas'), inasmuch as they do not constitute obstacles to the origin of these co-existing elements. Thus although a 'dominating-condition' does not positively help the arising of another object

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1. AK, II, pp.306-307. According to the 'Sarvāstivādins' the 'dharmas' co-existing ('sahabhū') with a certain consciousness are not the objects of this consciousness, (see AK, II, p.308). Yet the 'Sarvāstivādins' would probably admit that these 'dharmas' can be the objects of other consciousnesses with which these 'dharmas' do not co-exist.

or phenomenon, it nevertheless does not stand in the way of its coming into existence.<sup>1</sup> This non-interference is comparable to the way a sovereign ('adhipati'), although he may not do any thing constructive to make his subjects happy, may nevertheless be the indirect cause of their happiness by not oppressing them.<sup>2</sup> The 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') which we shall discuss later,<sup>3</sup> is said to be the same as this 'dominating-condition'.

A 'dharma' is not a 'dominating-condition' of itself. But apart from that, every 'dharma' is a 'dominating-condition' of every other 'dharma', and has, in its turn, every other 'dharma' as its 'dominating-condition'.<sup>4</sup>

From what has already been said, it is evident that all the four conditions help the arising of mental phenomena. The material, and what is known in 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophy as the 'citta-viprayukta dharmas'<sup>5</sup> arise only due to the conditioning of the

1. AK, II, p.309.
2. This is the reason why this condition is called the 'dominating-condition'. Domination ('ādhipatya') is the characteristic of a sovereign ('adhipati').
3. See pp.182-188 below.
4. See p.188 below.
5. These 'dharmas' are described by the 'Sarvāstivādins' as non-material. But they are not, for that matter, mental either. Factors like origination, continuance, destruction, impermanence are examples of these 'dharmas'. BTI, p.163.

'cause-condition' and the 'dominating-condition'. The material and the 'citta-viprayukta' 'dharmas' are non-mental. As a result, since the 'immediately antecedent-condition' and the 'object-condition' only condition mental events, they cannot condition the origination of material and 'citta-viprayukta — dharmas'.

#### The Six Causes ('Hetus')

We have so far analysed only those factors which are indirectly responsible for the emergence of something else. In the technical terminology of western philosophy these factors are known as 'conditions'. All the three conditions, the 'object-condition', the 'immediately antecedent-condition' and the 'dominating-condition' explain how certain conditions can be indirectly responsible for the coming into existence of certain objects and events. The 'immediately antecedent-condition' refers to that antecedent mental event which is immediately followed by other similar events. Just as the preceding sounds of a single tune that is being sung do not produce, but are only indirectly responsible for,<sup>1</sup> the sounds following them at subsequent moments, so the 'immediately antecedent-condition' is only indirectly responsible for the subsequent happenings of similar mental events. An object is only one of the factors responsible for

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1. i.e. they influence the player to play the next ones.



the origination of a particular cognition. The other factors responsible for knowledge are, for example, the existence of sense-organs and the 'correlation' of sense-organs and their corresponding objects. Hence an 'object-condition' cannot (by itself) be said to be directly responsible for any particular cognition. The 'dominating-condition' is only a 'permissive condition', and as such it is not directly responsible for the emergence of anything.

As contrasted with the 'conditions' or 'pratyayas', the different causes or 'hetus' represent factors that are directly responsible for the arising of other events or objects. One should not, however, interpret the words 'factors that are directly responsible' as meaning 'factors that produce'. Instead of explaining every case of causation (i.e. every case where one thing is said to be directly responsible for the origination of another), as a case of production, the 'Sarvāstivādins' try to explain even what is known as 'production' as involuntary mechanical reaction of a sort under certain conditions. Even production is explained by the 'Sarvāstivādins' as origination ('utpāda') of some elements depending ('pratītya') on certain others.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it can be

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1. CCB, p.28, and AKV, ii, 46 (according to Stcherbatsky, in CCB).  
See also Wogihana's edition of AKV, ii, 47 a-b; p.174,  
lines 14-16.

the origination of a particular cognition. The other factors responsible for knowledge are, for example, the existence of sense-organs and the 'correlation' of sense-organs and their corresponding objects. Hence an 'object-condition' cannot (by itself) be said to be directly responsible for any particular cognition. The 'dominating-condition' is only a 'permissive condition', and as such it is not directly responsible for the emergence of anything.

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1. CCB, p.28, and AKV, ii, 46 (according to Stcherbatsky, in CCB).  
See also Wogihana's edition of AKV, ii, 47 a-b; p.174,  
lines 14-16.

interpreted to mean only: appearance of certain events in a particular way in certain specific circumstances. We can use the example of natural phenomena like the flowing of springs to illustrate our point. We need not bring in concepts of production and producer in order to explain how the springs are flowing. We could simply say that the water is flowing in the springs in a particular way because of the presence of certain conditions. Such conditions are, the presence of water in a place, (due perhaps to the melting of a glacier), there being a slope of a particular nature on the hill and so on.

We have said before<sup>1</sup> that the 'Sarvāstivādins' analysed the 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya') into five different causes ('hetus'), viz., the 'simultaneous-cause' ('sahabhū-hetu'), ('sabhāga-hetu'), 'closely associated-cause' 'homogeneous-cause'/'('samprayuktaka-hetu'),<sup>2</sup> 'all pervading-cause' ('sarvatraga-hetu'), and 'retibution-cause' ('vipāka-hetu'). These five causes refer to factors that are directly responsible for the origination of physical, mental and moral phenomena. But the cause ('hetu') which occupies the first place in the 'Sarvāstivāda' enumeration of the causes ('hetus'), is a different one. This is called the 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu'). The causes ('hetus')

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1. See p.169 above.

2. Stcherbatsky refers to this condition as 'samprayukta-hetu'. See CCB, p.106.

are then altogether six. Yet the first of these causes ('hetus') is not included by the 'Sarvāstivādins' in the 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya'). According to them this cause is the dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya'). Our next step in the analysis of the 'Sarvāstivāda' theory of causation will be the critical investigation of the causes ('hetus').

We shall start with the examination of the (1) 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu').

It is a little difficult to make out what the 'Sarvāstivādins' actually mean by this 'general-cause'. The first description of the 'general-cause' in the Abhidharmakośa is: 'it does not constitute an obstacle to the arising of 'dharmas' that are capable of being born'.<sup>1</sup> ['susceptibles de naître' ('utpattimant')]

It is immediately added that the 'dharmas' which are simultaneous-causes etc. are also 'general-causes'. In the words of the Abhidharmakośa,<sup>2</sup> "les 'dharmas' qui sont 'sahabhū-hetu' etc. sont aussi 'kāraṇa-hetu'; les autres 'hetus' rentrent dans le 'kāraṇa-hetu'. Le 'hetu' qui ne reçoit pas de nom spécial, qui est simplement 'kāraṇa', 'raison d'être', sans qualification, c'est

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1. AK, II, p.246.

2. As translated by De La Vallée Poussin.

le 'kāraṇa-hetu': il reçoit à titre de nom particulier le nom qui convient à tous les 'hetus'.<sup>1</sup>

The underlying idea is that the five causes ('hetus') represent different ways in which certain objects or events (presuming the existence of certain other conditions) can be regarded as being especially responsible for the emergence of certain other objects or events. Now if anything is to be responsible in a special way, it has also to be responsible in a general way in the first place. The species has to be a member of the higher class or genus in the first place, before it can be regarded as representing a specification. The 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') is introduced by the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers in order to emphasise this idea. The 'general-cause' represents the most general way in which something may be responsible for the coming into existence of something else. As specifications of this general way, the five causes come under the genus of 'general-cause'.<sup>2</sup>

The 'negative condition' or the absence of counteracting conditions can also be regarded as an instance of the general way in which something may be responsible for the coming into existence of

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1. AK, II, P.246.

2. The 'general-cause' does not represent any cause different from the five causes, but only a genus of these five causes.

something else. For this reason the 'general-cause' can be said to comprise also the negative conditions. That is why the 'dominating-condition', which represents a negative condition is also said, in the Abhidharmakośa, (AK, II, pp.307-8) to be the same as the 'general-cause'.

There is another possible reason why the two are said to be identical.<sup>1</sup> Saying that 'something is in a general way responsible for something else', is virtually the same as saying 'something is indirectly responsible for something else'. Now properly speaking, it is only a condition ('pratyaya') that is indirectly responsible for the emergence of something. Hence a 'general-cause' is really a condition. This idea is expressed by equating the 'general-cause' with the 'dominating-condition', which is really merely a permissive condition. Identifying the 'general-cause' with the 'dominating-condition' safeguards us from a possible misinterpretation, viz., that the cause is a 'producer'. The cause is, according to the 'Sarvāstivādins', not a producer, but only a condition, although one with the qualification, viz., the 'fulfilment of which completes the tale'. When this condition is fulfilled, no other condition

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1. AK, II, pp.307-308.

is waited for, but the effect immediately appears.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Sarvāstivādins' say that a 'dharma' cannot be a 'general-cause' of itself. But apart from that, all the 'dharmas' are 'general-causes' of every other conditioned ('saṃskṛta') 'dharma'.<sup>2</sup>

But someone may ask, is this not too sweeping a statement? So many 'dharmas' do stand in the way of the appearance of so many 'dharmas'. For example knowledge of the 'truths'<sup>3</sup> prevents the appearance of any further vices in a man who did not know the 'truths' before. In the same way, the light of the sun creates an obstacle to the manifestation of the stars.

In answer the 'Sarvāstivādins' say that their standpoint still remains valid inasmuch as the knowledge of the 'truths' and the light of the sun do not constitute obstacles to the 'dharmas' that are 'being born'.<sup>4</sup> What is meant here is that the name 'general-cause' is given to a condition which does not put an obstacle to the coming into being of an object or event which has all the conditions of its coming into existence fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> In this sense all the conditions that are present at the moment when

1. See chapter III, pp. 130-31

2. AK, II, p. 246.

3. See chapter II, pp. 84-85, section entitled, 'The Four Noble Truths'.

4. 'Utpadyamāna', AK, II, p. 247.

5. CF. AK, II, p. 247.

an effect comes into existence, but do not obstruct the effect's appearance, are the 'general-causes' of the effect.

A 'general-cause' is really a 'dharma' that does not constitute an obstacle to the arising of another 'dharma' in spite of its being quite capable of doing so. The case is comparable to that of a king, who, although powerful enough to oppress his subjects, refrains from doing so and is consequently an 'indirect-cause' of the happiness of the subjects.<sup>1</sup>

The 'dharmas' then, that are capable of constituting obstacles, may possibly be designated 'general-causes'. But what about those that are incapable of being obstacles? The 'Sarvāstivādins' maintain that even such 'dharmas' are 'general-causes'! "They are causes; for even if the sovereign is incapable of harming them the villagers express themselves as we have said.<sup>2</sup> But they do not speak so about a lord who does not exist!"<sup>3</sup> The underlying idea of this way of arguing is the following,

The term 'general-cause' means, among other things, 'a factor that is indirectly responsible for the appearance of an effect'. There are certain things which are powerful enough to

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1. Cf. AK, II, p.247. This analogy is present also in the description of the 'dominating-condition'. See p.178.
  2. The villagers say with respect to a powerless king who does not oppress them: "Nous sommes heureux par le fait du maître ('svāminā smaḥ sukhitaḥ'). AK, II, p.247.
  3. AK, II, p.247.



obstruct the appearance of an effect. If these things do not obstruct the appearance of the effect, then they are indirectly responsible for the latter and hence its 'general-cause'. The 'Sarvāstivādins' claim that the presence of even those things which are incapable of hindering the emergence of the effect is its 'general-cause'. They probably mean that their incapability makes these things indirect causes of the effects in the sense that, because of their lack of power, these things cannot prevent the emergence of the effect. But this would be a far-fetched meaning of the expression 'indirectly responsible'. It may be that the 'Sarvāstivādins' are really trying to make the following point in a roundabout way.

They want to show that all the factors that are present at the time something comes into existence are, either directly, or indirectly, responsible for that thing. Of course we would grant that the appearance of a thing is, besides being directly caused by certain things, also indirectly conditioned by certain other factors. But we usually think that only a limited number of conditions are directly or indirectly responsible for an effect. The 'Sarvāstivādins' try to show that it is not possible to restrict ourselves in this way in our investigation of the conditions. It is true that a particular effect comes into being through its dependence upon a particular set of conditions (both direct and indirect conditions).

But there is a causal background from which this set of conditions itself arises. This background itself is, in its turn, dependent on another causal background. All these factors are, according to the 'Sarvāstivādins', indirectly responsible for the emergence of the effect. If they did not exist and constitute, so to speak, a 'general background' in which the effect in question can appear, the effect could not have secured its existence. In fact, these philosophers wanted to show that if we conducted our search for the conditions to its farthest limit, then we would find that nothing short of the condition of the whole universe at a particular time is in a way responsible for the appearance of an effect. "Tous les 'dharma's' sont 'kāraṇa-hetu' à l'égard de tous, eux-mêmes exceptés".<sup>1</sup> Owing to the limited scope of our thesis, it will not be possible to make a full enquiry about the truth of the 'Sarvāstivāda' claim. But we can at least say this, that the range of conditions responsible for the appearance of an effect is in fact much wider than what we, at an uncritical level, take it to be.

While the 'general-cause' represents the general causal condition under which a certain 'dharma' arises, the 'simultaneous-cause' and the following four causes ('hetus') stand for the things

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1. AK, II, p. 246. See also p. 178, n. 4.

or events that are directly responsible for the emergence of other things or events. The category of 'simultaneous-cause' ('sahabhū-hetu') comprises all those causes whose origins are simultaneous with those of their effects. It also stands for those objects and events which mutually cause one another or which are interdependent.<sup>1</sup> The 'four ultimate material elements' are in this way supposed to be 'simultaneous-causes' of one another. An act of consciousness and 'the concomitants of it' are also cited as examples of 'simultaneous-causes'.<sup>2</sup>

Vasubandhu refers, in this connection, to a possible objection by the rival 'Sautrāntika' school. Must not the word 'cause' be restricted to cases where the cause precedes the effect, (e.g. to the case where the seed is the cause of the shoot, the shoot of the stem and so on)? Vasubandhu gives the example of the flame of the lamp and the light emanating from it to illustrate the simultaneous origin of the cause and the effect.<sup>3</sup>

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1. For some unknown reasons, the 'Sarvāstivādins' make one exception to the rule that those causes which are simultaneous with their effects are also caused by these effects. See AK, II, p.249.
  2. AK, II, pp.248-249. According to the 'Sarvāstivādins' any material object is composed of 'four ultimate material elements'. These elements are always associated with one another. So are 'acts of consciousness' and their 'concomitant mental phenomena'. The 'Sarvāstivādins' observed that the existence of any one of these associated elements is concomitant with that of the rest of the elements. The existence of the rest of these elements is also, in its turn, concomitant with that of the former. From this observation they concluded that each of these associated elements are interdependent, i.e. they cause one another.
  3. AK, II, p.253.

But, the 'Sautrāntikas' argue, is it not possible that the flame of the lamp and the light emanating from it are just co-effects of one identical set of preceding conditions? Vasubandhu tries to justify his point, at this stage, by having recourse to the famous formula, 'this being that becomes' ('asmin sati idaṃ bhavati'). He says that we could test whether a certain case is a case of causality by applying to it the formula, 'when A being present B also is present, and A being absent B also is absent, A is regarded as the cause, and B as its effect'. This being so, Vasubandhu argues that 'if we examine the 'dharmas' which we have defined as simultaneous (and mutual) causes, we see that they all exist when one of them exists, none exists when one of them is missing'. Because they pass this crucial test, we could say that they are, therefore, simultaneous causes of one another<sup>1</sup> (and not just co-effects of a common set of preceding causes).

Before we go on to discuss the next cause ('hetu') in the list of the six causes, the 'homogeneous-cause' ('sabhāga-hetu'), we must point out that the 'Sarvāstivādin's view of the simultaneous

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1. AK, II, p.254. Vasubandhu is not taking account of the fact that by applying the same logic one may also argue that what he is taking as simultaneous and mutual causes are really the common effects of a set of preceding causes. One could argue that whenever these preceding causes are present these simultaneous 'dharmas' are present, and whenever these preceding causes are absent, these simultaneous 'dharmas' are also absent. So unless Vasubandhu can find out some other criterion of a causal relationship besides constant conjunction, he will be forced to admit a preceding set of constant conjuncts as the cause of these simultaneous 'dharmas'.

origin of the causes and effects is diametrically opposed to the view of the Buddhist logicians like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. To them the simultaneity of causes and effects is a contradiction in terms. Since we have already spoken at length about this,<sup>1</sup> we shall not spend any more time on this topic here.

As contrasted with the category of cause just mentioned, the (3) 'homogeneous-cause' ('sabhāga-hetu') represents the category of causes which always precede their effects. Besides being distinguished from the 'simultaneous-cause', it is also distinguished from the sixth cause, the 'retribution-cause' ('vipāka-hetu'), inasmuch as its effect, as contrasted with that of the 'retribution-cause',<sup>2</sup> is of the same nature as itself. This category of causes is brought in to explain what is commonly known as 'homogeneous production' as well as the apparent continuity of a particular object, mental or physical. In this way, although the five 'constituents of a person' are momentary, and as a result are destroyed in the next moment to that in which they are born, similar 'dharmas' arise immediately and take their place and give us the feeling that they constitute a continuity.<sup>3</sup> Apart from the problem of the continuity of an object, we have to explain also the problem

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1. See chapter II, p.102.

2. See pp.200f below.

3. AK, II, p.255.

of homogeneous 'production'. We must plant rice seeds and not something else if we want to grow rice. The 'homogeneous-cause' explains such phenomena as 'homogeneous production'.<sup>1</sup> The first embryonic state is also described in the Abhidharmakośa as being the 'homogeneous-cause' of the five following embryonic states and the five post-embryonic states namely childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and old age.<sup>2</sup>

A problem confronts us immediately at this stage. Can we describe a 'homogeneous-cause' as the cause of the emergence of an exactly similar 'dharma'? If we can, how can the first embryonic state be the 'homogeneous-cause' of, for example, the state of childhood or of adolescence?

The problem can perhaps be solved in two ways. One could either say that the first embryonic state is the 'homogeneous-cause' of the next embryonic state; and the second one is in its turn the 'homogeneous-cause' of the third and so on. In this way, the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosopher will perhaps be able to demonstrate a close similarity between a 'homogeneous-cause' and that which it conditions. Yet, in spite of all that, one cannot claim that there is absolute identity between one embryonic state and the next. One

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1. AK, II, p.255.

2. AK, II, p.256.

has to admit some difference or other between the two. Considering all this, it would probably be better to describe the 'homogeneous-cause' as that which accounts for the similarity between the otherwise different states of what is commonly known as the same individual or the same object, or that between the different individuals of one particular group.

It is further said in the Abhidharmakośa that 'the 'dharmas' belonging to a certain 'category' and to a certain 'state' ('bhūmi) are causes of similar 'dharmas' of the same 'category' and of the same state.'<sup>1</sup> The 'dharmas' are classified, in the Abhidharmakośa, in different 'categories' ('nikāyas') according to whether they are capable of being 'abandoned' by knowledge of the 'four truths' or by meditation.<sup>2</sup> They are classed, on the other hand, into ten different 'states' ('bhūmi') in accordance with the 'different worlds of existence' the 'Sarvāstivādins' analysed.

Now this needs some elucidation. From the view-point of a gradual progress towards Salvation ('Nirvāṇa') all the elements of life are supposed by the 'Sarvāstivādins' to "assume two different characters: they either are characterised by a tendency towards life,

1. AK, II, p.256.

2. See AK, II, p.256. "Par la vue de chacune des quatre vérités, ou par la méditation." For an account of the 'Four Noble Truths' see chapter II, pp.84-85.

commotion and turmoil,<sup>1</sup> and then they are called 'sāsrava', i.e. 'influenced' by passions; or they are 'uninfluenced' ('anāsrava'), i.e. they exhibit the opposite tendency towards reduction of life, appeasement of commotion.... Roughly, the first set of elements (the 'sāsrava-dharmas') correspond to the ordinary man,<sup>2</sup> with all his enjoyments and bothers in life; the second make up the saint who....cares only for Final Deliverance."<sup>3</sup> The 'Sarvāstivādins' believe that by proper knowledge<sup>4</sup> some of the elements that tend towards 'commotions' can be stopped from manifesting themselves.<sup>5</sup> Every disquieting or 'demeritorious' ('akuśala') 'dharma' has a "special antidote in the agency of wisdom; when suppressed it becomes an 'anutpatti-dharma', an element which never will return, a blank is substituted for it; this blank ('nirodha') is called 'cessation through wisdom' ('pratisaṅkhyā-nirodha')."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Commotion and turmoil are equivalent to 'suffering' ('dukkha') in Buddhist philosophy.
  2. i.e. to the life of the ordinary man.
  3. CCB, p.49.
  4. I.e. knowledge of the 'Four Noble Truths', knowledge that there are no substantial souls etc.
  5. This 'stoppage of manifestation' is sometimes referred to as 'suppression of dharmas' (CCB, p.50), 'abandonment of dharmas' (AK, II, p.256, and p. above). And it is obvious that what is meant is that by knowledge some of the elements can be totally annihilated. For example, when one realises the non-substantiality of things, his belief in a substantial 'soul' and object, and all feelings, volitions etc. connected with this belief, disappear completely from his mind.
  6. CCB, pp.50-51.



But only the initial stages of saintliness can be reached by wisdom. In order to be liberated, it is not enough that one gets rid of one's wrong views and the passions associated with it. Even the external world should cease to exist as such for the liberated person. For as long as the external world exists, and a person is conscious of it, he may, even if he knows for once that there are no substantial objects in that world, fall back to his initial wrong views and start committing actions again. Since the external world as such cannot be eliminated, the best remedy under the circumstances is, according to the Buddhist philosophers, to eliminate sensations of it. Now practical observation has shown to the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers that when a certain degree of intense concentration is reached, certain sensations, like those of taste and smell disappear. These philosophers believed that with more intense concentration we could reach states where even the sensations of sight, touch and hearing would be absent and one would cease to be aware of the external world as such. In accordance with this observation and belief the 'Sarvāstivāda', philosophers claim that certain 'influenced' elements, i.e. sensations, can be suppressed by different meditations only.

But even by suppressing the sensations one will not achieve the highest goal. A liberated man should cease even to

be conscious of himself. As long as he is conscious of his own self, he is still self-centred and may engage in selfish activities. The 'Sarvāstivādins' believed that with the help of mediation one can attain a state in which even abstract ideas and consciousness as such would disappear. This is 'Nirvāṇa', absolute annihilation of the 'saṃskṛta' (i.e. empirical) 'dharma's'.

The imagination of the Buddhist philosophers constructed different states of existence or 'different worlds' corresponding to the different states of meditation.<sup>1</sup> Thus they imagined a state of existence where all sensations corresponding to matter gradually disappear. This is referred to by them as the 'world of purified matter',<sup>2</sup> in contrast to the empirical 'world of matter' (in their special terminology, the 'world of desire').<sup>3</sup> Working further on upon the same principle, a higher state of existence is constructed, which is a purely spiritual world consisting of non-sensuous consciousness, devoid even of purified matter'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers held this doctrine of the 'three worlds' in common with several other schools of Buddhism.
  2. i.e. 'rūpa-dhātu'. See CCB, p.52, and AK, I, pp. 78 and 79.
  3. i.e. 'kāma-dhātu'.
  4. This is usually referred to as 'arūpa-dhātu'. Sometimes this is also referred to as 'ārūpya-dhātu'. (See for example 'Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā', ed. Wogihara, part I, pp.253, 256; Edgerton's Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, vol.I, p.283.

The 'Sarvāstivādins' believed that these states of existence can be entered either by rebirth in them ('utpatti') or by meditational practices.

A 'Dharma' that can be suppressed merely by 'knowledge' (e.g. of the 'four Truths') is the 'homogeneous-cause' of another 'dharma' that can likewise be suppressed merely by knowledge'. In the same way 'dharmas' that can be 'abandoned' by the different states of meditation, are supposed to be the 'homogeneous-cause' of 'dharmas' that can similarly be 'abandoned' by different states of meditation. 'Dharmas' belonging to different 'states of existence' ('bhūmi') are also described as 'homogeneous-causes' of 'dharmas' belonging to corresponding 'states of existence' ('bhūmi').

The next cause in our scheme, the (4) 'closely associated-cause' ('samprayuktaka-hetu') is described in the Abhidharmakośa<sup>1</sup> as representing only a more intense form of the interaction between 'dharmas' about which we have already spoken in the description of the 'simultaneous-cause'. This point is made clearer in the Abhidharmakośa with the help of the following example. Suppose a group of merchants are travelling together in a caravan and protecting

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1. AK, II, p.268.

each other from the dangers of the road. In this case they only help each other while retaining their respective individuality. But if this group use even the same food and drink and do the same work together then they lose much of their previous separateness and become more unified. The mere mutual helping of the merchants is comparable to the way the various 'simultaneous-causes' help each other. The merchants are more united when they have the same food and drink and do exactly the same work. This is comparable, according to the 'Sarvāstivādins', to the unity which an act of consciousness and its 'concomitants' have when they have the same 'point d'appui' ('samāśraya'), same object, and same time of origination.<sup>1</sup> An act of consciousness and its 'concomitants' are in this case said to be 'closely associated-causes' of each other. 'Closely associated-causes' thus refer to mental phenomena only. As contrasted with this, 'simultaneous-causes' refer to both physical and mental phenomena.

Before we proceed to discuss the next cause we should like to make some observations about this last cause. It seems more plausible that the particular act of consciousness and its

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1. The perception of a rose and the feelings, volitions etc. concomitant with it can be used to illustrate the point. The consciousness of the rose and the feeling, volition etc. connected with this consciousness have the same 'point d'appui' (i.e. the eyes). They both have the same object (i.e. the rose). They also arise and disappear at the same time.

'concomitants', which are supposed to be 'closely associated-causes' of each other, are really mere invariable associates of each other. This is due to the fact that they are partly caused<sup>1</sup> by some common causes. Whenever we perceive a rose we also, in almost all cases, have a pleasant feeling. But we cannot say that the pleasant feeling causes the perception. We ought rather to say that the perception of the rose and the pleasant feeling associated with it have some causes in common.<sup>2</sup> The erroneous belief of the 'Sarvāstivādins' that 'consciousness' and its 'concomitants' cause each other is due perhaps to their equating causation with 'constant conjunction'; and their insisting that the applicability of the formula, 'this being that becomes', is the sole criterion of causal relationship.

As contrasted with the reciprocal causality exhibited by the 'closely associated-cause' the next two causes the 'all-pervading-cause' ('sarvatraga-hetu') and the 'retribution-cause' ('vipāka-hetu') are paradigm cases of unilateral causality. The (5) 'all-pervading-cause' comprises the underlying innate passions ('anuśayas')<sup>3</sup> which later give rise to all sorts of demeritorious

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1. i.e., they both have some causes in common in addition to having some specific and unique causes.
  2. e.g. they both originate in dependence upon the same 'point d'appui' or 'āśraya' (i.e. the eyes) and the same object (i.e. the rose).
  3. The word 'anuśaya' is explained as meaning 'a bias, a proclivity, a persistence of a dormant or latent disposition of mind leading to all kinds of evil volitions'. See BTI, p.142.

consciousness. It is called 'all-pervading' ('sarvatraga'), because unlike a 'homogeneous-cause' it is not confined in its activity to 'dharmas' of its own 'category' ('nikāya');<sup>1</sup> but it can give rise to passions and defilements belonging to other 'categories' as well.<sup>2</sup>

Both the demeritorious ('akuśala') and those of the meritorious ('kuśala') 'dharmas' which proceed from craving,<sup>3</sup> lead to certain painful or pleasurable consequences. Such meritorious and demeritorious 'dharmas' are then said to act as (6) 'retribution-causes' ('vipāka-hetu'). The 'retribution-cause' therefore refers to voluntary actions. Neither the 'indeterminate' ('avyākṛta') 'dharmas' nor the 'pure' ('anāsrava') 'dharmas' that are not preceded by craving, can act as 'retribution-causes'.

The 'indeterminate dharmas' are the results of voluntary actions. Every fact resulting from the 'maturing process' of voluntary actions belongs, like the actions themselves, to the realm of human and animal life. But as contrasted with the voluntary actions which are either meritorious or demeritorious, their results are morally indifferent ('avyākṛta'). As natural outcomes of

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1. See pp. 193-196.

2. AK, II, p.269.

3. Even meritorious 'dharmas' may proceed from craving or aspiration, inasmuch as people may act in accordance with their aspiration for earning merit or for going to heaven. And such actions are normally considered to be meritorious actions.

antecedents, they are completely foreshadowed by these antecedents, and hence arrive completely involuntarily. Only a voluntary action can be morally good or bad, and can lead to retributory results. But the phenomena resulting from voluntary actions are involuntary happenings, resembling to a large extent certain natural processes like the flowing of springs. Like the flowings they are, as it were, merely mechanical reactions of a sort under certain conditions (see p.121). Just like the flowing of springs, such involuntary results can neither be called good nor bad, and can lead to no moral consequences either. The 'pure' ('anāsrava') 'dharma's' are not causes of retribution inasmuch as they are not preceded by craving.<sup>1</sup>

The word 'vipāka' ('vi' + 'pac' = to cook, to mature, to ripen) can stand either for a 'state' or for an 'operation'. It can either mean a state that is the result of an operation, 'vipāka', or an action which matures or 'ripens' ('vipacyate').<sup>2</sup> A 'retribution-cause' thus either means a cause of the 'matured state' or an action which matures into a particular effect.

The prefix 'vi' of the word 'vipāka' implies 'difference'. And a cause is called 'vipāka-hetu' because its effect is different

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1. AK, II, pp.271-272.

2. AK, II, p.271.

in nature from itself.<sup>1</sup> There are many reasons why the effect is said to be different in nature. To start with, the cause itself is either meritorious or demeritorious, whereas its effects lack any moral character. Moreover, there is no conformity between the cause and the effect as regards number. One single cause may be the cause of many effects.

Neither is there any symmetry between the cause and its effect as regards time. It can happen that the retribution of an action belonging to one single period of time ('ekādhvika') can last three periods of time ('traiyadhvika'); but it is not true conversely. The retribution belonging to one single period of time cannot be the result of an action belonging to three periods of time.<sup>2</sup>

What is meant is probably the following: I may at present reap the consequences of an action committed by me in the past. I might have reaped the consequences of that action in the past as well (i.e. at the same time as the action was committed). I may have to reap the consequences of that action even in the future. As contrasted with this, if I am reaping some consequences at the present, then this consequence may be the result of actions committed

1. AK, II, p.272.
2. AK, II, pp.274-275.



in the past. It may also be the result of present actions. But it cannot be the result of future actions. Actions committed in the future cannot be said to determine the present state of affairs.

Difficulty connected with identifying the 'kāraṇa-hetu' with the 'adhipati-pratyaya'

Before we finish the discussion of the six causes and the four conditions we must point out a difficulty that arises as a result of identifying the 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu') with the 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya').

The 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya') is divided by the 'Sarvāstivādins' into five different causes ('hetus'): 'simultaneous-cause' ('sahabhū-hetu'), 'homogeneous-cause' ('sabhāga-hetu'), 'closely associated-cause' ('samprayuktaka-hetu'), 'all-pervading-cause' ('sarvatraga-hetu'), and 'retribution-cause' ('vipāka-hetu'),<sup>2</sup> Yet, surprisingly enough, one of the causes ('hetus') which, according to the 'Sarvāstivādins', tops the list of the causes ('hetus'), the 'general-cause' ('kāraṇa-hetu'), is not included by them in the 'cause-condition' ('hetu-pratyaya').

1. AK, II, pp.274-275.

2. See p. 181.

On the contrary, this is said to be identical with the 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya')! We have already suggested<sup>1</sup> the possible reason which led the 'Sarvāstivādins' to identify it with the 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya'). But one question still remains unanswered. If this 'hetu' (cause) does not come under the genus 'hetu-pratyaya' ('cause-condition'), why call it a 'hetu' (cause)? Call it anything else: call it an 'adhipati-pratyaya' ('dominating-condition') if you like. But why 'Hetu' ('cause')? If, on the other hand, we try to save the 'Sarvāstivādins' by saying that what they really meant to say (as opposed to what they explicitly said), is that it comes under both the 'hetu-pratyaya' ('cause-condition') and the 'dominating-condition' ('adhipati-pratyaya'), then the 'pratyayas' (conditions) will not be mutually exclusive and this defect will make the foundation of the theory of the 'hetus' (causes) and 'pratyayas' (conditions) very weak.

#### Section IV

#### Is there Anything in Buddhist Causal Theories Corresponding to Mill's Insistence that the Causal Sequence Must be Unconditional?

We have already seen that Mill and the different schools

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1. See pp. 184-185.

of Buddhism were unanimous in explaining the causal relation simply as the relation between a set of conditions and the conditioned.

The 'Sarvāstivāda' school comes closer to Mill than any other school of Buddhism in maintaining that the entire set of causal conditions invariably contains, besides the 'positive conditions', some 'negative conditions' as well.<sup>1</sup> 'Negative conditions' are introduced by the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers by their concepts of 'dominating-condition' and 'general-cause'.<sup>2</sup>

Now causal relations were, in the first place, explained by Mill as consisting of unvarying successions between sets of antecedent conditions and phenomena consequent upon them. But the question is, is this account of causation in terms of the unvarying sequence of events of a given kind, given certain complex sets of positive and negative conditions, a sufficient one? Would every case of unvarying sequence then qualify as a case of causation? We have seen how Mill saved himself from the incongruity of treating any arbitrary sequence of phenomena as a causal sequence with the introduction of the concept of 'unconditional sequence'. In order to

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1. Both the 'Sarvāstivāda' and the 'Theravāda' schools share Mill's opinion that the effect can, in some cases, be considered to come into existence at the same time as the cause. The 'simultaneous'- and 'closely associated-causes' of the 'Sarvāstivāda' school and the 'simultaneous'- and 'closely associated-conditions' of the 'Theravāda' school provide examples of such simultaneous origin of causes and effects.
  2. See pp. 177f, 182f.

qualify as a causal sequence, a sequence must be, besides being unvarying, unconditional as well.

Buddhist philosophers also analysed causal relations as relations of constant conjunction or unvarying sequence. Did they have recourse to any device in order to save themselves from the incongruity of admitting any arbitrary sequence or conjunction as a case of causation? As far as we know, only the causal theory of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, out of all the theories we have reviewed so far, did explicitly invent such a device. Yet that device does not seem to be the introduction of the concept of unconditional sequence .

In the Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā (p.180) Kamalaśīla writes: 'We do not say that mere immediate sequence is the basis of the cause-effect relationship.... What we mean is that one thing is to be regarded as the cause of another when the latter is found to appear in succession to former only and never without it.<sup>1</sup> Smoke is not seen to follow the presence of animals like cows and horses only. It appears even in their absence.'<sup>2</sup> In this way

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1. Assuming of course that there is no such thing as a plurality of causes, Buddhist philosophers like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla did not discuss the possibility whether the same effect can be caused by different causes on different occasions.
  2. "Na hi vāyam ānantarya-mātraṃ kārya-kāraṇa-bhāvādhiḡati nibandhanaṃ brumaḡ... Tathāhi, yasyaivānantaraṃ ya bhavati tat tasya kāraṇam iṣyate. Na ca dhumo gavādeḡ eva anantaraṃ bhavati, asati api gavāḡau tasya bhāvāt." Cf. Jha's translation of the Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjikā, pp.309-310. See also chapter II, p.114,n.2

Kamalaśīla tries to show that although smoke is seen in many cases to accompany the presence of certain animals, yet it is not caused by their presence, inasmuch as it appears even in the absence of these animals.<sup>1</sup>

It seems then that both Mill on the one hand and Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla on the other, did have recourse to different devices in order to avoid the incongruity of admitting every case of unvarying sequence as a case of causation. But the devices concerned were different in the two cases. In Mill's case the device consisted of the introduction of the concept of 'unconditional sequence'. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla however avoided the incongruity by insisting that only in that case can an antecedent be a cause, when the consequent never appears without the antecedent.

#### Section V

#### Can Russell's View of Causation be Compared with the Buddhist views?

So far we have compared different Buddhist theories of causation with the causal theories of some British empiricist philosophers who have denied causal efficacy or operation. Now

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1. See chapter II, pp. 114-115.

causal operations were also denied by Bertrand Russell. Observing this, Stcherbatsky wanted to compare Buddhist theories of causation with Russell's interpretation of causal laws as well. We shall see to what extent such a comparison is feasible.

Stcherbatsky tried to compare the Buddhist analysis of causal relations, especially as it is introduced by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, with Russell's analysis of causal relations in terms of 'functional interdependence'.<sup>1</sup> We are, however, doubtful about the extent to which such a comparison is feasible, because formulae expressing 'functional interdependence' do not provide us with any clue whatsoever by means of which we can distinguish the cause from the effect. Buddhist analyses of causal relations are however, at least in the majority of cases, based on a clear distinction between a cause and an effect.

In the essay, 'On the Notion of a Cause',<sup>2</sup> Russell pointed out that the traditional presentation of the concepts of cause and effect is beset with numerous difficulties. He therefore recommended the replacement of the traditional concept of 'causation' by that of 'functional dependence'.

1. See BL, vol.I, pp.119, 142, 143.
2. Published in Mysticism and Logic, pp.132-151.

He remarked that the concepts of cause and effect play no part in the theoretical sciences like physics. "In the motions of mutually gravitating bodies", for example, "there is nothing that can be called a cause, and nothing that can be called an effect; there is merely a formula. Certain differential equations can be found, which hold at every instant for every particle of the system, and which, given the configuration and velocities at one instant, or the configurations at two instants, render the configuration at any other earlier or later instant theoretically calculable. That is to say, the configuration at any instant is a function<sup>1</sup> of that instant and the configurations at two given instants. This statement holds throughout physics..."<sup>2</sup>

Russell suggested that the pattern of the physicist's analyses should be extended to every field of study which deals with the notions of cause and effect. Instead of speaking, for example, of one event causing another, we should only speak of calculating the state of a system at any one time in terms of its state at any other time with the help of certain differential equations. Russell said that since the essential function that causality is supposed to perform is that of enabling us to infer the future from the past, or to

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1. Russell is using the word 'function' here in its mathematical sense. In the mathematical sense a function expresses a correspondence between two variables such that for every value of the one there are one or more determinate values of the other.
  2. Mysticism and Logic, p.141.

infer events at any time from events at certain assigned times, we can therefore easily replace the notion of causal relations by that of 'deterministic systems'. And he defined a 'deterministic system' in the following way:

"A system is said to be 'deterministic' when, given certain data,  $e_1, e_2, \dots, e_n$ , at times  $t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n$  respectively, concerning this system, if  $E_t$  is the state of the system at any time  $t$ , there is a functional relation of the form

$$E_t = f(e_1, t_1, e_2, t_2, \dots, e_n, t_n, t).$$

The system will be 'deterministic throughout a given period' if  $t$ , in the above formula, may be any time within that period...<sup>1</sup>

We can, with regard to a 'deterministic system', therefore, infer the value of any of its states at a particular time in terms of the values of its states at certain other assignable times.

Now we must make an important observation with regard to the relation of 'functional (inter-)dependence'. The relata of such a relation are really interdependent. One of them depends on the other in the same way in which the other depends on it. Both of them are, in this sense, exactly equal. We have, in that case, no way of telling which one of the two relata is the cause and

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1. Mysticism and Logic, p.145.



which one the effect. However, Buddhist interpretations of causal laws are, at least in the majority of cases, free from such a difficulty. According to Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, the effect comes into being depending on a set of conditions which have preceded it in an unvarying way. A cause is thus a collective name of a group of conditions which are unvaryingly followed by an entity called the effect. A cause is thus that which precedes, and the effect, that which succeeds.

Philosophers of the 'Sautrāntika' school also insisted that causes must, in all cases, precede their effects.<sup>1</sup> The 'Theravādins' and the 'Sarvāstivādins' however say that although the effect mostly succeeds the cause, yet in some cases it must be admitted to come into existence at the same time as the cause. Cases of the simultaneous beginning of causes and effects are exhibited by the 'simultaneous'- and 'closely associated-conditions' of the 'Theravāda' school and the 'simultaneous'- and 'closely associated-causes' of the 'Sarvāstivāda' schools. Only the relationships exhibited by these 'simultaneous'- and 'closely

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1. See p.190 above. According to the 'Sautrāntikas' causes precede their effects and do not continue to exist when the effect appears. The past is unreal; it does not exist at the present. Since the cause precedes its effect, it must be unreal or absent at the present. See A.Bureau's Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule, p.157, thesis 10 etc.

associated-conditions' and 'causes' can be compared to relations of 'functional interdependence' in the Russellian sense. Causes cannot, in these cases, be marked out as those factors which precede their effects.

Causal theories developed by most Buddhist schools do not thus have any parallel to Russell's interpretation of causal laws as laws of functional interdependence. Only the analysis of some causal relations made by the 'Theravādins' and 'Sarvāstivādins' can be compared to Russell's analysis of causal laws as laws of 'functional interdependence'.

But we must admit that both Russell and the school represented by Śāntrākṣita and Kamalāśīla share certain criticisms of the popular notions of a cause. Both Russell and this school of philosophers have argued against the ordinary notion of causal 'operation'.<sup>1</sup> Both have also argued that the ordinary notion of causation is fraught with anthropomorphic ideas. Russell, for example, pointed out that the idea of a causes's compelling the effect appears to have arisen from the assimilation of causes to human volitions. In his own words, "any set of circumstances is said to c<sub>o</sub>mpel A when A desires to do something which the circumstances

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1. For Russell see Mysticism and Logic, p.139, "The mistake in this maxim consists in the supposition that causes 'operate' at all". For the Buddhists see Chapter II, pp.103-112.

prevent, or to abstain from something which the circumstances cause."<sup>1</sup> We have also seen how Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla have warned us against holding such ideas as the cause's grabbing hold of the effect like a pair of pincers and then 'working' on it.<sup>2</sup> But inspite of these points of resemblance, the difference between Russell's interpretation of causal laws and that of the Buddhists is too great to be ignored.

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1. Mysticism and Logic, p.138.
  2. See Chapter II, p. 102.

## CHAPTER V

REMARKS ON THE THEORY OF THE 'TWELVE-MEMBERED DEPENDENT  
ORIGINATION'<sup>1</sup>

We have so far seen how the tendency to deny concepts like causal efficacy and production constituted a salient feature of theories of causation held by some Buddhist logicians.<sup>2</sup> We have also seen how some early Buddhist schools tried to explain causal connections without introducing any such concepts as production and efficacy.<sup>3</sup> With the help of their formula 'this being, that becomes',<sup>4</sup> they tried to analyse every causal process operating in the physical and mental world in terms of 'conditions' and 'that which they condition'. The doctrine on which such typically Buddhist analyses of causation are based is known in Buddhist circles as the 'doctrine of dependent origination' ('pratītya-samutpāda). But Buddhist philosophers of every school also spoke of another aspect of their special 'doctrine of dependent origination' which is known among Buddhist thinkers as the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we shall try to demonstrate that the origin of the idea that

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1. 'Dvādaśāṅga-pratītyasamutpāda'.
  2. See chapter II, pp. 94-123.
  3. See chapter IV, pp. 144f.
  4. 'Asmin sati idaṃ bhavati'.

the pivotal point of causation is not the concept of production, but merely that of necessary and sufficient conditions, can be traced in its rudimentary form even in this 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'.

Of course we are not suggesting that denial of the concepts of production and efficacy are as clearly formulated in the 'doctrine of <sup>the</sup> twelve-membered dependent origination' as it is in the analyses of causation<sup>1</sup> referred to above. In fact, concepts like cause ('hetu'), producer ('janaka'), condition ('pratyaya', 'paccaya'), 'jātika' ('descending from'), origination ('samudaya', 'prabhava', 'pabhava')<sup>2</sup> were used indiscriminately in ancient Buddhist texts in discussions of the significance of the 'twelve members' ('nidānas'), as if there was no difference at all between them.<sup>3</sup>

But although concepts of production and efficacy were not explicitly denied in the logical analyses of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' yet the following points must be considered with regard to such analyses.

The relationships between each 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' and its immediately succeeding or preceding 'member' are analysed, in the various works in which the

1. See p.214.
2. Throughout this chapter we shall try (when necessary) to give both the Sanskrit and the Pāli terms used in Buddhist literature. The Pāli term will always succeed the Sanskrit one.
3. See Keith's Buddhist Philosophy, p.97; Thomas' Buddhist Thought, p.58; DN, II, 57; SN, II, p.30.

doctrine is enunciated, as causal relationships. Yet if we scrutinise the relationships concerned deeply enough, we shall find that most of these relationships can be represented more easily as the relationship between the necessary and sufficient condition and that which they condition, rather than as the relationship between the producer and the produced. This shows very clearly that the relationship between the cause and the effect was, in some places at least, conceived by ancient Buddhist philosophers on the pattern of the condition and the thing conditioned.

Of course the relationship between one or two 'members' and their immediately succeeding or preceding 'member' may, at least at the outset, be comparable to the relationship between the producer and the produced as well. But then there are two alternative possibilities.

It is possible that the Buddhist philosophers concerned were using the term 'cause' to mean both<sup>1</sup> a 'condition' and a 'producer'. In that case they might have actually referred sometimes to a condition and at other times to a producer while talking about a 'cause'.

Alternatively, it is quite possible that although the relations between some 'members' apparently resembled relations between

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1. Not at the same time of course. But they may have used the term 'cause' sometimes to mean a 'condition' and at other times to mean a 'producer'.

a producer and the product, yet the Buddhist philosophers really meant<sup>1</sup> even by these relations merely connections between the conditions and the conditioned. This is very likely to have happened if a 'producer-cause' was analysable in Buddhist philosophy, in general, in terms of a condition or a group of conditions.<sup>2</sup> Buddhist philosophers might even have used words in these contexts which apparently signify 'production' and 'producer'. Yet it is quite likely that, they meant by these words 'appearance of things under certain conditions' and 'condition'. If a is in fact analysable as really being b, then we may sometimes<sup>3</sup> use the word 'a' while really meaning 'b'. For example, we may, on some occasions, talk about 'salt' while really meaning 'sodium chloride'. In this way, the Buddhist philosophers might really have meant 'condition' and 'appearance of things under certain conditions' by the use of the words which apparently mean 'producer' and 'production'.

If the first alternative alone is true, we can no longer make the stronger claim that the relation between each member of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' and its immediately following or

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1. As opposed to what they explicitly said.
  2. We shall, towards the end of this chapter, consider some reasons why we think that it is quite likely that a 'producer' was so analysed in Buddhist philosophy.
  3. If we have been habituated to using the word 'a' in our day to day conversation for a long time.

preceding 'member'<sup>1</sup> is a relation between the condition and the conditioned. Yet this does not prevent us from making the weaker claim that the term 'cause' has at least in some contexts been understood by Buddhist philosophers to refer to a condition in the logical analyses of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. Even if the first alternative alone were true, we can, on the basis of that alternative alone, hope to show that the rudiments of the analysis of causation in terms of conditioning, rather than in terms of production can be traced in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. But we have grounds for believing, as we shall show later,<sup>2</sup> that even the second alternative can be true. And if the second alternative were true, then that would strengthen our claim that the outlines of the theory of analysing causation in terms of conditioning can be found in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. In what follows, we shall first attempt an analysis of the relationship between most 'members' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' and their putative effects as that between the necessary and sufficient conditions and the conditioned. After that we shall state the reasons why we think that it is quite likely that even the second alternative is true.

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1. i.e. between each 'member' that is supposed to be the cause and that which is supposed to be the effect.

2. See 263f.



Before going on to demonstrate how we can analyse the relations between the majority of the twelve 'members' and their immediate successors as those between the necessary and sufficient conditions and the conditioned, we have to answer two preliminary questions. First, what do we exactly mean by necessary and sufficient conditions? Secondly, what does the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' really signify?

As regards the first question, since we shall speak of necessary and sufficient conditions at some length in a later chapter,<sup>1</sup> we shall only make a few necessary remarks here. Some factor is a necessary condition of another if the latter cannot exist without the former. A factor is a sufficient condition of another if the existence of the former inevitably implies the existence of the latter. In the words of Professor A. J. Ayer, "What is meant by saying that a is a sufficient condition of b is that however the circumstances are varied, other than those whose constancy is tacitly implied, a would not occur without b's also occurring; while what is meant by saying that it is a necessary condition of b is that b would not occur without it. But from this it immediately follows that if a is a sufficient condition of b, b is a sufficient condition of a; and if either one is a necessary and sufficient condition of the other, the relationship is reciprocal."<sup>2</sup>

1. See ch. VI, pp. 273-74

2. <sup>The</sup> Problem of Knowledge, A. J. Ayer, pp. 171-172, Pelican Series.

Section i

Significance of the 'Doctrine of the Twelve-membered  
Dependent Origination'

As regards the second question, there is controversy among Buddologists about the final import of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered<sup>1</sup> dependent origination'. While some scholars try hard to find in it an explanation of the origin or evolution of the cosmos<sup>2</sup> (or 'existence') others try to limit its explanatory force only to the analysis of the origination of 'suffering' ('dukkha', Pali 'dukkha').

The view that the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' is concerned with human suffering<sup>3</sup> is widespread among prominent Buddologists. Oltramare, for example, is of the

1. In fact, there is controversy even about whether there were actually twelve 'members' or 'nidānas' in the original formulation of this classical 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. For an account of other versions which put the number of the 'members' down to less than twelve see Conze's Buddhist Thought in India, p.157. See also note 1 of p.222 present chapter.
2. Cf. R.C. Childer's article in Life and Essays of H.T. Colebrooke, Vol. II, p.454). Eugène Burnouf (Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, p.486 f.) sees the whole doctrine as an attempt to explain the successive causes of the process by which phenomenal 'being' evolves from 'non-being'. Another scholar, M. Kern (Manual of Indian Buddhism, p.47 f.) believes that the doctrine is based on various ancient cosmogonic myths, describing poetically the destruction and creation of the world.
3. Or, for that matter, of human life in itself, inasmuch as it is vitiated with 'suffering' or 'unrest'. Some Buddologists, e.g. M. Oldenberg (Buddha, p.254 f.) are of the opinion that the doctrine concerns not only the present life of the individual, but also his past life and past actions of which the present life is a result, and also the future life which evolves from the present life. We agree with this view. [See p.222 note 1 below.]

\* Stchbatsky translated 'dukkha' as 'unrest' in CCB, <sup>see e.g.</sup> pp.42, 53.

opinion that the Buddha's aim in formulating this doctrine was not to explain the origin of life but only human suffering, and of explaining it thus without introducing a so-called permanent 'self' or God.<sup>1</sup>

After these brief remarks about the significance of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' we shall introduce a short explanation of the twelve 'members', in order to elucidate our view that the relationship between most of these 'members' and its following or preceding 'member' is that of necessary and sufficient conditions and that which they condition.<sup>2</sup>

The full significance of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' can be summed up in the form of the two following propositions:

1. '(a) Individual suffering, ('duhkha') is due to  
(b) individual actions, ('karma').'
2. '(b) Individual actions are due to, or arise under the influence of  
(c) 'infections'<sup>3</sup> ('kleśa').'

1. Oltramare (see FBCD, pp.28-29) said that it appears from the doctrine that the Buddha wanted to say that suffering was evolving in abstracto by the causal process initiated by ignorance [see pp. 246-248 for the meaning of 'ignorance' ('avidyā').]
2. At the very beginning of our introduction to these twelve 'members' or 'nidānas' we shall mostly use the word 'cause' instead of 'necessary and sufficient conditions'. We shall come to use the terms 'necessary and sufficient conditions' more vigorously when we actually come to our analysis of the members as 'necessary and sufficient conditions'.
3. 'Infection' ('kleśa') is used here as a generic term implying both 'ignorance' ('avidyā', , 'avijjā') of the real nature of things and craving or passion ('trṣṇā', 'taṇhā') which is aroused in individual human beings as a result of their putting wrong values to objects due to ignorance.

Now, the argument which we have put forward in a nutshell with the help of the two propositions mentioned above can be further analysed in greater detail for the sake of clarity. And this detailed analysis of this argument can be expressed in the form of twelve separate propositions.<sup>1</sup> Before going on to enunciate the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' in the form of these twelve propositions, it is necessary to make a few explanatory remarks about the detailed analysis of the twelve 'members'.

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1. There is a difference of opinion among Buddhologists about whether the doctrine that is traditionally known as the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' really represents the form in which the Buddha taught it. Some think that the original doctrine taught by the Buddha contained only a few of the twelve 'members' that tradition has handed down to posterity. They think that the doctrine in its traditional form (implying past, present, and future life) is only the result of later Scholastic (both 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda') interpretations. (See Conze's Buddhist Thought in India, p.157) According to Conze, originally the doctrine had nothing to do with rebirth. The basis of his argument is the fact that in a very large number of formulations of the doctrine in archaic Buddhist works four of the twelve members, which are essential for making the formula refer to rebirth, are missing (see BTI, p.157). For a detailed account of such variations in the enumeration of the twelve 'members' see IC, 197-9; AK, III, 70-72; Oltramare pp.27-36. We shall assume, for the sake of explanatory convenience, that the formula has reference to successive lives. Besides, the opinion of scholars like Conze contradicts completely the forceful argument behind the remarks of other very eminent Buddhologists like Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids. Cf. "In the central links we have the working of the process of sentience, culminating in the central links — sense-feeling-desire- and representing fresh ebullition, a new source of causal force reaching on into next birth. There its resultant is renewed sentience, eventually again to be darkened by the inevitable disease-decay-death- a centre of effects in sentience due to causes in the past". (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol9, 673 b). Mrs. Rhys Davids does not think that the rebirth-orientated doctrine is necessarily of later origin. See also Keith's Buddhist Philosophy, pp.97-98. See also n.1, p.220 in this connection.

In order to make the doctrine more intelligible the present life of the individual was analysed by Buddhist philosophers into greater detail. The present life is analysed first in the form of prenatal existence (in the form of a foetus in the mother's womb) comprising an amalgam of 'consciousness' ('vijñāna'; viññāna'), a 'psycho-physical complex' in the rudimentary form ('nāma-rūpa'), and the formation of the organs of sense ('ṣaḍāyatana', 'saḍāyatana').<sup>1</sup> The present life is then analysed in its post-natal stage as consisting of (a) the 'functioning of perceptual (and conceptual) processes' ('sparśa', 'phassa'); (b) the consequent 'craving' ('tṛṣṇā', 'taṇhā') of the individual (growing out of 'feelings' ('vedanā') of pleasure, pain etc.) for objects (perceived and conceived); and (c) lastly, as committing of further actions ('karma', 'kamma') by the individual under the influence of 'grasping' ('upādāna') after desired objects. The future life evolves as a consequence of such actions (committed under the influence of 'ignorance'). The future life is then analysed in two aspects: (a) 'birth' ('jāti'), and (b) 'aging + death' ('jarā-maraṇa'). The present life of the individual and its retributory

1. Sometimes 'ṣaḍāyatana' ('saḍāyatana') is interpreted as referring to that stage of the sense-organs when they are perfectly developed in a man, but have not yet started to function. In that sense, the 'ṣaḍāyatana' ('saḍāyatana') would refer to the sense-organs of the post-natal stage. (See Macgregor, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, p.173.)

principles could, not, however, appear inside the arena of the ever-revolving and ever-flowing cycle of existence at all unless these are, in their turn, conditioned by two principles, 'ignorance' ('avidyā') and voluntary actions' ('saṃkāras') committed by the individual in his past life. The twelve members of the archaic formulations of the 'doctrine of dependent origination' are then: (1) 'Ignorance' ('avidyā', 'avijjā'), (2) 'voluntary actions' ('saṃskāras', 'saṅkhāras'), (3) 'consciousness' ('viññāna', 'viññāna'), (4) 'psycho-physical complex' ('nāma-rūpa'), (5) 'sense-organs' ('ṣaḍāyatana', 'saḷāyatana'), (6) 'perception'<sup>1A</sup> ('sparśa', 'phassa'), (7) 'feeling' ('vedanā'),<sup>1B</sup> (8) 'craving' ('tṛṣṇā', 'taṇhā'), (9) 'grasping after desired objects' ('upādāna'), (10) 'actions committed in the present life', or 'commencement of the principle of present life' or, more briefly, 'becoming' ('bhava'), (11) 'birth' (present) ('jāti'), (12) 'aging and death' ('jarā-marana').

We are now in a position to put the argument behind the archaic formulations of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' in the form of twelve propositions in the following way.<sup>2</sup>

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1A & 1B. We prefer translations/ <sup>of</sup> 'sparśa' and 'vedanā' as 'perception' and 'feeling' in this context. See pp. 233-4 below in this connection.

2. The order in which we have presented these propositions corresponds to the order which is traditionally referred to in Buddhist texts as the 'reverse order' ('pratiloma deśanā') of the teaching of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. The usual order in which the doctrine is presented in Buddhist texts is known as the 'straight order' ('anuloma deśanā'). Cf. JRAS, vol. 37, article, 'Formulation of Pratitya-samutpāda', B.C. Law. .

- (i) Life is permeated with (12) (suffering, especially in the form of) 'aging and death'.
- (ii) The necessary and sufficient condition of (12) (suffering, especially), 'aging and death' is (11) 'birth'.
- (iii) The necessary and sufficient conditions of (11) 'birth' are (10) 'actions committed in the previous life' or 'becoming'.
- (iv) The necessary and sufficient condition of (10) 'actions committed in the previous life' or 'becoming' is (9) 'grasping after desired objects'.
- (v) The necessary and sufficient condition of (9) 'grasping' is (8) 'craving'.
- (vi) The necessary and sufficient condition of (8) 'craving' is (7) 'feeling'.<sup>1</sup>
- (vii) The necessary and sufficient condition of (7) 'feeling'<sup>2A</sup> is (6) 'perception'.<sup>2B</sup>
- (viii) The necessary and sufficient conditions of (6) 'perception' are the (5) 'sense-organs'.
- (ix) The necessary and sufficient condition of (5) 'sense-organs' is the existence of a (4) 'psycho-physical complex'.
- (x) The necessary and sufficient condition of the existence of the (4) 'psycho-physical complex' is the existence of (3) 'consciousness'

1. An ignorant person will either crave for pleasant feeling or desire to get rid of or hate painful feelings.

2A & 2B. See notes 1A and 1B, previous page.

(or conscious impressions which survive the physical death of an individual and become the necessary and sufficient condition of a next individual life).

- (xi) The necessary and sufficient condition of (3) 'consciousness' is (2) 'voluntary actions'.
- (xii) The necessary and sufficient condition of (2) 'voluntary actions' is (1) 'ignorance'.

Before going on to demonstrate the relation between each 'member' of the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' and its preceding or succeeding one<sup>1</sup> as that of a necessary and sufficient condition and that which they condition, it is necessary to make a few more explanatory remarks about the 'twelve members'.

### Section ii

#### More Explanatory Remarks About the 'Twelve Members'

We have already seen that 'suffering', such as (12) 'aging and death', is conceived in Buddhist philosophy as being conditioned by (11) 'birth'. Some Buddhist texts have, however, elaborated the last 'member', 'suffering', by saying that aging and death ('jarā-marāṇa'), grief ('śoka'), lamentation ('parideva'), sorrow ('duḥkha'),

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1. i.e. the relation between each 'member' and its putative 'effect'.



gloom ('daurmanasya'), and anguish ('upāyāsa') are all different forms of 'suffering'.<sup>1</sup> The reason why the latter five are added to (a) 'aging and death' in some texts and omitted in certain others is the following. Some scholars did not think it necessary to mention the latter five explicitly inasmuch as they thought that the concept of the different forms of 'suffering' is implied in that of 'aging and death'.<sup>2</sup>

The eleventh member, (11) 'birth', represents the 'becoming'<sup>3</sup> of the individual, his passing out of the mother's womb.<sup>4</sup> It is further analysed in the various Nikāyas and in the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā as the descent of the individual in a particular 'category' ('nikāya' and 'gati') of existence,<sup>5</sup> or the assuming of a new 'aggregate'<sup>6</sup> ('skandha', 'khandha') of the elements which survive the death of an individual.<sup>7</sup>

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- Buddhaghosa's as
1. See ~~the~~/definition of the first 'noble truth' / discussed by H.C. Warren in JPTS, 1891, p.136. See also TDDC, pp.31-32.
  2. Some texts conceived grief, lamentation etc. as forming a separate 'member' in the causal process. They depicted 'birth-aging-death' as causes (or conditions) of grief, terror, anguish etc. "Yattha atthi āyatiṃ jāti-jarā-maraṇaṃ sasokantaṃ bhikkhave sadaram saupāyāsan ti vadāmi" (SN, II, p.102); "Where there is in the future decay and death, I declare brethren, that with it is grief, affliction and despair". (Kindred Sayings, II, p.71.)
  3. See TDDC, p.31.
  4. See TDDC, p.31.
  5. e.g. the categories of human beings, animals, spirits, etc.
  6. The five 'aggregates' [pañca-skandha], 'khandha' ] are introduced in Buddhist philosophy in order to explain the particularity of individuals. The elements surviving the physical death of an individual are supposed to assume a new 'aggregate' and thus reappear in the world in accordance with the actions of an individual in his past life.
  7. See DN, II, 305, MN, III, 249, SN, II, 3, MKV, pp.557, 565. (Cf. May's translation, pp.263 f.)

Since the words (10) 'bhava' and (11) 'jāti' are very close in their meaning, and since they both can be translated as 'becoming', one is naturally faced with the difficult task of picking out their difference. One way of explaining their difference is to say that while the concept 'becoming' signifies merely the series of 'réexistences'<sup>1</sup> of the individual after death, the concept 'birth' specifies this 'réexistence' by saying that an individual is born to live a particular life in a particular state.<sup>2</sup> Another way of explaining this difference is to interpret 'becoming' as referring to the moment of conception,<sup>3</sup> as contrasted with the actual 'birth' of the individual. But the explanation which can explain this difference most satisfactorily is the one given by Buddhaghosa. According to him 'becoming' ('bhava') signifies only the acts<sup>4</sup> which condition 'réexistence'.<sup>5</sup> And 'birth'

1. We are deliberately using the French word, 'réexistence' here inasmuch as this word, in our opinion, brings out the dynamic aspect of existence, as conceived in Buddhism, more clearly, rather than the word 'rebirth'.
2. See Formule Bouddhique Des Douze Causes, Oltramare, p.10. "La naissance ponctue l'existence, ou, pour mieux dire, la série des existences d'un individu."
3. 'Pratisaṃdhi-kṣaṇa'. TDDC, p.30. See also Buddhist Philosophy, Keith, p.104.
4. 'Karmabhava'! See Visuddhimagga, XVII, p.201. See TDDC, pp.30-31. For an account of different kinds of being see P.C.Bagchi's article in Epigraphica Indica, XXI, p.203.
5. "Punarbhava-janakam karma", "paunarbhavikam karma". TDDC, p.30. Cf. also Compendium of Philosophy, p.189, n.1.

('jāti') refers to the effect of those actions.<sup>1</sup>

That which causes (10) 'becoming' (or 'réexistence') is (9) 'grasping' (in its various aspects). (9) 'Grasping' can be understood as our constant inclination to grasp objects of sensual pleasure.<sup>2</sup> It also refer to our adherence to (ii) 'false doctrines',<sup>3</sup> (iii) to 'moral and ascetic rites'<sup>4</sup> and to 'belief in a soul'.<sup>5</sup> The underlying significance is that we are reborn because we perform various actions under the influence of our constant inclination to grasp sensual objects. (De La Vallée Poussin defines 'grasping' as "cause de la force qui projette l'acte". See TDDC, p.27.) We are reborn also because we perform various actions under the influence of our tendency to 'grasp' 'false views'.<sup>6</sup>

Some texts treat (9) 'grasping', however, as nothing but an intense form of (8) 'craving'.<sup>7</sup> And it is of course needless to

1. For further remarks on the nature of the concept of 'becoming' see TDDC, pp.29-31. (10) 'Becoming' or 'existence' ('bhava') is conceived as being possible in three spheres of existence.
  2. 'Kāma-upādāna'.
  3. 'Dṛṣṭi, diṭṭhi upādāna'.
  4. 'Śīlārata, sīlabbata upādāna'.
  5. 'Ātmavāda, attavāda upādāna'.
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|---|--|
| } | <u>SN</u> , II, p.3; <u>DN</u> , II, p.58;<br><u>MN</u> , I, p.66. See also<br><u>TDDC</u> , p.27. |
|---|--|
6. e.g. belief in false doctrines, in the efficacy of moral rites etc. Because such actions are performed under the influence of 'desire' (or 'grasping') and 'ignorance', individuals committing them are bound to be reborn to reap the consequences.
  7. One text (SN, IV, 400) equates it straight away with 'craving' ('trṣṇā', 'taṇhā'). Another text, the Arya Śālistamba Sūtra, (p.80) equates it with 'excess of craving' ('trṣṇāvaipulya'). The same Samyutta Nikāya equates it, in other places (III, 101, 167; IV, 89) with a term similar in meaning to 'craving', namely 'chanda-rāga' (translated as 'exciting desire' in Pāli-English Dictionary, ed. T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, p.107).

elucidate how (8) 'craving' leads to rebirth.

According to De La Vallée Poussin the term 'upādāna', connotes not only the process of 'attachment' or 'grasping' but also the object of it.<sup>1</sup> This object is, metaphorically speaking, the 'fuel'<sup>2</sup> of the fire of passion or incessant grasping. 'Upādāna' is thus a comprehensive term denoting both the process of 'grasping' and the object grasped.

(9) 'Grasping' is either caused by, or merely an intense form of, (8) 'craving'. But what is 'craving', and how is it caused? When an ignorant man perceives an object, he either gets pleasurable or painful (7) 'feelings'. Pleasant 'feelings' make him 'crave' for the object of pleasure and act accordingly. Alternatively, he tries to avoid those objects which arouse painful 'feeling' in him and act accordingly. (8) 'Craving' is twofold, in accordance with whether the individual 'craves' either for having more pleasant 'feelings' or for severing himself from painful 'feelings'. Buddhist texts add a third kind of 'craving' to these two. Sometimes men also desire not to be parted from that 'neutral' 'feeling' which marks certain states of meditation in which there is neither any pain nor any pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

1. See TDDC, p.27.

2. Or the material which the fire consumes. This connotation of the term 'upādāna' is in keeping with its various etymologies. See TDDC, p.27 in this connection.

3. See TDDC, p.25; Keith Buddhist Philosophy, p.103. The word which we have translated here as 'neutral' is really 'adukkhamasukham' in Pāli, which literally means 'neither painful nor pleasant'. As such, this word does not qualify states of meditation only. It also refers to feeling felt in day to day life. It refers to a feeling that is neither markedly pleasant nor markedly painful.

Buddhist scholastics went on enumerating many other categories of (8) 'craving': sometimes it is (8) 'craving' for the 'objects perceived by the six sense-organs<sup>1</sup> [or for the six different (7) 'feelings' caused by six different kinds of (6) 'perception'<sup>2</sup>]. Sometimes it is of three kinds: (i) 'craving' for objects of sensual pleasure, (ii) 'craving' for existence, and (iii) 'craving' for non-existence<sup>3</sup> [or, according to certain interpretations, (see note 4 below) for power].<sup>4</sup>

'Feeling' is capable of causing desire only<sup>in</sup> an 'ignorant' man, who ascribes wrong values to objects perceived. When an 'ignorant' man perceives something he makes an 'incorrect judgment' ('ayoniṣo manaskāra'). This 'incorrect judgment' colours his (7) 'feelings' as well.<sup>5</sup>

1. SN, II, p.3.
2. TDDC, p.25.
3. DN, II, pp.61, 308; III, pp.216, 275; SN, III, pp.26, 158, V, p.420; Itivuttaka, p.50. For another different way of classifying (8) 'craving' see DN, III, p.216.
4. The term 'vibhava-taṇhā' can be translated both as "'craving' for non-existence or annihilation [also a mistaken 'craving', since it implies the reality of existence (or being or substance)] and as "'craving for power". For various discussions on the meaning of the term 'vibhava-taṇhā' see Suttanipāta, verses 856, 867; Atthasālinī, sec. 745 ad finem; Oldenberg's Buddha, p.243.
5. In the words of De La Vallée Poussin, the erroneous judgment "est cause d'ignorance concomitante à la 'vedanā' ('feeling')"; see TDDC, p.24

Because a saint ('arhat') can judge correctly, he does not succumb to 'craving'. According to the Sarvastivāda scholastics, although (8) 'craving' is conditioned by (i) 'ignorance', it itself in its turn nourishes (i) 'ignorance', inasmuch as it causes the delusive conception<sup>1</sup> of objects perceived.<sup>2</sup>

As is obvious from what we have said above, (7) 'feeling' can, firstly, be of three different kinds, namely, (i) pleasant, (ii) painful and (iii) neither markedly pleasant nor markedly painful.<sup>3</sup> It can also be categorised into six different ones in accordance with the feelings associated with the five different kinds of perception<sup>4</sup> and with conceptual cognition.<sup>5</sup> It is sometimes conceived as being contemporaneous with (6) 'perception'.<sup>6</sup> The relationship between (7) 'feeling' and (6) 'perception' has been compared, in the Majjhima Nikāya (III, pp.242-243), to that between the fire and the heat resulting from the friction between two pieces of wood. (Fire and heat are the common effects of a cause, i.e. friction).<sup>7</sup> Other texts, e.g. the

1. i.e. the man who craves perceives them as 'real' or 'existing in themselves'.
2. e.g. objects of visual perception, auditory perception etc.
3. SN, II, 53, 82 etc. See also TDDC, p.23 and Keith's Buddhist Philosophy, p.103. See also p. , n. , present chapter.
4. e.g. visual perception, auditory perception etc.
5. SN, II, p.3.
6. In the words of De La Vallée Poussin, "étant produits par un même complexe de causes ('sāmagrī')". TDDC, p.23.
7. This example is also meant to suggest the idea that the existence of a feeling is concomitant with that of a perception. In the same way, the existence of a perception can also be said to be concomitant with that of a feeling. On the basis of the premise that the existence of each of these is concomitant with that of the other, Buddhist philosophers  
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Atthasālinī (sec.286) conceive (7) 'feeling' as being the resultant of (6) 'perception'. De La Vallée Poussin pointed out that (7) 'feeling' has sometimes been represented as being concomitant and consascent even with (3) 'consciousness' (or analytical or discriminative knowledge) and 'volition'.<sup>1</sup>

In the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' (7) 'feeling' is said to be caused by (6) 'perception'. We are taking the liberty here of freely translating the word 'sparśā' (Pāli 'phassa') as 'perception'. The actual etymological meaning of the word is 'contact'. Buddhist philosophers believe that all the different forms of perceptual knowledge, e.g. visual, auditory etc. involve actual 'contacts' between the sense-organs and their corresponding objects. We would like to indicate, in this context, that their account of perception is not altogether incorrect. From our present scientific knowledge we know, for example, that in every case of seeing there is an actual contact between the light waves and the eye. In every case of hearing there is an actual contact between the sound waves and the ear-drums and so on. Of course Buddhist philosophers did not have the knowledge of soundwaves, lightwaves etc. which we now have. Yet even they must be credited with having rightly claimed that

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wanted to conclude that each of them is dependent on the other. We would, on the other hand, like to point out that the feeling concomitant with a perception is just caused by this perception.

1. See TDDC, p.24. "Un 'sūtra'... établit que la 'vedanā' est co-existante ('saṃsr̥ṣṭa'), con-née ('sahotpanna') à la 'samjñā'..., à la 'cetanā'..., à la 'vijñāna', connaissance dialectique (?)."

corresponding to every case where we see something or hear something, there is some process or other which establishes a relation between something external and a particular sense organ. In the case of visual perception, however, the Buddhist philosophers can no longer be shown to have correctly claimed that there is a 'contact' between the eyes and the object, (according to the present interpretation) since there is, strictly speaking, only a 'contact' between the visual organs and something<sup>1</sup> of the external object.

It is evident that Buddhist philosophers meant by 'contact' ('sparsá'), at least in the context we are discussing here, perception. However, Miss Horner translates 'phassa' (Sansk. 'sparsá') as 'sensory impingement', in Milinda's Questions, I, p.82.

Detailed analyses of the perceptual process of the individual can be found in the Nikāyas and some commentarial works. The Majjhima Nikāya, for example described 'visual perception' as originating in dependence upon (or being 'conditioned' by) the eye and colour (or matter or form). It further says that the 'correlation' of three factors [namely eye, form and visual sensation (or cognition)] is known as 'perception' (or 'contact').<sup>2</sup> Other forms of 'perception', e.g. auditory,

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1. i.e. the light waves emanating from the object.

2. 'Cakkhuṃ ca āvuso paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ, tinnaṃ saṅgati phasso...', MN, I, p.111.



olfactory etc. are also analysed, in a similar way, as resulting from the 'correlation' of the respective sense-organs, their corresponding objects, and the 'cognitions' ('vijñāna', 'viññāna')<sup>1</sup> which constitute essential factors of the corresponding 'perceptions'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in addition to the five sense-organs mentioned above, Buddhist philosophy introduces one more sense-organ which it designates 'mano-indriya'. Etymologically this word means 'mental organ'. But a proper rendering of this term, which conveys its full significance, is 'the faculty of intellection'.<sup>3</sup> Objects known by this faculty can be summed up by the word 'dharma' (Pāli 'dhamma'), which implies all 'non-sensuous objects', e.g. concepts, ideas, and even 'things in themselves', (designated as 'dharmas')<sup>4</sup>. The correlation of the 'faculty of intellection, a 'non-sensuous object', and the 'cognition' ('vijñāna') which originates (by being conditioned by these two factors)<sup>5</sup> is known as a (sixth) form of 'perception' or

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1. Some Buddhist texts, however, prefer to interpret these 'vijñānas' (or 'viññānas') as 'sensuous images' or 'bare awareness of particular sense-data'. [De La Vallée Poussin translates it as 'idée'. See TDDC, p.22.] According to them, those perceptions which can be expressed in propositional forms, (i.e. using Western logical terminology 'X is blue', or 'I know X as blue') require, in addition to 'vijñāna', ['adhivacana', literally 'denomination' (see TDDC, p.19, n.2.; p.22, para 2)]. See also MKV, p.74 in this context.
  2. See May's Candrakīrti Prasannapadā, pp.261-262. See especially note 941, 2 of p.261. See also Vasubandhu, Sthiramati's Trimsikā, p.20.
  3. Stcherbatsky translates it as 'the faculty of the intellect or consciousness'. See The Central Conception of Buddhism, pp.8, 96, 97.
  4. See Ch.II, pp.87-93, for the meaning of the word 'dharma'. Stcherbatsky refers to 'concept' ('saṃjñā'), 'feeling' ('vedanā'), and 'saṃskāra' ('volition') as the objects known by this faculty. See Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, p.236 under 'ādhyatmika-āyatana'.
  5. See SN, II, p.72; IV, pp.68, 86.

'intellectual intuition'.<sup>1</sup>

As we have already seen, 'perception' depends, for its origination, not on the sense-organs alone, but (at least) on their corresponding objects. Buddhist texts use one single word, 'āyatana', to denote both these factors. As it is extremely difficult to give an exact English rendering of this highly technical term, we shall use the expression 'source of perceptual (and 'intuitive') knowledge', as an approximate English corollary of this term 'āyatana'.<sup>2</sup> The five sense-organs such as eye, ear etc. are described in the Nikāyas as being material<sup>3</sup> but invisible, thus being distinguished from the fleshy organs in which they are immanent (or which 'support' them). The sixth organ, which we have translated as 'the faculty of intellection', is described

1. Some Buddhist texts, however, describe 'perception', as a resultant of such correlations and not the correlations themselves. The resultant is variously described, either as (i) 'vijñāna' or (ii) 'saṃjñā' [(i) 'consciousness', (ii) 'notion', 'perception', 'appellation']. See TDDC, pp.22-23. For the two opposing views consult AK, III, p.30; Atthasālinī, p.109. There is dissension among Buddhist philosophers also with regard to the number of the factors essential for a 'perception'. Some texts (e.g. SN, II, p.97; Milindapañho, p.60) think that only two factors are essential for 'perception'. Another text (Mahāvagga I, sec. 21) adds more factors to the three mentioned above.
2. Shcherbatsky tried to translate this term in various ways as 'entrance', 'door' (cf. MKV, p.564, 'āyatana' = 'āyadvāra'), 'that which introduces', 'support', meaning thereby that 'consciousness' arises in us 'through' or 'being supported by' these factors. He has given the etymological analysis of the term in Sanskrit as "āyaṃ tanoti", which means roughly, (the place) where 'motion' ('āyaṃ') 'reaches full expansion'. The term 'āyatana' thus stresses the dynamic character of 'consciousness'. See Central Conception, p.8.
- De La Vallée Poussin translates this term as, "siège, lieu de production, cause, domaine". (TDDC, p.18) These translations are also in keeping with the etymological analysis of the term as "āyaṃ tanoti".
3. But made of 'subtle matter' ('rūpa-prasāda'). See TDDC, p.18. Each sense-organ is composed of the same 'ultra-fine elements' (see Ch. IV, p.158,

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as being immaterial, invisible and not susceptible to contact.<sup>1</sup> The six organs are referred to as/<sup>the</sup>'internal sources of perception ('ādhyātmika-āyatana') and their corresponding objects are referred to as/<sup>the</sup>'external sources of perception' ('bāhyā-āyatana').<sup>2</sup> La Vallée Poussin notes that the Samyukta Nikāya (SN, II, p.24) equates these last 'sources' with 'external psycho-physical complexes' ('nāma-rūpas').<sup>3</sup>

He also points out that certain Buddhist texts<sup>4</sup> omit the (5) 'six sources of perception' from their enumeration of the 'members' ('nidānas') of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. These texts relate (6) 'perception' directly to the (4) 'psycho-physical complex' ('nāma-rūpa'). And he adds, "Ce qui s'entend aisément, car les six organes ne sont qu'une définition ou une précision du 'nāma-rūpa'. D'autres documents...omettent 'vijñāna' et 'nāmarūpa' (SN, II, 13; III, pp.46, 96), et, en effet, les six organes équivalent à "'nāma-rūpa' coupled with 'vijñāna'" (comp. DN, II, p.64)."<sup>5</sup>

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n.3 ) of which their corresponding material objects are composed. The sense-organs are also described as being susceptible to contact with their corresponding objects. See MN, I, p.190. See also MKV, p.126, n.1; Psychological Ethics, Mrs. Rhys Davids, p.173 in this context. And see specially TDDC, p.18, n.5.

1. See TDDC, p.19.
2. See MKV, pp.16, 31; CBN, p.236; SN, VI, p.175.
3. See TDDC, p.18.
4. Suttanipāta, 870, and DN, II, p.62.
5. TDDC, pp.19-20.

(6) 'Perception' thus necessarily implies the existence of a (4) 'psycho-physical complex' equipped with 'sense-organs'. But this (4) 'psycho-physical complex' alone is incapable of causing (6) 'perception' even being equipped with the 'sense-organs' unless it is aided by (3) 'consciousness'. Yet it is difficult to determine exactly what sort of relationship exists between (3) 'consciousness' and the (4) 'psycho-physical complex'. All that we manage to understand from some cryptic remarks of the Nikāyas is that<sup>1</sup> the (4) 'psycho-physical complex' and (3) 'consciousness' necessarily 'depend' on each other. What is really meant is something like the following:

On the one hand, individual 'consciousness' could not exist at all unless the 'psycho-physical complex' itself existed first. (See TDDC, p.13.) Here the words 'psycho-physical complex' refer probably to the foetus and not to the individual as such. According to this interpretation consciousness ('vijñāna') is in principle separable from the 'psycho-physical complex'. [See SN, II, p.3; MN, I, p.53.] Yet it does not, in practice, exist (as an individual consciousness) without being conjoined with some 'psycho-physical complex' or other. It is supposed to descend into the womb and, by being conjoined with the foetus, to form an integral part of an individual as such. Besides, the different

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1. See SN, II, 104; DN, II, 63. See also TDDC, p.13. The relationship between (3) 'consciousness' and<sup>the</sup> (4) 'psycho-physical complex' has been compared to that between two reeds standing by supporting each other. See also May's Candrakīrti Prasannapadā, pp.268-269, and n.975.

forms of perceptual experience<sup>1</sup> which an individual is capable of having depend, for their origin, on the functioning of the sense-organs of the individual (i.e. 'the psycho-physical complex'). On the other hand, the particular 'psycho-physical complexes' which we individuals have depend, according to Buddhist philosophy, on 'consciousness'; because it is (3) 'consciousness' which survives the death of the body and assumes a new existence by being inseparably connected (or finding a new support) with a different body.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore (3) 'consciousness' which determines not only the 'psychical frame work' of an individual [(4) 'psycho-physical complex'] but also [according to certain Buddhist texts, see TDDC, p.13] its particular bodily structure.<sup>3</sup> Besides the 'psycho-physical complex' could not exist at all without (3) 'consciousness' itself.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of such observations, it is

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1. Buddhist texts describe them as 'prativijñāna', i.e. 'consciousness in its active form'. See TDDC, p.13, Cf. May's Candrakīrti Prasannapadā, p.270, n.981. May discusses the term 'prativijñapti' instead of 'prativijñāna'.
  2. "Dans les cas ordinaires en raison d'actes ou dispositions anciennes ('saṃkāras') entre après la mort dans une nouvelle existence." TDDC, p.12. See also MKV, p.543. "Saṃniviśate...gatau." See also Keith, *op.cit.*, p.101.
  3. See TDDC, p.13. "Le 'vijñāna', principe spirituel...de la génération." 'Consciousness' has also, sometimes, been regarded as the "principe vital". See TDDC, pp.13, 14; and FBDC, p.15.
  4. According to this interpretation, a particular individual (3) 'consciousness' necessarily forms an integral part of a (4) 'psycho-physical complex'. (See TDDC, p.14). 'The psycho-physical complex' does not, however, signify any substantial unity. See TDDC, p.16. It is only that which determines the individuality of individuals. See TDDC, p.17. The Sanskrit/Pāli word which we have rendered into English as 'psycho-physical complex', signifies, in the opinion of some Buddhologists, on very rare occasions, 'the external world'. See in this connection TDDC, pp.17-18; JRAS, 1905, p.402. See also p.237. The passage they refer to is in the Samyukta Nikāya, II, p.24.

concluded, in the Samyutta Nikāya (SN, II, p.104) and the Dīgha Nikāya, (DN, II, p.63) that consciousness and the 'psycho-physical complex' are interdependent.

Buddhist philosophers have taken great pains to prove that (3) 'consciousness' does not represent any static permanent substantial entity. (3) 'Consciousness', according to them, implies dynamic streams of ever-changing conscious moments ('vijñānasrota') which usually<sup>1</sup> arise being conditioned by the correlation of factors like sense-organs, their corresponding objects and "un élément intellectuel" (possibly an act of attention).<sup>2</sup>

It is (3) 'consciousness' which conditions a new 'individuality' or 'personality', known in Buddhist technical terminology as a (4) 'psycho-physical complex'. But what conditions this (3) 'consciousness' itself, which marks the beginning of a new existence? In 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophy this unique conditioning factor consists of our (2) 'voluntary actions' ('saṃskāras', 'saṅkhāras').

1. I have used the word 'usually' here because I am not very sure whether this 'consciousness' would be entirely identified by Buddhist philosophers with the 'consciousness' that survives 'physical death' and conditions the next birth of a human being. See also p.239, n.2. The former 'consciousness' is undoubtedly related to the latter one, yet it is very difficult to determine what sort of relationship it really is. The former one is sometimes designated as 'pravṛtti-vijñāna' (see p.239, n.1). The latter one is probably that which is variously described as that which is 'invisible' ('anidassanam') [or 'cannot be characterised' (see Middle Length Sayings, I, p.392)], 'infinite' ('anantam'), 'luminous all over' ('sabbata pabham'). [See MN, I, p.329; DN, I, 223.]

For a difference of interpretation see Dialogues of the Buddha, I, p.283, n.2. See also Régamey's Three Chapters from the Samadhirajasutra, Preface, p.26.

2. See TDDC, p.14; See also MN, I, p.257.

We are born in particular states in order to reap the consequences of our past actions. Our particular 'mental'<sup>1</sup> as well as 'physical'<sup>2</sup> make-ups, and the particular situations in which we find ourselves are thus conditioned by our past 'voluntary actions'. We are, in normal circumstances, rewarded or punished by some agents, e.g. parents, judges etc. Sometimes, when no external 'dispenser of justice' is visible, we attribute such power of dispensing to an 'Invisible Judge', i.e. God. Since the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers did not believe in the existence of such a personal Creator God, they suggested that our actions themselves determine the forms of our reward or punishment. [Since the actions can, strictly speaking, no longer be said to exist once they have been committed, Buddhist philosophers may be expected to come forward with the following modified proposition: "The 'impressions' of the 'voluntary actions' persist in a state of flux, surviving the 'physical deaths' of people, and determine the mental and physical make-ups of new individuals."<sup>3</sup>]

We have used the words 'voluntary action' here as an English rendering of the term 'saṃskāra' (Pali 'saṅkhāra'). Actually, this

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1. Here we find the direct connection between 'voluntary actions' and 'consciousness'.
  2. See CCB pp.34-35. See also AK, I, p.37.
  3. Cf. Jayatilleke's 'Problems of Translation and Interpretations,' UCR, vol.7, p.216.

highly technical term 'saṃskāra' has many different connotations, depending on the variety of circumstances in which it is used. Accordingly, it is impossible to produce one single English expression which would convey all the different connotations of this word. Etymologically, this term implies 'that which puts (or 'acts') together'.<sup>1</sup> In this sense the term 'saṃskāra' ('saṅkhāra') can quite easily be used to signify 'action'. It is undoubtedly in the sense of 'action' that the term 'saṃskāra' has been used in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' as denoting its second 'member'.<sup>2</sup> But any act whatsoever is not a 'saṃskāra'. A 'saṃskāra' must necessarily be a 'voluntary action',<sup>3</sup> if

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1. TDDC, p.10; CCB, p.20, especially n.5; BL, I, p.127, n.6. 'saṃskṛtatvaṃ'... 'sambhūya kāritra'. In this sense, even 'imagination' ('prakalpa'), which is essentially a false construction (i.e. which knits false 'ideas' together) can be designated a 'saṃskāra'. This 'imagination' is said to have as its 'point d'appui' empiricall 'thought' or 'consciousness' (MN, III, p.99; SN, II, p.65), such as false ideas like 'I exist'. Such false 'thoughts' and 'ideas' help 'imagination' in its function of incessant mental fabrication of false ideas. See TDDC, pp.10-11.
  2. TDDC, p.10, See also CCB. p.20, n.7. See also Keith's Buddhist Philosophy, p.100.
  3. This 'voluntary action' can either be 'meritorious', 'demeritorious', or 'neutral' ['āniñjya'-(āneñjya, ānejya) abhisāṅkhāraṃ'] [See SN, II, p.82, V, p.450; AK, IV, p.107, n.1. The word 'saṃskāra' ('saṅkhāra') can also imply 'actions' of the body, e.g. 'inhalation' and 'exhalation'; of speech, e.g. 'critical argumentation' ('vitarka') and 'critical analysis' ('vicāra'); and of mind, e.g. 'conceptualisation' or 'denomination' ('saṃjñā'), and 'feeling' ('vedanā'). [See MN, I, p.301; SN, IV, p.293; Vibhaṅga, p.135. See also TDDC, pp.9 and 10]. But no action can be retributive 'saṃskāra' unless it is conditioned by a 'volition' ('cetanā'). It is in order to stress this point, that the word 'saṃskāra' has sometimes been directly applied to 'volition'. (TDDC, p.10 and FBDC, p.16). It must be noted in this context that the position of Buddhist philosophers in maintaining that overt voluntary actions are 'results of counterpart hidden operations of willing' is in direct opposition to the position of philosophers like

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it is to be retributive, (in the sense of causing 'rebirth', ['punarbhavābhisamkāra', MKV, p.543. See also TDDC, p.12]).

Many scholars, e.g. Keith (Buddhist Philosophy, p.100) and K.N. Jayatilleke (Some Problems..., in UCR, vol.7, pp.208-224) have tried to translate the word, 'saṃskāra' ('saṅkhāra') as it is used in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination' as 'disposition'. But we do not feel happy about this translation of the term 'saṃskāra' ('saṅkhāra'). Professor Jayatilleke has given three reasons for his preference for the term 'disposition'. The reasons he has given are as follows. Firstly, the word 'disposition' denotes pattern reactions. Secondly, it has the necessary dynamic quality of 'saṃskāra' in influencing the present, and thirdly, it comes to mean an organised mental tendency produced from past experience.<sup>1</sup>

Now, in the first place, the word 'saṅkhāra' undoubtedly means 'voluntary action' in the context of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. In that case, there seems to be no justification for translating it as 'disposition'. Disposition signifies merely a

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Gilbert Ryle (The Concept of Mind, pp.61-72). They do not believe that there are any 'secret operations' 'in the mind', corresponding to 'volitions', which are related to overt voluntary actions as their causes. For different meanings of the word 'saṃskāra' see CCB, pp.6, 7, 20-23, 29, 39, 53, 69.

1. 'Some Problems of Translation,' p.223.

tendency. In contrast to a disposition, a voluntary action is an overt happening which takes place at a particular time and place.

It is possible that Dr. Jayatilleke wanted to point out that the word 'saṅkhāra' primarily means, as the second 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination', an act of willing and not voluntary actions as such.<sup>1</sup> That is probably the reason why he commented that 'saṅkhāra' denotes 'an organised mental tendency'. But even then we must point out that an act of willing can, on no account, be compared to a disposition, in any sense of the term 'disposition'.

An act of willing is not similar to disposition in the Rylean sense of the term. According to Ryle 'dispositions' merely denote tendencies or capacities. Thus he comments that "to possess a dispositional property is...to be liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is realized."<sup>2</sup> "Dispositional statements are", according to him, "neither reports of observed or observable states of affairs, nor yet reports of

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1. Such an opinion would go against the views of eminent scholars like Stoherbatsky (see CCB, p.20, n.7), Keith (see Buddhist Philosophy, p.100) and De La Vallée Poussin (see TDDC, p.10) who believe that 'saṅkhāra' refers to voluntary action in the present context.
  2. The Concept of Mind, p.120, italics ours.

unobserved or unobservable states of affairs. They narrate no incidents."<sup>1</sup> He further adds, "To say that a person knows something, or aspires to be something,<sup>2</sup> is not to say that he is at a particular moment in the process of doing or undergoing anything, but that he is able to do certain things, when the need arises, or that he is prone to do and feel certain things in situations of certain sorts."<sup>3</sup> There is no reason to think, on the other hand, that acts of willing signify merely tendencies or capacities.

Of course there is another sense of the term 'disposition' which Ryle has not taken account of. Such a sense of the term can be found in a statement of the form, 'I was disposed to hit him'. Here the word 'disposed' does signify that a person was, at a particular moment in the process of doing or undergoing something.<sup>4</sup> But an act of willing is not comparable to a disposition even in this sense of the term 'disposition'. An act of willing does also refer to something a person is in the process of doing. Yet willing refers to a deliberate choice. When I am disposed to hit somebody, on the other hand, I need not deliberately choose to do so.

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1. The Concept of Mind, p.43. Italics ours.
  2. The verbs 'to know', 'to aspire' etc. signify dispositions according to Ryle.
  3. The Concept of Mind, p.112. Italics ours.
  4. See the second quotation from The Concept of Mind, in the preceding paragraph.

We have already seen<sup>1</sup> that individual 'suffering' is due to 'voluntary actions'. What causes this 'voluntary action' itself is (1) 'ignorance'. Briefly speaking, we act in a particular way because we are ignorant of the real nature of objects, put wrong values to them and crave either for possessing or for getting rid of them. For example, a small baby would crawl towards a lighted cigarette butt lying on the floor and try to play with it, because it does not know what red hot fiery objects are really like. Adult (2) 'voluntary actions' are also conditioned by various sorts of (1) 'ignorance' and 'craving' resulting from such (1) 'ignorance'. Although 'ignorance' may be summed up as (1) 'ignorance' of how 'suffering' is caused and how to get rid of it, as well as of the real nature of both external objects and 'self', Pāli scholasticism has gone quite a way in its fabrication of the different items that can be listed under (1) 'ignorance'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See p. 221

2. (1) 'Ignorance' is described as the (i) 'ignorance' of 'causation', which includes both causal explanation of the origin and destruction of 'suffering' [i.e. 'the Four Noble Truths', (see pp 84-5 ch. III). See DN, II, p.90, Suttanipāta, verse 724, SN, V, p.439, Vibhaṅga, p.135, Netti-pakarana, p.28.] and causal explanations of objects and entities ('idappaccayata-paticcasamuppannā dhammā,' see Netti-pakarana, p.28). 'Ignorance' is further categorised into (ii) 'ignorance' of the origin and disappearance of the 'five aggregates' ('pañcaskandha', or 'khandha') which explain individuality (see pp 84-5 ch. III) in Buddhist thought, (see SN, III, pp.162, 171); (iii) 'ignorance' concerning 'self' (or substance); (iv) 'ignorance' of taking what is really 'painful' as 'pleasant', what is 'transitory' as 'eternal', what is devoid of self as possessed of self (Suttanipāta, verse 756), and what is 'impure' as 'pure' (see MKV, pp.460-461). 'Ignorance' has been described in the Visuddhimagga (XVII, in Warren's Buddhism in Translation, p.170) as 'ignorance' concerning our past, our future, the relation between past and present and so on. All the items listed under 'ignorance' imply and hence can be summed up as wrong evaluation of the objects of experience. 'Ignorance of causal

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One must not come to the conclusion that since (1) 'ignorance' is represented as the first 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination', it itself is therefore uncaused. It is described in the Canon, as well as in the commentarial literature, as being due to the 'five hindrances' ('nivarana's'), i.e. 'craving',<sup>1</sup> 'spitefulness', 'sloth' and 'torpor', 'pride' and 'skepticism'.<sup>2</sup> The Samyukta Nikāya (IV, p.70) and the Anguttara Nikāya (V, pp.113, 116) add many more items to the list of causes of 'ignorance'. But commenting on them<sup>de</sup> La Vallée Poussin says, "'Convoitise, méchanceté', etc. peuvent être résumés en un mot, 'trṣṇā',<sup>3</sup> 'soif, désir'. La soif cause, nourrit l'ignorance, comme l'ignorance la soif; ni l'une ni l'autre n'ont eu de commencement (voir Oltramare, p.34 f., Visuddhim., XVII apud Warren, 171; comp. Majjh, I, 54, où l'ignorance est en causation réciproque avec les 'āsravas', concupiscence, désir de

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explanations of the origin and cessation of suffering' also implies 'wrong evaluation' inasmuch as we 'suffer' precisely because we act under the influence of desire growing out of our wrong evaluation of objects. For further accounts of 'Avidyā' ('avijjā') and the items listed under it consult TDDC, pp.6-7; P.C.Bagchi's 'A Note on the Pratītya-samutpāda-sūtra', published in Epigraphica Indica, vol.XXI, pp.202-203. For original sources consult Mahāvagga, VI, sec. 29 (SBE, XVII, p.104); MKY; pp.328, 542, 564; Visuddhimagga, XVII, pp.527-528; Netti-pakarapa, p.75; pp.10-11; Suttanipāta, verses 1032-1033; AK, III, p.28.

1. Italics ours.
2. TDDC, p.8.
3. Italics ours.

l'existence, hérésie)"<sup>1</sup>

De La Vallée Poussin also tries very hard, in keeping with the argument quoted above, to bring to our notice the extremely important point that (1) 'ignorance' is not causally connected with its immediately succeeding 'member'<sup>2</sup> alone. 'Ignorance' must be present in every case in which any one of the rest of the 'twelve members' is causally responsible for its following 'member'. Unless 'ignorance' is there, no 'member' can cause the succeeding 'member'. 'Ignorance' is thus a necessary condition of the fact of some other 'member' causing its succeeding 'member'. 'Ignorance' is in fact a necessary condition in every case in which one 'member' acts as the cause of the following 'member'. In defence of his thesis he refers us to the Abhidharmakośavākhyā<sup>3</sup> and the Samyutta Nikāya<sup>4</sup> where it is argued that "si la sensation ('vedanā') agréable (ou désagréable) produit la soif (ou le dégoût), c'est qu'elle procède d'un contact auquel l'ignorance est associée ('avidyāsparśa jaṃ veditaṃ pratityotpadyate 'tṛṣṇā'...)"<sup>5</sup>. He adds, "C'est l'ignorance qui fait de sensation un "membre" (aṅga), c'est-à-dire un élément causal de l'existence: car la sensation ne produirait pas la soif s'il n'y avait pas l'ignorance chez celui qui sent...."<sup>5</sup>

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1. TDDC, p.8. Italics ours.
  2. i.e., 'voluntary actions'.
  3. See TDDC, p.9.
  4. SN, III, pp.46, 96.
  5. TDDC, p.9.

Section iii

Analysis of the Twelve 'Members' as Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

After introducing a short explanation of the different 'members' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' we are now in a position to give our reasons why we think that the relationship between most 'members' and their immediate successors can more easily be represented as that between either a necessary or a sufficient condition, or a both necessary and sufficient condition and the conditioned.<sup>1</sup> This gives us the opportunity to defend our thesis<sup>2</sup> that the rudiments of the idea that causation can be analysed in terms of conditioning, rather than in terms of production, can be traced in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'.

Our view is based mainly on two arguments: (1) the language in which we can express the relationship between one 'member' and its immediately following one appears more natural with the introduction of terms like 'necessary' and 'sufficient condition' and 'the conditioned', rather than with that of terms like 'producer' and 'the product'. (2) Secondly, the relationship between one 'member' and its immediate successor<sup>3</sup> is, in most cases, that of reciprocity.

1. See pp. 216, 219

2. See pp. 214-5 present chapter.

3. In other words, between a so-called 'cause' and its so-called 'effect'.

Yet although the producer can, in all cases, be said to produce the product, the product can never be said to produce the producer.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, for both these reasons, it seems more natural to analyse, as pointed on the previous page, the relationship between most 'members' and their immediate successors (i.e. their supposed 'effects') as that between necessary conditions, or sufficient conditions or conditions which are both sufficient and necessary, and that which they condition. To analyse their relationship as that between a producer and the produced would appear highly artificial.

The Sanskrit/Pāli words which are most frequently used to denote the relationship between the different 'members' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination', are 'pratyaya, paccaya'. Thus we very often come across descriptions like the following in the Nikāyas,<sup>2</sup> "Vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ..." Such statements are usually translated as: "Conditioned by 'feeling' 'craving' comes to pass, conditioned by 'craving' 'grasping' comes to pass."<sup>3</sup> The corresponding descriptions in Sanskrit, using the word 'pratyaya' can be found e.g. in the MKV (pp.554, 555).<sup>4</sup> Other words which explain the

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1. See p.156, n.1<sup>263</sup> below.
  2. SN, II, pp.1-2.
  3. Kindred Sayings, II, p.2.
  4. Cf. May's Candrakīrti Prasannapadā, p.262.



('prabhava')

'members' are 'hetu',<sup>1</sup> 'nidāna', 'samudaya', 'pabhava', 'jātika'.<sup>2</sup>

Now all these terms, 'hetu', 'paccaya', 'nidāna', 'samudaya', 'pabhava', 'jātika' have often been used almost synonymously, as if there were no distinction in their meanings.<sup>3</sup> This shows clearly that despite the fact that all these words<sup>4</sup> are slightly different in meaning, they have all been understood by Buddhist philosophers to have something in common. What is that common factor? All these terms have been understood by

1. See specially MKV, pp.553, 554, 557.
2. DN, II, pp.57-59, 62-63; SN, II, pp.52-53.
3. See Pali-English Dictionary, PTS edition, p.192. Later Pāli scholastics tried to draw a distinction between a 'hetu' and a 'paccaya'. See Pali-English Dictionary, p.192.
4. There is an incredible variety in the way in which these terms have been translated into English. See Dialogues of the Buddha, part II, pp.52-55, 58-61; Kindred Sayings, II, pp.39-40. Both the words 'hetu' and 'paccaya' have sometimes been translated as 'cause' and sometimes as 'condition'. It shows clearly that there was confusion among Buddhologists as to (1) whether the Buddhist theory of 'dependent origination' is about production, or about conditioning. P.C. Bagchi, (see Epigraphica Indica, vol. XXI, pp.199-204, passim, see especially, p.27), Otramare (see FBDC, p.9), de La Vallée Poussin (TDDC, passim, see specially p19) all seem, to a certain extent, to suffer from this confusion. This confusion itself may be a result of the confusion which Buddhist philosophers themselves had about whether the term 'cause' signifies either a 'producer' or a 'condition' or both. See ch. III, pp.122-123 about the distinction between a 'cause' and a 'condition'.

Buddhist philosophers to represent some aspect or other of a 'cause'.<sup>1</sup>

Let us assume then, for the sake of brevity, that the relationship between each 'member' and its succeeding one is that of cause and effect. Now the question is, does this word 'cause' signify here a 'producer', or does it signify a 'condition'? The translation of the word 'jātika' as 'source of production' in the Kindred Sayings<sup>2</sup> does not really help us in our enquiry. Because this word has been used synonymously with 'nidāna', 'samudaya', 'pabhava' in the Samyukta Nikāya, which have been translated as 'base', 'uprising', 'cause' in the Kindred Sayings (II, pp.39-40). The words 'nidāna' and 'samudaya' have, moreover, been used synonymously with 'hetu' and 'paccaya' in the Dīgha Nikāya (II, pp.57-58), which have been translated as 'ground' and 'cause' in the Dialogues of the Buddha (pp.52-55). None of the words like 'base', 'uprising', 'ground', 'cause' need necessarily imply

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1. That they have been so understood is/evident from the fact that the word 'cause' is always found in the midst of a large number of words given in the Pali Dictionary, as well as in various translations of the Nikāyas, as English renderings of the words 'paccaya', 'pabhava', 'samudaya', 'hetu' and 'nidāna'. (See Pali-English Dictionary, PTS edition, pp.6, 37, 146, 192 [Part II]; and p.194 [Part I]. See also Dialogues of the Buddha, Part II, pp.52-55, 58-61; Kindred Sayings, II, pp.39-40.) For the meaning of the word 'jātika' see Pali-English Dictionary, PTS, edition, under the word 'jāti', (Part I, p.114) and 'jātika' (p.115).
  2. See Kindred Sayings, II, pp.39, 41. Many other authors have also introduced words like 'produce', 'producer' in their analysis of the relationship between the individual 'members' of the 'dependent origination'. See e.g. P.C.Bagchi's 'A Note on the Fratītya Samutpāda', in Epigraphica Indica, vol.XXI, pp.199-204, passim, especially p.207. See also note 4 of p.252.

'production'. Moreover, it is quite possible, as we have already remarked,<sup>1</sup> that since a 'producer-cause' was analysable, in Buddhist philosophy in general, in terms of a 'condition', Buddhist philosophers might have really meant by the words 'source of production' merely 'condition for origination'.

Now, if we analyse the concepts of (11) birth and (12) aging and death we immediately feel inclined to represent their relation in terms of conditions (One should not conclude that since the relationship between one 'member' and its immediate successor has been understood by Buddhist philosophers to be a causal relationship, and since that same relationship has been analysed by us as that of conditioning, we therefore understand by causation nothing but conditioning. On the contrary, we believe that the concept of 'causation' is inexplicable without that of 'production'. See chapter VI in this connection.) We feel tempted to say that the (11) birth of an individual is a necessary and sufficient condition of his subsequent (12) aging and, in most cases,<sup>2</sup> even of death.<sup>3</sup> If anything may be said to 'bring about' the

1. See p. 217
2. In those cases where death is due simply to the failure, on the part of the vital organs, to function at a very old age, we can undoubtedly say that birth is both a necessary and sufficient condition of death. But in cases of accidental deaths and untimely deaths, we can only say that birth is only their necessary condition. Their sufficient conditions are those extraneous factors like the accident.
3. N. Dutt's statement in the Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism, (p. 209) also seems to corroborate our view: "*Jāti*' cannot be the cause of '*jarā-marāṇa*'. The underlying idea is that if there be '*jāti*', it is inevitably followed by '*jarā-marāṇa*'." Italics ours. He probably means by 'cause' a 'producer'.

(untimely) death, in some cases, of an individual<sup>1</sup> is some particular accident or disease.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship, between all the other 'members', with the exception<sup>2</sup> perhaps of that between (i) the first and the second, (ii) the second and the third, (iii) the ninth and the tenth, and the (iv) tenth and the eleventh, lends itself very easily to the analysis in terms of condition and the conditioned.

We have already noticed<sup>(see p. 228)</sup> that the terms representing the tenth ('bhava') and the eleventh ('jāti') 'members' are very close in their meaning and Buddhist philosophers had to struggle very hard to explain their difference. This fact in itself suggests that the relationship between them is more likely to be that between a necessary and sufficient condition and that which they condition rather than that between a producer and a product.<sup>3</sup> Even supposing that the tenth 'member' represents 'the series of 'réexistences' whereas the eleventh one is merely a specification of it,<sup>4</sup> it sounds very artificial to say

1. We cannot, however, speak of anything as bringing about aging. Aging does not require any external 'producing factor'. It is the inevitable consequence of the birth of living organisms.
2. See pp. 227-230, 238-248  
Consult these pages also for the technical terms referring to these 'members'.
3. Production necessarily implies the existence of two separate objects (e.g. the hen and its eggs) or events. Whereas, in the case of conditions, if a (e.g. X's being an equiangular triangle) is a necessary and sufficient condition of b (e.g. X's being an equilateral triangle) then we can separate a and b only by logical abstraction.
4. See p. 228

that 'réexistances' 'produce' their specification, 'birth'. It seems more natural to say that 'réexistances' necessarily imply,, or are 'necessary and sufficient conditions' of their specification, namely 'birth'.<sup>1</sup>

But if we take the tenth 'member' as signifying 'voluntary actions',<sup>2</sup> then of course it may be more natural to say that our 'voluntary actions' 'bring about' 'rebirth' after death.<sup>3</sup> We would like to point out that in this interpretation the producer, voluntary action, belongs to a former life and the product, rebirth, to a subsequent life. As contrasted with this, the former interpretation does not place the cause ('réexistence') and the effect, birth, in different lives.

We have already brought the attention of readers to the question whether (9) 'grasping' really represents an independent 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'.<sup>4</sup> It is possibly only an intense form of (8) 'craving', and in that case, strictly speaking it cannot be said to be 'produced' by 'craving'.<sup>5</sup>

Although (8) 'craving' may, in a sense, be described as

1. The converse of this proposition, namely, 'birth' is a necessary and sufficient condition of 'réexistances' is also true.
2. See p. 228
3. Or rather, they determine the particular character of our 'psycho-physical make-up' in a next life. See p. 241.
4. See pp. 229 -230.
5. See n.3 of p. 254.

being brought about by (7) 'feeling', yet it becomes extremely difficult to say whether (a) it is (7) 'feeling' which produces (8) 'craving' while (1) 'ignorance' is a necessary condition of such a production, or whether (b) it is 'ignorance' which produces (8) 'craving' whereas (7) 'feeling' is a necessary condition of such a production.<sup>1</sup>

(7) 'Feeling' can, in a sense, be described as being 'produced' by (6) 'perception'. Yet doubt is cast on such an efficacious power of (6) 'perception' by some remarks found in Pāli texts such as: 'feeling' is contemporaneous and concomitant with 'perception'. [In the words of <sup>De</sup> La Vallée Poussin, "étant produits par un même complexe de causes ('sāmagrī')." <sup>2</sup>

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1. See p. 231. It is perhaps unlikely that (1) 'ignorance' should produce (8) 'craving', inasmuch as (8) 'craving' itself is also described as 'conditioning' (1) 'ignorance' (see p. 232). And although 'a' and 'b' can be said to be 'necessary and sufficient conditions' of each other (see p. 24), they can hardly be said, strictly speaking, to produce each other. (See p. 250, <sup>103</sup>). Of course it is possible that (1) ignorance may produce (8) craving, and then this (8) craving may, in its turn produce further (1) ignorance. But (8) craving cannot, by any means, be said to produce the same ignorance from which it secures its own existence. And it is obvious that the ignorance that is referred to when it is said in the Canon and the commentarial literature, "La soif cause, nourrit l'ignorance, comme l'ignorance la soif" (see p. 247), is the ignorance that 'nourishes' craving.
2. See p. 232, n. 6, and TDDC, p. 23.

As is obvious from what we have already said above,<sup>1</sup> 'perception' is not produced by any one single factor. It is simply another name for the 'correlation' ('saṅgati') of at least three factors, e. g. the sense-organ, its corresponding object and the corresponding 'cognition' ('vijñāna') which forms an essential factor for the corresponding 'perception'.<sup>2</sup> It is, by no means, produced only by its preceding factor, (5) 'sources of perception' ('ṣaḍāyatana').

Neither do the three antecedents of (6) 'perception', viz., (5) the 'sources of perception', (4) the 'psycho-physical complex' and the (3) 'consciousness' represent three consecutive factors which can be deduced from their respective antecedent factors. (5) The 'sources of perception' are definitely implied by the very concept of (4) a 'psycho-physical complex'. That is clearly the reason why some texts have even dropped the (5) 'sources of perception' from their enumeration of the different 'members'.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore not a separate factor which can be 'produced' by the (4) 'psycho-physical complex'.

1. See pp. 234 - 235.

2. We do not deny that some texts have, however, described 'perception' as the 'resultant' of such a 'correlation' and not the 'correlation', itself. Such texts do, however, constitute a very tiny minority. See p. 234, n. 1. It is in any case debatable whether the word 'resultant' signifies a 'product'.

3. See p. 237.

In fact, even (3) 'consciousness' does not stand as a separate factor apart from and in addition to (4) the 'psycho-physical-complex'. (4) The 'psycho-physical complex' and (3) 'consciousness' are categorically described in the Nikāyas as being interdependent.<sup>1</sup> We cannot, in that case, describe the (4) 'psycho-physical complex' as being 'produced' by (3) 'consciousness'. And Stcherbatsky's remarks in The Central Conception of Buddhism are very pertinent in this context: "it was impossible to deduce....'nāma-rūpa' from 'vijñāna'".<sup>2</sup> What is implied here is that instead of saying that (3) 'consciousness' 'produces' (4) the 'psycho-physical complex', we should rather say that (3) 'consciousness' and (4) the 'psycho-physical complex' are necessary and sufficient conditions of each other.

(3) 'Consciousness' itself is not either, strictly speaking', the product of (2) 'voluntary actions'. The sole function of (2) 'voluntary actions', as it is represented by the early Buddhist texts, seems to be 'determining' the particular structure of the 'consciousness' of the individual in the next life.<sup>3</sup> The 'consciousness of an individual is supposed to survive his physical death<sup>4</sup> and assist in the

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1. See pp. 238-239. This shows very clearly that they have been conceived after the pattern of 'a' being the 'necessary and sufficient condition' of 'b'; and 'b' being, in its turn, the necessary and sufficient condition of 'a'. See pp. 219, 256 n.1, 263

2. CCB, p. 28, n. 3.

3. See pp. 240-241.

4. See pp. 239.



formation of a new individual by being inseparably connected with some material elements that ultimately leads to the formation of the body of a new individual. 'Consciousness' is therefore already subsisting, and the 'impressions' of the 'voluntary actions' of a past life only shape its particular make-up.

Although (1) 'ignorance' is designated in early Buddhist literature as the 'cause' of (2) 'voluntary actions',<sup>1</sup> one is entitled to have doubts as to whether the word 'cause' here necessarily implies a 'producer'. In a sense 'desire' or 'craving', can also be said to prompt our actions.<sup>2</sup> And we must also bear in mind that a vast number of Buddhist texts describe this 'craving' itself as being 'caused' by 'ignorance'.<sup>3</sup> In this sense 'craving' can be said to produce 'actions', whereas it itself may be said to be caused by 'ignorance'. 'Ignorance' may, in this sense, be described as the 'ultimate cause', or the 'cause of the cause' of 'voluntary actions'. And this way of arguing is in line with the spirit in which 'ignorance' is described in the Théorie Des Douze Causes, as being intimately connected with all the other 'members' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'.<sup>4</sup> 'Ignorance' can thus be said to be the

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1. See p. 246.

2. Cf. TDDC, p.27. "De cette soif intense, procédera l'acte: l'upādāna est la cause de la force qui projette l'acte.

3. See p. 247.

4. See p. 248.

'necessary condition' of all the other 'members' acting as the 'sufficient condition' of their succeeding 'members'.

Yet, there is also difficulty in considering 'craving' as causing 'voluntary actions'. 'Voluntary action' is the second 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' and 'craving' is the eighth one. As a result, 'craving', the eighth 'member' succeeds (not immediately though) 'voluntary action' the second one. Yet we expect the cause to precede the effect and not succeed it. How could 'voluntary action' then, as the second 'member' of the 'dependent origination', be caused by a later 'member', the eighth one?<sup>1</sup>

Coming back to the second argument of our thesis, which we have already referred to on pp. 249, 50 there is ample evidence that some early Buddhist texts<sup>2</sup> have categorically expressed the relationship between some 'members' which they described as causes, and some others which they have referred to as their effects, as that of reciprocity. We have already given hints about this relation of reciprocity while we

1. Perhaps the solution to this puzzle lies in interpreting the second 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' as referring to an element of the past life of an individual. In that case we shall have to look for the causes of the 'voluntary actions' of the past life in the past life itself (they would probably be 'ignorance' and 'craving' of past life). 'Craving' as the eighth 'member' of the traditional formulation of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' could then be taken as causing actions committed in the present life, which would be represented by the tenth 'member' 'bhava', and not actions committed in the last life represented by the second 'member', 'saṃskāra'.

2. See pp. 232, 238 & n. 1; see also p. 262 n. 2.

were discussing the 'members' individually.<sup>1</sup> It will therefore be sufficient to refer the readers to the pages where we have already explained these 'members', in order to make our point.

Firstly, the reciprocal relation between (3) 'consciousness' and (4) the 'psycho-physical complex' has been compared in the Nikāyas to that between two reeds standing, supporting each other.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, we have also seen how (6) 'perception' and (7) 'feeling' have also sometimes been described by Buddhist philosophers as being contemporaneous and interdependent.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, in the opinion of <sup>De</sup> La Vallée Poussin, as we have already seen,<sup>4</sup> the omission, upon occasions, of the (5) 'six sources of perception' from the traditional enumeration of the 'members' only indicates that the (4) 'psycho-physical complex' and the (5) 'sources of perception' necessarily imply one another. Moreover, in the opinion of some scholastics, although (8) 'craving' is conditioned by (1) 'ignorance', it itself, in its turn is supposed to 'nourish' (1) 'ignorance'.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, although 'consciousness' is reputed to be, according to traditional enumeration, the cause of causes of both 'feeling'

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1. See pp. 229-248

2. See p. 238, n. 1.

3. See p. 232

4. See p. 237

5. See p. 232

and 'craving', they themselves are sometimes described, in their turn, as being concomitant (and also co-nascent) with 'consciousness'.<sup>1</sup>

No more actual textual evidence can, it is true, be found of the mutual causality between any other pairs of causes and effects of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. Yet, we do not think that such mutual causal relation is very difficult to derive between those 'members', if we follow the natural implications of the texts. For example, (10) 'becoming' and (11) 'birth' may also be interpreted as mutual conditions. Neither of them could be said to subsist without the other. The same is true also <sup>of</sup> (11) 'birth' and (12) 'aging and death'.<sup>2</sup> Even if one insists that the relationship between these alleged 'causes' and their alleged 'effects' cannot, in the absence of textual evidence, be shown to be that of 'mutual causality', the categorical declaration, in some texts,<sup>3</sup> of the 'mutual causality' between some 'members' is enough evidence for us to say that the rudiments of the programme of analysing the relations between causes and effects

1. Samyukta Nikāya (II, p.101) says that 'consciousness' is firmly placed wherever there is 'craving' etc. The Majjhima Nikāya (I, p.295) represents 'feeling' as being concomitant and co-nascent with 'consciousness'. And it is hinted in these texts that whatever is concomitant, is also interdependent. (See pp.232, n.1)
2. It is even suggested in the Kathāvatthu, (the fifth book of the Abhidhammapitaka) (XV, sec. 2), a work which mentions some controversial points existing in Buddhist texts, that one ought to understand (11) 'birth' and (10) 'becoming' on the one hand, and (11) 'birth' and (12) 'aging and death' on the other, as interdependent. The Kathāvatthu (XV, sec. 2) suggests that one should also interpret the relationship between (1) 'ignorance' and (2) 'voluntary actions' as that of mutual conditioning.
3. See pp.261-262 above.

as that between necessary and sufficient conditions and the conditioned can be traced in the 'doctrine of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. Since these 'members' are supposed to be interdependent or mutually conditioning each other, it is obvious that they cannot produce each other. Two separate things could hardly produce each other. What the analogy of the two reeds<sup>1</sup> does establish is only the following. The existence of each of the reeds is a necessary and sufficient condition of the other's continued existence in a particular state. It does not establish that the two reeds cause each other to come into existence, or produce one another. Considering all this one ought to conclude that the relation between those 'members' which are supposed to cause one another, is really that between a necessary and sufficient condition and that which they condition. The relation between a producer and the product is an asymmetrical relation. If one thing produces another, the latter cannot also be said to produce the former.

So far we have only tried to prove that Buddhist philosophers used the term 'cause' in most places, in the course of their elucidation of the 'doctrine' of the twelve-membered dependent origination, in the sense of condition. We would now like to point out that although some 'members' may, at the outset, appear to be producing their succeeding

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1. See p. 233, n. 1.

'members', yet the Buddhist philosophers probably meant<sup>1</sup> even these 'members' merely to condition their successors.<sup>2</sup> This possibility suggests itself from the fact that a producer was analysed in Buddhist philosophy in general in terms of a condition or a group of conditions. Production necessarily implies a producer, an agent. Yet Buddhist philosophers have, almost unanimously, rejected concepts like substances (mental and physical), and, as a consequence, producers, agents etc.<sup>3</sup> Instead of talking in terms of permanent selves, agents etc., they have, on the contrary, tried to explain the whole stream of phenomenal existence in terms of impersonal factors and relations of conditionality. In view of the fact that a vast literature has already been produced making this last point, it would be best, we think, to quote some authorities in order to establish it. Edward Conze has, for example, very clearly said in his Buddhist Thought in India (p.158). "It<sup>4</sup> explains how it is possible for an individual to appear to come into being without the existence of a permanent self, which would be subject of his deeds and experiences and the recipient of pleasure and pain which result from his deeds. At every point impersonal factors are brought into play, and there is no one who knows,

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1. As opposed to what they actually said.

2. See p. 217

3. See ch. II, pp. 74-75

4. Conze means by 'it', 'pratītya-samutpāda' ('dependent origination').

feels, craves, grasps, is born, decays or dies."<sup>1</sup> The same spirit is noticeable in Stcherbatsky's remarks: "The special theory<sup>2</sup> aims at explaining the notorious and puzzling fact that Buddhism assumes a moral law, but no subject of this law. There are good deeds and a reward for them, there are bad deeds and punishments. There is a state of Final Deliverance. But there is no one who commits these deeds, no one who abides in a state of Bondage and no one who enters into Final Deliverance, no Soul, no Ego, no Personality. There are only groups of separate elements, physical and mental, which are interrelated, which form themselves and which unform themselves....a personal agent, an abiding spiritual principle, the subject of the moral law, is not at all necessary."<sup>3</sup> Oltramare has also made such interesting remarks: "Il<sup>4</sup> a voulu apprendre à ses disciples que la misère ne vient point à l'homme de quelque agent externe échappant à

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1. Compare Conze's remarks with that made by Stcherbatsky in EL, I, p.129. "Instead of explaining every causation as a process resembling human cooperation, he (Stcherbatsky is referring here to the typical Buddhist philosopher) regards even this human cooperation as a kind of impersonal process. All cooperating causes are convergent streams of efficient moments. They are called "creeping" causes ('upasarpāṇa-pratyaya') since their movement is a staccato movement. In their meeting point ('sahakāri melana') a new series begins."
  2. He means the 'theory of the twelve-membered dependent origination'.
  3. EL, I, p.136.
  4. Oltramare refers to the Buddha here.

sa prise; et qu'elle n'est pas non plus inhérente à une substance immuable, ce qui la rendrait elle-même incurable."<sup>1</sup> He quotes Buddhaghosa<sup>2</sup> in support of his thesis as saying: "La roue de l'existence roule sans 'cause personnelle' et sans récipient passif..... l'ignorance, etc., la roue de l'existence exclut, pour le retour d'une nouvelle naissance, toute cause telle que le dieu Brahmā...; elle exclut aussi toute âme qui serait le récipient passif du bonheur et de la misère."<sup>3</sup>

After developing the <sup>two</sup> arguments mentioned above,<sup>4</sup> at some length, we are now in a position to reiterate our point, that the outlines of the theory that causation can be analysed solely in terms of conditioning can be traced in the 'theory of the twelve-membered dependent origination'. Stcherbatsky has, relentlessly, tried to draw our attention to this unique and important aspect of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'. He has, for example said in The Central Conception of Buddhism,<sup>5</sup> "The stumbling-block to every explanation<sup>6</sup> came from the supposition that the formula was meant to represent some evolution in which one member was producing<sup>7</sup> the other:

1. FBDC, p.29.

2. Ultramare himself quotes Buddhaghosa from Visuddhimagga, Ch.XVII, p.175, in Warren's Buddhism in Translation.

3. FBDC, p.29.

4. See p.249 and above.

5. CCB, p.28, n.3.

6. He is referring here to the explanation given by European Buddhologists.

7. Italics ours.



it was then impossible to deduce e. g. 'nāma-rūpa' from 'vijñāna'." Speaking about the early Buddhist theory of causation in general, he remarked in his Concepts of Buddhist Nirvāṇa,<sup>1</sup> "Strictly speaking it was no causality at all, no question of one thing producing<sup>2</sup> the other." Other scholars, such as N. Dutt, followed suit: "Those scholars, who expected to find in it a key to the origin of the world have been disappointed and condemned it as illogical and incongruous.

It is just a chain of instances to illustrate the law of 'idappaccayatā'.<sup>3</sup>

'Jāti' cannot be the cause of 'jarā-marāṇa'. The underlying idea is that if there be 'jāti', it is inevitably followed by 'jarā-marāṇa'.<sup>4</sup>

Early Buddhist philosophers tried to bring to light, with the help of their 'theory of the twelve-membered dependent origination', the extraordinary point that 'human suffering' is not 'produced', either

1. CBN, p.40.

2. Italics ours.

3. It means 'dependent origination'.

4. Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism, p.209. Italics ours. N. Dutt probably means by the term 'cause', 'producer'. [See also p. 253 n.3]. He is probably trying to warn his readers that they should not think that (12) 'aging and death', as a 'member' of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination' is produced by (11) 'birth'. What the 'theory of dependent origination' is trying to elucidate is, according to him, merely that each of the 'members' is conditioned by the preceding one. (1) 'Aging and death' in particular, are only conditioned by (11) 'birth'. Aging and death are not possible without birth. Birth is thus the necessary condition of aging and death. Moreover, birth cannot be there without aging and death also being there. Birth is thus also the sufficient condition of aging and death.

by any external Creator of human lives, or by any internal 'permanent soul'. Their general theory of 'dependent origination' extends this denial of 'production' to every phenomenon and declares that nothing at all is 'produced' in the real sense of the term. Everything merely 'comes into existence' depending on some conditions. 'Mahāyāna' Buddhism carries this argument one step further and claims that what is 'dependent' does not 'exist in itself', (i.e. is not 'Real'). 'Real' is what possesses a 'reality of its own' ('svabhāva').<sup>1</sup> Since everything is dependent on other 'conditions', everything is relative ('śūnya'). The phenomenal world is thus entirely 'relative' and hence 'unreal', viewed from the stand-point of the Absolute. "A dependent existence is no real existence, just as borrowed money is no real wealth."<sup>2</sup>

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1. See CBN, p.40. 'Real' is what does not depend on anything else ('paratra nirapekṣa'). Cf. MMK, XV,<sup>MKV</sup>p.2.
  2. CBN, p.41. See also MKV, p.263, n.3.

CHAPTER VIIS A VALID EXPLANATION OF CAUSATION POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONCEPT  
OF PRODUCTION ?Section iAttempts to Explain Causation Without the Concept of 'Production'

So far we have seen how Berkeley, Hume, Mill and Russell on the one hand, and some Buddhist schools on the other, tried to explain causation without the concepts of 'efficacy' and 'production'. Such an analysis reduces causes to necessary and sufficient conditions, and effects to what they condition. However, we would like to argue that the notions of 'production' and 'efficacy' are so intimately connected with the concept of 'causation' that it would be impossible to give a valid explanation of causation without these notions. It is not possible to analyse causal relations solely in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions.

One of the several spheres in which the language of 'cause-effect' is primarily applicable is that of human activity. Here the cause is a conscious agent, the voluntary actions which he performs are the means by which he brings about certain things called effects. Sometimes when we persuade or induce another to perform a certain act, we say we cause

another to do it; we make him do it. Here we say we cause another, because we 'manipulate' the latter, we use him as a means to bring about certain states of affairs. Such cases have an obvious similarity with cases where we manipulate certain objects or events in nature in order to produce certain desired states of affairs. In such cases, we call that by manipulating which we bring about some desired result a 'cause' and the result its 'effect'.

The word 'cause' is used in the second case in the sense in which the applied sciences use the word. According to these sciences, the cause is something under human control; we can produce or prevent the happening of the effect by producing or preventing the cause. Other branches of enquiry have also probably borrowed ideas belonging to the concept of cause used by the applied sciences. The notions of agency and production thus seem to be fundamental factors constituting the concept of cause as it is used in the different branches of study. R. G. Collingwood<sup>1</sup> and Douglas Gasking<sup>2</sup> have argued quite persuasively that causes are elements within the control of agents, by means of which they can bring about or prevent certain other conditions. Collingwood refers to them as 'levers' and Gasking calls them 'recipes'.

We might, at this stage, anticipate some objections by quoting some counter-examples. Such an example could be provided by the case where

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1. R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, part 3-c, pp. 285-340.
  2. D. Gasking, 'Causation and Recipes', Mind, vol. 64, 1955, pp. 479-487.

the ice of a river, for example, melts in the spring. It is clearly the heat of the sun that causes the ice to melt in the spring. Yet neither the ice nor the sun is within the control of man. We cannot say that we can bring about or prevent the melting by producing or preventing the heat of the sun. And unless we can do <sup>that</sup>, we cannot use the term 'production' either in this context. Again, imagine that some inhabitants of a particular place suddenly became ill, and that subsequent research found that this illness was caused by certain unusual solar radiations. Would we say that those radiations were not the cause since they cannot be controlled by human intervention?<sup>1</sup> I would rather think that such arguments are missing the point. What is really meant here is that the situations are called causal situations if they are in principle subject to human control and not that they are so designated only if they are actually under human control. It is thus a necessary condition (only) of something's being a causal situation that is controllable by human beings.

The language of 'production' or 'bringing about' is thus stipulated, in some sense or other, to be applicable to every case of causation. The realization of the inseparable connection between the concepts of 'production' and 'causation' helps us to solve a major problem about causation. This is the problem about the temporal relation between the cause and its effect. What sort of temporal relation should there be

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1. These two examples are from the article on 'Causation' in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. II, p. 64.

between a cause and its effect? We have already seen that Hume suggested in many places that we can stipulate that the cause must be temporally prior to the effect. Such a suggestion is apparent in his definition of a cause as "an object precedent and contiguous to another"; "an object followed by another."<sup>1</sup> Yet, in spite of that, he discussed the possibility of the simultaneous existence of causes and effects.<sup>2</sup> However, there is one question which he has never discussed. This is whether an effect could possibly be temporally prior to its cause. I suggest that the essentially productive character of a cause seems to make it clear why a cause cannot, under any circumstances, temporally succeed its effect.

We must admit that in a moment of deeper reflection the question can indeed arise in our mind whether an effect can precede a cause.<sup>3</sup> It is, for example, not absurd to ask whether it is possible to form a concept of a 'quasi-cause', like that of a cause in every respect except that, unlike a cause, it always follows its 'quasi-effect'.

It is true that a question like this one cannot be answered merely

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1. See Ch. I, p. 56, etc.
  2. Treatise, p. 76. This possibility is not discussed in the Enquiry.
  3. For an account of the controversy as to whether a cause can succeed its effect, the following sources can be consulted:
    - (a) Dummett and Flew, FAS, Supplementary vol. XXVIII, 1954, pp. 27-60.
    - (b) Scriven and Flew in Analysis, 1956-1958, pp. 5-9 and 81-86;
    - (c) Pears and Flew, Analysis, 1958, pp. 54-63.

by pointing out that, according to the ordinary usage of the word 'cause', nothing is designated a 'cause' of any event that precedes it. One can still ask, why is the word 'cause' so used? What is the principle which people have in mind when they use the word in that way?

The question whether a cause can succeed its effect could probably arise in our mind from such a consideration as the following. A given change that is caused could be said to occur under a set of numerous conditions. Among these conditions there are some which are such that, presuming that the other conditions remained unaltered, the change cannot fail to occur in their presence. Some conditions again are such that the change could not have occurred had they not been present, given that all other conditions remain what they are. The first set of conditions could be called 'sufficient conditions' and the second set 'necessary conditions'. Using this vocabulary of 'necessary and sufficient conditions', some contemporary philosophers have tried to define the cause of an event either as being a necessary condition, or a sufficient condition, or both. Now, we can see that if a is a sufficient condition of b, b is a necessary condition of a. If the beheading of Anne Boleyn is a sufficient condition of her dying, then her dying in the particular way she did is a necessary condition of her beheading. She could not have been beheaded if she was not to die in that particular way. Similarly it could also be shown that if a is a necessary condition of b, b is a's sufficient condition. Now, from this it follows that if a particular event is a necessary as well as

a sufficient condition of another event, then the other event is a necessary as well as a sufficient condition of that event. If, in certain circumstances, a projectile's striking the wall from a particular angle and with a particular velocity is both a necessary and sufficient condition of its rebounding at a given angle with a given velocity, then its rebounding in the way it did is also both a necessary and sufficient condition of its striking the wall with the particular velocity and from that particular angle.<sup>1</sup> From this it follows that if an earlier event is a necessary as well as a sufficient condition of a later event, then the later event is also in its turn a necessary and sufficient condition of the earlier one. Thus, if a cause is equivalent to the necessary and sufficient conditions, it seems quite arbitrary to reserve the title of 'cause' for the earlier event only. There is nothing in the concept of 'necessary and sufficient conditions' as such which necessitates their application to the earlier, rather than to the later event. The later has an equally good claim to it. Logical equivalents are also necessary and sufficient conditions of one another. Yet one logical equivalent is not earlier than the other. X's being equilateral is both a necessary and a sufficient condition of X's being equiangular; and of course X's being equiangular is both a necessary and a sufficient

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1. This example is taken from Ayer's The Problem of Knowledge, Pelican Series, p. 172.



condition of X's being equilateral. Yet X's being equilateral is not earlier than X's being equiangular. <sup>1</sup>

Take the example of the 'quasi-cause' which Dummett has given. <sup>2</sup> A 'quasi-cause' resembles a 'cause' in every respect except that it is stipulated to succeed its effect. Such a 'quasi-cause' must, according to Dummett, satisfy three conditions. First, the occurrence of the earlier event, which was to be explained by reference to that of the later event, would have to be incapable of being (causally) explained by reference to simultaneous or preceding events. Secondly, there must be no discoverable way of representing the earlier event as a causal antecedent (a remote cause) of the later. Thirdly, we should have to be able to give a satisfactory (causal) account of the occurrence of the later event which contained no reference to the occurrence of the earlier. <sup>3</sup>

Having these conditions in mind, Dummett constructs the following example of the 'quasi-cause'. Suppose a certain man regularly wakes up three minutes before his alarm-clock goes off. This regularity is maintained even when he does not know that, and for what time, it has

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1. Neither is, for that matter, the fact of X's being equilateral causally related to that of its being equiangular. See also pp. 28-28a  
op. cit.,
  2. Dummett, /p. 32.
  3. It seems that Dummett has here just taken it for granted that the later event must be capable of being causally explained. He has not taken into consideration the possibility that one may not, after all, be able to give a causal account of the later event.

been set. He sleeps very late on those occasions when the clock fails to ring. Suppose also that one day the man forgot to wind the clock and the following morning he wakes up early. A friend of his, who knew nothing about this strange phenomenon, happened just to walk into his room and inadvertently set off the alarm-clock just three minutes after the man woke up. Could it not be reasonable to say in such a case that 'the man wakes up because the alarm-clock is going to go off'? <sup>1</sup> This example satisfies all the conditions mentioned above.

We shall try to point out the contradiction involved in speaking of a cause succeeding its effect with the help of the notion that a cause is essentially a producer. In order that a later event might cause an earlier event, the later event has to be able to bring about an event in the past. But past events have, by definition, already happened. So the only way to bring about an event in the past is to alter what has already happened. Everybody would object to such an absurd suggestion. The past is unchangeable, closed. One might recreate events similar to what has already happened, but it makes no sense to speak of now bringing/what has already happened. But the question could still be asked, what makes it impossible to speak of bringing about an event that has already happened? Does it reflect some arbitrary choice on our part to restrict the use of the expression 'bring about' to events that have not yet happened? Or is there some

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1. Dummett, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

genuine difference between the past and the future which induces us to speak of bringing about only future events?

Professor Ayer has tried to explain the reason why we cannot speak of bringing about past events, with reference to our knowledge of the past. "The reason, then, why we do not allow ourselves to conceive of our actions as affecting past events is, I suggest, not merely that the earlier events already exist, but that they are, for the most part, already known to exist. Since the same does not apply to the future, we come to think of human action as essentially forward moving".<sup>1</sup> Normally, when one tries to bring something about, when one acts in a certain way in order that some desired results may be achieved, one is not certain of their happening. Because the future seems to us uncertain we think that we must strive to bring things about, we must work in a way that is likely to bring the things about. The past, on the other hand, is not unknown to the same degree; and especially not the immediate past.

Now this, to me, does not appear to be the whole story. Our knowledge of any state of affairs does not make us mere spectators of the drama of existence. Even if I know that I am going to Covent Garden tomorrow, that does not make my going there redundant or fruitless.<sup>2</sup> And if I sit idly in my room doing nothing, then I cannot

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1. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, p. 175. Italics as in the original.

2. Cf. Flew, p. 61. PAS Supplementary vol. XXVIII, p. 61.

be said to have known it really.

Moreover, our knowledge of the past is really not so certain as Professor Ayer suggests. Even with regard to the immediate past, we can make mistakes about what we claim to know about it. So it cannot be true that we do not try to produce something in the past because we are absolutely sure of what happened in the past. There are many instances where we are not sure whether something has happened in the past. Why do we not make any effort in those cases to find out whether the event has taken place by trying to bring it about?

I suggest, rather, that efforts cannot be ascribed to an agent to bring about something after the product is already in existence. Before some state of affairs comes into being, it could be said to be potential. Potentiality or possibility makes sense only in the case of the existence of alternatives (of existence). When a potential becomes actualised, the alternatives of its existence are destroyed or closed. We then make no efforts to bring it about, we do not perform any action intended to produce it, because efforts make sense only in the presence of alternatives. Thus we make no effort to bring about a past event as the alternatives of its being and non-being are destroyed. But in the case of a future event we make efforts to bring it about because there are alternatives to the existence of that event. Unless we make efforts to bring it about, unless we perform those actions that are intended to bring it about, it may not come into existence at all.

Thus the reason why we make efforts to bring about a future event and do not do so to bring about events in the past is not because we are uncertain about the future but certain about the past. We could be equally uncertain about the past, especially if it is not the immediate past. But we would still not try to bring those events about, as there are no alternatives to their existence. On the contrary, the reason why we are not so sure of future events (as Ayer points out) is that there are alternatives to their existence, and we do not know which of the alternative courses they are going to take. And the reason why we are more certain of past events (as Ayer points out) is that there are no alternatives in the case of past events. But Dummett may point out here that the reason why you maintain that you cannot bring about a past event is that you think of the past as being determinate. You think that the past event either did exist or did not exist. If it did exist then you cannot bring it about. But is the same thing not true of future events? Future events either will exist or will not exist. If they will, then you cannot bring them about either. (I.e. they are going to happen irrespective of your efforts).

In answer we can say that the very nature of the concept of production rules out the possibility that a past event may be brought about. We get instances of production primarily<sup>1</sup> in the realm of human

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1. We find instances of production in the animal and insect-worlds also. But we tend to endow these man-human agents with some anthropomorphic qualities. Moreover, even these agents provide us with instances of bringing something about in the future.

activities. Here all the instances are cases of agents producing something in the future. There is no instance to the contrary of an agent producing something in the past.

But Dummett may come forward with his example of the alarm-clock<sup>1</sup> and argue that here is a perfect instance of a cause producing its effect in the past. In answer we can say that we do not even understand what is meant by saying, 'the man's making up is produced by the alarm-clock's going to go off.' Our concept of production is primarily formed from our observations of the situations in which human agents produce effects in the future. This being the case, we would not even understand what is meant by saying, 'X brings about Y in the past.' We can very well understand what is meant by saying, 'X a present event, is a necessary and sufficient condition of Y, a past event'. But we fail to understand what is meant by saying, 'X, a present event produces Y, a past event.'

Perhaps the question may still be asked, how would you then explain a case like the waking up of the man and the subsequent going off of his alarm-clock? We could argue that in those cases where the man himself sets the alarm the night before, he makes up regularly before the alarm goes off because of the expectation of the alarm. We

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1. See pp. 275-276

could then say that the man's waking up in cases where he is ignorant of the setting of the alarm, and where his friend inadvertently sets off the alarm-clock,<sup>1</sup> just coincide with the subsequent ringing of the clock. Dummett may ask, would these not be very strange coincidences? In answer we may ask, is it not also very strange that the ringing of the alarm-clock in the future produces the state of wakefulness in the past? If one can admit such a strange phenomenon, why can one not also admit the possibility that a mysterious cause operates by waking him up via his watching the television every evening?

The difficulty in proving our normal intuition that causes are prior to effects serves as a pointer. This difficulty probably arises because of the inadequate analysis of causation in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Causation cannot be properly analysed in this way. We shall mention a few possible objections to such an analysis. The first objection has already been hinted at in discussing the necessary and sufficient conditions on page 274. Suppose that a is the cause of b. This means, according to that analysis, that a is both a necessary and sufficient condition of b. According to that very analysis, it also logically follows that b is also a necessary and sufficient condition of a. Now one of the difficulties involved here is that logical equivalents are also necessary and sufficient conditions of each other. Yet neither of them is the cause of the other. The

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1. See p. 276

relation of logical equivalence is non-temporal, whereas the relation of cause-effect is a temporal relation.

We should be faced also with the following difficulty if we adhere to the analysis of causation in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions: Let us suppose that a cause,  $x$ , is nothing but a necessary and sufficient condition of its effect,  $y$ . According to the analysis shown in the preceding paragraph,  $y$  would, in that case, also be the necessary and sufficient condition of  $x$ . Now if we understand by the necessary and sufficient conditions of an event its cause, then we would be forced to regard  $y$  also as causing  $x$ . Yet no one in his sense would allow that the accident of the car caused the icy patches on the road; that the death of President Kennedy caused the shooting; that the fire in a room is the cause of someone's dropping a cigarette-butt in the waste-paper basket!



Section iiDenial of Production Led to Denial of Causation Itself in  
'Mādhyamika' Philosophy

We have seen <sup>1</sup> that the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools  
causation  
tried to explain/solely by the notion of condition. We have also  
seen<sup>2</sup> that Buddhist logicians like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla tried  
to give an account of causation without the concepts of efficacy and  
production. Yet it is in fact impossible to explain causation  
without bringing in the concept of production. That is probably the  
reason why the Absolutist philosophers of the 'Mādhyamika'<sup>3</sup> school of  
Buddhism argued that the concept of causation is unreal from the  
absolute standpoint. They are unanimous with the 'Theravāda' and  
'Sarvāstivāda' schools in explaining away production. But whereas  
these schools tried to give some explanation of causation even in the  
absence of the concept of production, the Absolutist 'Mādhyamika'  
philosophers argued that the concept of causation itself is invalid  
from the absolute standpoint. The 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools  
claim that the 'doctrine of dependent origination' ('pratītya-samutpāda')

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1. See chapter II and IV above.

2. See chapter II (above. 94f)

3. i.e. the 'Śūnyavāda'.

conveys the idea that everything in the phenomenal world comes into being through its dependence on certain conditions. The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers on the other hand argued that the doctrine is meant to show only that everything in the phenomenal world is dependent on others and hence unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute. The expression 'pratītya-samutpāda' ('dependent origination') does not, in their system, refer to the objective fact of causation. On the contrary, it refers only to the fact of the essentially relative nature of the entire phenomenal existence (i.e. of empirical reality).

The 'Mādhyamikas' argue that no empirical entity could be said to 'produce' another from the standpoint of the Absolute. Firstly, production implies the coming into existence of a particular thing which did not exist before. From the Absolute standpoint, however, nothing can be said to 'exist', in the real sense of the term, which does not exist in its own right (i.e. which is not 'self-existent'). But if anything is self-existent, then it must exist always. Only that which depends on others for its existence can be said to 'begin to exist'. Hence, there will be no truth in the proposition that something which did not exist before comes into existence. Moreover, production requires that both the producer and its product must be real and self-existent entities. Yet no phenomenal thing can be self-existent from the standpoint of the Absolute. If anything were so, the Absolute would be contrasted with a self-existent being and hence lose its absolute character. Nāgārjuna<sup>1</sup> in fact argued against

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1. Nāgārjuna gave shape to the Mādhyamika' ideas in such a way that he can be called the founder of the school.

the production of a self-existent thing in his Madhyamakārikās in the following way:

## I

"The production of a self-existent thing by a conditioning cause is  
not possible,

[For] being produced through dependence on a cause, a self-existent thing would be 'something which is produced' ('kṛtaka')."

## II

"How, indeed, will a self-existent thing become 'something which is produced?

Certainly, a self-existent thing [by definition] is 'not produced' and is independent of anything else".<sup>1</sup>

The argument implied in the above verses is that if anything is produced by something else, then it is dependent on the latter and not, therefore, self-existent.

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1. MMK, ch. XV, verses 1 and 2. Translation by Streng in Emptiness, p. 44, 199. The original Śanskrit verses can be found in De La Vallée Poussin's ed. Madhyamaka Vṛtti (MKV), pp. 259, 260, 262 as follows:

Verse I 'Na saṃbhavaḥ svabhāvasya yuktaḥ pratyaya-hetubhiḥ.  
Hetu-pratyaya-saṃbhūtaḥ svabhāvaḥ kṛtako bhavet.'

Verse II. 'Svabhāvaḥ kṛtako nāma bhaviṣyati punaḥ kathaṃ.  
Akṛtīmaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca.'

Compare Streng's translation with that of Schayer in Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā, pp. 59, Ia and b, IIa; p. 62. IIb.

Having denied production from the absolute viewpoint, the 'Mādhyamika' philosophers took a further step and denied causation itself from that viewpoint.

Nāgārjuna tries to prove the unreality of the concepts of cause and effect by refuting the views of those opposing systems which take these concepts to be real. He proceeds by first introducing the vocabulary these systems use in propounding their theories of causation, and then trying to show what absurd consequences we are led into if we adhere strictly to their terminology. Consequently, the standpoints of the theories Nāgārjuna is criticising may, as he represents them, appear to be both somewhat unintelligible and even absurd to a modern reader. If my representation of the views of those systems which take 'cause' and 'effect' to be valid concepts appears to be rather strange, that may be, I am afraid, due to the fact that I have mostly, even verbally quoted Nāgārjuna's arguments (and Candrakīrti's commentary on them). Let us now look at the arguments.

Since, on the one hand, the concepts of 'cause' and 'effect' depend on one another, and, on the other hand, they are incompatible even with each other, it follows that they are invalid. (Cf. R. Wollheim's F.H. Bradley, p. 112. "Bradley here <sup>1</sup> must be using a familiar kind of philosophical argument which moves from the fact

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1. The context Wollheim is referring to is Bradley's discussion of 'Relation and Quality' in his Appearance and Reality, chapter III, pp. 21-29.

that two concepts are both mutually dependent and mutually incompatible to the conclusion that the concepts are invalid or at any rate invalid when used on the same level in the same context.") This argument is well illustrated in the verses of Nāgārjuna's 'Kārikā':

(The cause and the effect cannot be absolutely independent of each other.) "If the effect which does not exist in the causes nevertheless appears from them, why does it not appear from the non-causes?" <sup>1</sup>

But if the cause and the effect are related, <sup>2</sup> then neither of them has any self-supporting independent nature ('asvayāmmaya'). <sup>3</sup> And since according to common conception things that enter into a relationship with each other have self-sufficient beings, <sup>4</sup> things which do not have any independent nature cannot be related to each other. The cause and the effect would thus be incompatible even with each other. "The effect is caused, but the causes do not have any essence. How can the effect be caused, if it comes from (causes)

1. MMK, ch. 1, verse XII, as presented in MKV, pp. 87-88. Cf. CEN, p. 178.
2. The word 'related' in this context should be taken as meaning 'essentially related', i.e. such that they cannot exist without one another.  
other
3. For/translations of the term 'asvayāmmaya' see CEN, pp. 178-179; Emptiness, p. 184.
4. e.g. two apples co-existing in a basket are two self-supporting objects.

which do not have any essence?"<sup>1</sup>

Causation is explained in different ways by different non-Buddhist schools such as the 'Sāṅkhya', the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika', as well as some Buddhist schools like the 'Theravāda' and the 'Sarvāstivāda'. As we have shown before,<sup>2</sup> the 'Sāṅkhya' philosophers argued that the effect already exists in an unmanifest form in its material cause. The effect is substantially the same as its material cause. The 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' philosophers, on the other hand, argue that the effect cannot be substantially the same as its material cause. The 'Theravāda' and the 'Sarvāstivāda' schools largely agree with these philosophers. The effect does not pre-exist in its material cause. The appearance of the effect marks a completely new beginning. According to the 'Cārvākas' or the 'Lokāyatas', however, things are merely produced at random without any causal laws.

The 'Mādhyamikas' deny all these alternatives and say:

"Never and nowhere are there any entities which are produced, either out of themselves, or out of others, or

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1. MMK, ch. I, verse XIII, as presented in MKV, p. 88. The translation is our own. For other translations see CBN, p. 178 and Emptiness, p. 184.

2. See ch. II, pp. 77f

out of both, or out of no causes whatever." <sup>1</sup>

The 'Sāṅkhya' theory of 'satkārya-vāda' is repudiated by Candrakīrti <sup>2</sup> in the following way:

"Entities are not produced out of themselves; since such production is useless ('utpādavaiyarthyaṭ')." <sup>3</sup> "We do not see the need of the production of what already exists. We also see an infinite regress." <sup>4</sup> (If the effect y is only a new manifestation of the cause x, then the cause x and the effect y have the same essence. Now since x is essentially the same as y, then y is also the same as x. Thus as long as we have x, we have y, as long as we have y we have x, and so on ad infinitum).

The 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' schools of Buddhism and

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1. MK, ch. I, verse I, as presented in MKV, p. 12. Translation ours. For other translations see CEN, p. 93 and Emptiness, p. 183). By the phrases 'produced out of themselves' and 'produced out of others' Nāgārjuna is referring to (i) the 'Sāṅkhya' and (ii) the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika' (as well as the 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda') theories of causation respectively. The phrase 'out of both' refers only to a fictitious theory which would combine the alternatives suggested by these two theories. The phrase 'out of no causes whatsoever' obviously refers to the 'Lokāyata' ('i.e. 'Cārvāka') theory. We must point out that the 'Theravāda' and the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers did not really believe in production. But they did believe in causation and intended to analyse it in terms of conditions. The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers want to show <sup>that</sup> even the concept of causation is invalid from the absolute standpoint.
  2. Candrakīrti is here commenting on Nāgārjuna's argument by quoting Buddhapālita's opinion on this issue.
  3. MKV, p. 14. Cf. CEN, p. 94.
  4. MKV, p. 15. Cf. CEN, p. 95.

the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' school take the cause and the effect to be essentially different from each other. They recognise the logical difficulties connected with analysing causation as a process of the manifestation of an effect already existing in an unmanifest form, in its cause. Causation is explained by the 'Sarvāstivāda' philosophers as the appearance of an effect depending on several conditions ('pratyayān pratītya'). The scholastic 'Sarvāstivādins' enumerate four kinds of conditions,<sup>1</sup> depending on which the effect appears. This theory, which explains the effect as the appearance of a thing or event under several conditions, the 'Mādhyamikas' contend, is equally unable to explain causation. The gap between the two entities, the cause and the effect, is widened if we accept this theory, and no amount of argumentation can bring together entities which are essentially different from each other.

If the effect were 'an other' then, in principle, everything could be produced from anything and anywhere (otherness being equally present both in what is and in what is not the cause of a thing). Candrakīrti says in his Prasannapadā,<sup>2</sup> "entities cannot arise out of something (essentially) different from them, since it would follow that everything could then arise out of

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1. See ch. IV, pp. 169-179

2. Candrakīrti here quotes Buddhapālita.



anything." <sup>1</sup> "Why then is a piece of cloth (linen or silk) never produced out of straw and other things which admittedly are not its causes? From the standpoint of Ultimate Reality <sup>2</sup> we deny the production of effects altogether." <sup>3</sup>

The early Buddhist schools analysed different perceptions as originating due to the 'correlation' of the different sense-organs and their corresponding objects. The sense-organs and their corresponding objects are considered as 'conditions' which cause the different perceptions. But it is evident that before a particular perception comes about, the particular sense-organ which is supposed to cause it is a non-cause. If that is the case, then that particular sense-organ cannot, according to a 'Mādhyamika' philosopher, bring about any perception. Candrakīrti says, suggesting such a point, "nothing can be produced out of non-causes, e.g. oil cannot be pressed out of sand." <sup>4</sup>

If and when we want to produce an entity from another, it is obvious that they both must be self-supporting. If the effect is not, in a way, present in the cause, then we cannot, by any

1. MKV, ch. I, p. 36. Translation, CEN, p. 120.

2. 'Svarūpataḥ' = 'tattvataḥ'. See CEN, p. 178, n. 2.

3. MKV, p. 88. Cf. CEN, p. 178.

4. MKV, p. 81. Cf. CEN, p. 170.

means whatsoever, produce it out of that cause. Yet if, on the other hand, the effect is already present in the cause (e.g. as claimed by the 'Sāṅkhyaists'), if it is already an existent fact, why should we bring an additional entity to produce it? If a particular perception is already there, what is the use of introducing a visual sense-organ as its generator? <sup>1</sup>

Neither could we bridge the gap between two entirely different entities, the 'Mādhyamika' philosopher shows, by introducing a third entity between the two as the 'energy' ('kriyā'), or the 'causal operation' exercised by the cause on the effect. It could be argued that the cause of a visual perception does not, as a separate entity, produce that perception. Its real producer is a corresponding 'energy', inherent in its cause. A similar energy is the physical energy of heat which produces cooked rice. <sup>2</sup>

This additional 'energy', the 'Mādhyamika' philosopher shows, will complicate matters further. We will then be tempted to ask, when does this 'operation' come into being? Does it appear when the effect already exists, or before it, or simultaneously with it? We cannot say that it arises after the effect has emerged, for its

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1. Cf. "But if a thing is really existent, if it is present....it is absolutely useless to imagine some causes producing it." (See MKV, p. 82 and CBN, p. 171.

2. MKV, p. 79. Cf. CBN, pp. 178-179.

presence would be perfectly useless then. Nor would we say that it arises before the effect emerges; for the effect is bound to be there when the 'causal operation' is there. Nor can the 'operation' exist when the effect is being born; "because a thing is either produced or not-produced, there is no existence between (the two)." <sup>1</sup> Besides, as an action it must belong to a thing. It cannot belong to the cause, the seed; for the seed, ex hypothesi, no longer exists when its effect, the sprout, comes about.

An elaborate refutation of the possibility of each of the conditioning causes separately causing the effect is also given in Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā (based on the same principle that the two entities in relation cannot remain isolated, and yet if they are united, they cannot be related):

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1. MKV, p. 80. Cf. CEN, p. 168. Candrakīrti clarifies his statement with the following verse:

"Because what is being born is half-born, it is not (really) produced. Otherwise the state of being born would attach to everything."

(MKV, p. 80. Cf. CEN, p. 168 and n. 7).

The intended meaning is probably this. An entity that is in the process of being born does not have any real existence. If it does, then one will have to admit the identity of what is being born and what is in existence. But if we admit such an identity, then we shall have to grant that all the existing things are only half-born (because an entity that is being born is only half-born). If all this is true, then it follows that the 'operation' cannot belong to an entity that is in the state of being born. For such an entity does not have a real existence.

The 'Sarvāstivādins' introduced four causal conditions.<sup>1</sup>

(The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti do not represent them as they are actually analysed in the 'Sarvāstivāda' system. They sometimes misrepresent them to a certain extent).

"Among them the 'cause-condition' is", in the language of the 'Mādhyamika' philosopher, "that which turns out" ('nirvartaka').<sup>2</sup>

(For example, the seed turns out the effect, the sprout).

Candrakīrti gives the following account of the remaining three conditions:

"If something is supported by [something else] in its coming into existence, then the latter is called its 'supporting condition' or 'object-condition' ('ālambana-pratyaya')." <sup>3</sup> (For example, the 'supporting-condition' of a perception is the object <sup>4</sup> on which the perception depends). "The immediately-preceding condition ('samanantara-pratyaya') for the emergence of an effect is the evanescence of its material cause." <sup>5</sup> (Candrakīrti gives the

1. We have discussed these four conditions in ch. IV, pp. 169-179

2. MKV, p. 77. Cf. CBN, p. 165. Behind the metaphor of 'turning out' is the meaning that a 'cause-condition' is that which is directly responsible for the coming into existence of the effect. The phrase 'turns out' refers to a transitive verb here.

3. MKV, p. 77. Cf. CBN, p. 165.

5. MKV, p. 77. Cf. CBN, pp. 165-6.

4. One should not confuse this 'object' with a sense-datum. The object of sensation, sense-datum, is usually referred to as 'viṣaya'. The object of a perception ('ālambana') contains a conceptual aspect.

example of the preceding destruction of the seed as the 'immediately-preceding condition' for the production of the sprout. This grossly misrepresents the position of the 'Sarvāstivādins' in whose analysis an 'immediately-preceding condition' is necessarily a mental state. See ch. IV, pp. 169-176 in this connection). "If something appears because something (else) exists, then the (latter) is the predominant-condition ('adhipati-pratyaya') of the (former)."<sup>1</sup> The 'predominant-condition' is thus that factor which being present the effect inevitably appears. As such this really stands for the condition that<sup>is</sup> in a general way responsible for the emergence of an effect.

The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers show that the first condition, the 'cause-condition', is an absurdity. The so-called 'cause-condition', the seed, cannot be said to 'turn out' (i.e. 'produce') its so-called effect, the sprout, either in the presence or in the absence of the sprout. If the sprout already exists, then there is no need to produce it with the help of something else. When the sprout appears we do not require the seed to produce it once again. On the other hand, as long as the sprout is absent, we cannot say

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1. MKV, p. 77, cf. CBN, p. 166.

that the seed produces the sprout.

The same logic applies to the 'object-condition' and its corresponding perception. If the perception is present then there is no need to bring it into being with the help of something else. If the perception does not exist, then we have to imagine the absurd situation that a non-existent perception already has an object. The same dilemma exists if we take up the object. If the object is there, its corresponding perception is bound to be there (because an object is, by definition, the object of a perception). In that case, there will be no need to bring the perception about. On the other hand, if the object is absent, then we shall have to answer the following question: If the perception begins by having no object, how can it get one afterwards? <sup>1</sup> In other words, we shall be faced with the difficulty of showing how two objects, which are basically unrelated, can somehow enter into some sort of relation.

The 'immediately-preceding condition' must disappear before the effect appears. But "if it disappears, how can it be a cause?" <sup>2</sup> The cloth does not exist either in the threads ('adhipati-pratyaya') or in the weaver's brush, or in the loom, or in the shuttle. If

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1. MMK, ch. I, verse VIII; MKV, p. 84; cf. CEN, p. 173.

2. MKV, p. 86; cf. CEN, pp. 175-176.

it did, we should be able to perceive it. Moreover, from a multiplicity of causes a multiplicity of effects would be expected. And since the cloth does not exist in any of its parts taken singly, neither does it exist in all of them together. Besides, (as stated on p. above) if the effect appears even from things in which it does not exist, why does it not appear from the non-causes? <sup>1</sup>

Moreover, it will be difficult even to establish the reality of the piece of cloth. The cloth would be real only if the threads had any reality. But the threads themselves consist of parts. Consequently, the threads themselves are dependent on something else and not self-sufficient, and hence not real. Therefore, how can we maintain that the piece of cloth which consists of these threads is self-sufficient and real?

From all these considerations it follows, the 'Mādhyanika' philosophers contend, that both the alternative theories of causation advanced by the 'Sāṅkhya' philosophers on the one hand, and the 'Sarvāstivāda' and 'Theravāda' philosophers (and the 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika')

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1. MMK, ch. I, verse VII; cf. CBN, p. 178,

on the other, suffer from some major defects. A theory that would try to combine the alternatives suggested by these opposing theories would naturally be falsified by the defects associated with each of these alternatives taken separately.

The fourth theory, that things are uncaused, is, in the language of Candrakīrti, "absolutely poor" ('ekānta-nikṛṣṭa iti').<sup>1</sup> What Candrakīrti means here is probably that if it is argued that 'there is no cause of anything whatsoever' then (presuming the identity of 'cause' and 'reason'), it follows that there is no reason for anything whatsoever. And the statement, 'things are uncaused' would then have no reason behind it either.<sup>2</sup>

The above discussion shows that the 'Mādhyamika' philosophers maintain that entities designated as 'causes' and 'effects' cannot exist by virtue of their own being. As causes things are dependent on their effects in much the same way as their effects depend on them for their coming into existence. And even if they did exist by virtue of their own being, there could not be any

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1. MKV, p. 76; cf. CBN, p. 165.

2. It is however doubtful whether the words 'reason' and 'cause' can be identified in this manner. One has to recognise that the concepts 'cause' and 'effect' are temporal concepts, and hence they must be recognised to be different from the non-temporal concepts like 'reason', 'ground', and 'consequent'.



causal relationship between such self-supporting entities.

It might be asked then, if there are no causes and effects, how does the 'Mādhyamika' philosopher in that case interpret the principle of 'dependent origination' ('pratītya-samutpāda'), the principle by which all Buddhists explain the world?

The 'Mādhyamika' philosopher maintains that when the phrase 'dependently originating entities ('pratītya-samutpanna ') is applied to the things in the phenomenal world, it only expresses the idea that these things are devoid of any essence of their own, they are relative.<sup>1</sup> In the technical terminology of the 'Mādhyamika' system, they are said to be 'devoid' ('śūnya), of the dual concepts of 'beings' and 'non-being' in terms of which we define every entity. They cannot evidently be characterised as being, as only self-supporting entities can, properly speaking, be said to have any being of their own. Yet they cannot be said to be absolutely non-existent either; because they have some sort of relative being. The word 'pratītya-samutpāda' in their system is interpreted as meaning only 'relative origination'. Everything in the phenomenal world can thus be said to have 'relative origination' only in the sense that everything has a 'relative existence'.

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1. "Yaḥ pratītya-samutpādaḥ śūnyatām taṁ pracakṣmahe". MMK, chapter XXIV, verse 18, presented in MKV, p. 503. See also CBN, p.43, n.1.

Just as the word 'long' is essentially relative to the word 'short' with regard to its meaning, in the same way effects are essentially relative to their causes. Since every phenomenal thing is conditioned by causes, every phenomenal thing is relative.<sup>1</sup> In the words of the Prasannapadā, "Thus it is that Buddha wished to put in a strong light (the principle of Relativity) the fact that entities are produced only in the sense of being relative to others. He therefore maintains that they are produced neither at random nor from a variety of causes... By this negative method he discloses the true relative character of all entities... This is the relative existence or dependent origination, because nothing really new is produced."<sup>2</sup>

Considered from the standpoint of absolute truth 'originating dependently' loses its meaning as the 'link' between things; rather

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1. However, we must point out that such a line of arguing is based on presuppositions like, the effect could not be what it is (i.e. effect) unless it were caused, the cause could not be what it is (i.e. the cause) unless it did cause the effect. Hence such a line of arguing is dependent on describing the effect solely as an 'effect'. The sprout is essentially dependent on the seed if we decide to describe the sprout as an 'effect' of the seed. In the same way, the cause is necessarily related to the effect if we decide to describe it as the cause. But there are other ways of identifying the cause and those other ways are not essentially related to the descriptions of the effect. Thus one can say that 'smoking causes cancer' and such a proposition is undoubtedly a synthetic one. But if we decide to describe the cause in terms of its causal property, then we can of course convert the above proposition into the analytic proposition. 'The cause of cancer causes cancer'.

2. MKV, p. 10; CBN, p. 90.

it indicates that the process of 'phenomenal becoming' is devoid of independent reality. If all this is true then, (according to the 'Mādhyamika' philosophy), without real entities, and consequently, without real causes, the so-called causal chain is a mere mental fabrication.

The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers regarded causal relations, as conceived in 'Theravāda' and 'Sarvāstivāda' Buddhism, as real only from the practical, the conventional point of view. Processes such as origination, production, and causation are thus not deprived of their reality from the empirical point of view in 'Mādhyamika' philosophy. The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers even admit that the early Buddhist analysis of causal relations also serves some useful purpose. It accounts for phenomenal 'becoming' and at least serves to turn a person's attention away from ascribing independent reality to mundane things. From the ultimate point of view, however, the realisation of the principle of 'dependent origination' is, according to them, only the realisation of the 'emptiness' of the categories of thought and external reality (e.g. cause, substance etc.).

The 'Mādhyamika' philosophers thus denied production from the standpoint of the Absolute. They probably realised the futility of the attempt to retain the concept of 'causation' after having denied that of production. This probably is the reason that prompted them to deny even the concept of causation from the absolute standpoint.

CHAPTER VIIREASONS AND CAUSES

'She married him because of his money.' 'He killed X out of sheer jealousy.' 'He shot X because X's remarks about his wife made him extremely angry.' Statements like these express the various ways in which we explain actions by quoting motives, like greed, jealousy, and anger. And it is quite common to speak of motives and intentions as the causes of our actions. But a group of British (and American) philosophers have recently been inclined to deny that motives, intentions, volition etc. can be causes of our actions. Since by quoting motives, intentions etc. of actions people also state the reason why they perform those actions, these philosophers prefer to call motives, intentions etc. reasons for actions. These philosophers also often make a distinction between what they describe as 'his reason' and 'the reason'.<sup>1</sup> Such a distinction is noticeable in the way we sometimes say of somebody, 'his reason might have been X but the reason why he did it was Y'. Thus we may argue that although Jones said that he crossed the road in order to buy some tobacco, the reason why he crossed it was that he wanted to have a closer look at the pretty girl serving at the

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1. See R.S. Peters, The Concept of Motivation, pp. 8-9.

counter. Whereas talk of 'his reason' entails that a man is conscious of his objective, talk of 'the reason why he did it' does not.

Now the question whether there is a distinction between reasons for actions and causes is very important for the comparative study we have undertaken. The group of philosophers we have mentioned just now argue that reasons for actions are fundamentally different from causes. It is true that the empiricist philosophers like Hume and Mill did not explicitly distinguish between these two concepts. Yet those philosophers who advocate a distinction between reasons for actions and causes might argue that this distinction is so fundamental that even though philosophers like Hume and Mill did not explicitly make it, their discussion of causes must nevertheless have had implicit reference to it. Now it is possible that there is no corresponding distinction in Buddhist philosophy between reasons for actions and causes. Let us, at this stage of our investigation, just presume that there is no such distinction. The question would then naturally arise, to what extent can we really compare the concept of cause as found in Buddhist philosophy with that found in the philosophy of empiricists like Hume, Mill?

But we contend that there is no essential difference between reasons for actions and causes. In the following pages we shall examine some of the arguments put forward by some philosophers in view

of their thesis that the reasons which explain actions cannot be said to cause actions. In the course of the examination we shall also try to make it clear that reasons for actions really constitute a species of the genus cause. After the examination of these arguments we shall try to show that Buddhist philosophers did not maintain a fundamental distinction between reasons for actions and causes. But we shall, by then, be in a position to argue that this is no reason why we cannot make the comparative study we have undertaken. The distinction between reasons and causes is not fundamental. Philosophers like Hume and Mill did not make any explicit or implicit reference to such a distinction. In fact it is hardly surprising that they did not do so for, as we shall show in the following pages, reasons and causes are not essentially different.

The arguments against treating reasons for actions as causes have been very lucidly and succinctly analysed by Donald Davidson in his article, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes.'<sup>1</sup> We shall, in our examination base ourselves to a large extent on his analysis.

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1. Published in Journal of Philosophy, 1963, pp. 685-700.

Section iExamination of Arguments Against Considering Reasons for Actions  
as Causes.

One of the arguments is to the effect that since reasons consist of motives (greed, jealousy, anger etc.), which are states or dispositions, and not events, they cannot therefore be causes.<sup>1</sup> That motives and intentions do not stand for any happening or experience, has been pointed out by various philosophers in various ways. In one form or another this has been pointed out by philosophers like Wittgenstein, Melden, and Peters.<sup>2</sup>

The first thing to be pointed out in answer to such an argument is the fact that the entire set of antecedent conditions which causes an effect consists not only of events but of static states and conditions as well. We have seen in a previous chapter<sup>3</sup> how Mill himself has pointed this out. To give some examples of static causal conditions: the boat capsized because it had a hole in it, the bridge collapsed because of a structural defect. But the question can still be asked, does not the mention of such static conditions

1. Davidson, J P. p. 693.

2. For Melden see Free Action, pp. 86-87, 90-97. For Wittgenstein see Philosophical Investigations, sec. 645. For Peters see The Concept of Motivation, pp. 37-40.

3. See ch. **III**, pp. 130-131

qualify as giving causal explanations only on the assumption that somewhere in the causal situation there was also a preceding event? And what sort of events can be counted as causing actions?

Now it is really not difficult to point out events that are closely associated with reasons for actions like motives and intentions. States and dispositions are certainly not events. But then that which Davidson describes as the 'onslaught'<sup>1</sup> of a state or disposition is undoubtedly an event. And these 'onslaughts' can, with full propriety, be given causal roles in bringing about actions. I become angry the moment someone insults me. Sheila becomes jealous the moment her boy friend pays attention to another girl in the party. And these 'onslaughts' are certainly events.

Melden, in discussing the case of a driver raising his arm in order to signal that he is approaching a turn, challenges his readers to point out any event, any particular feeling or experience, that is 'common and peculiar' to all such cases of signalling. Is there, he asks, any event, perhaps a motive or an intention that can be identified as causing the action of raising the arm by way of signalling?<sup>2</sup> But of course we can point out such an event. At a particular moment the driver becomes aware of the fact that he is

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1. Davidson, J P, p. 694.

2. <sup>Melden,</sup> Free Action, pp. 85, 87.



approaching a turn. And whether we can call such an awareness an experience or not, that is what causes him to signal. Melden is of course right in saying that we cannot specify any event that is 'common and peculiar' to all cases where a man intentionally raises his arm to signal. But then can we specify any 'common and peculiar' cause of all cases of collapsing of bridges, capsizing of boats either? <sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the objection to treating reasons as causes comes from the observation of the nature of our knowledge of reasons. How do I know that this motive or this intention relates to this action or that? Not by observing any correlation between reasons and actions. I know my reasons in acting infallibly. Yet this is not the way I become aware of causal processes. I become aware of them through observation and induction.<sup>2</sup>

No doubt our knowledge of our reasons in acting does share some of the oddities peculiar to the first person knowledge of one's pain, desire etc. Yet our knowledge of our own reasons is not as infallible as we may think. I may, for example, have two reasons for performing a particular action, <sup>one</sup> of which pleases me and one of which does not. And I may be mistaken about which of them is the reason why I did

1. Davidson, JP, p. 695.

2. See Davidson, JP, p. 699, and Macintyre, 'Antecedents of Action' published in British Analytical Philosophy, ed. Williams and Montefiore, p. 216.

what I did. I may, for example, think that I am poisoning Charles because I want to put an end to the terrible and incurable pain he is suffering from. My citing of this reason would be citing my reason for what I am doing. But it may be that I am really poisoning him because I want him out of the way. In that case, my wanting him out of the way would be the reason why I am poisoning Charles. And I may be wrong about which particular motive was the one from which I am poisoning him.

But of course the fact that I may sometimes be wrong about my motives and may accept public evidence as correcting my knowledge, does not mean that in general it makes sense to ask 'how do I know what my reasons for acting are?'. We do not generally need any evidence for knowing what motives are the ones from which we performed particular actions. Yet this fact in itself does not prove that our knowledge of our own reasons is not knowledge of causes. Perhaps what is suggested by this argument is that we do not need any evidence precisely because of the fact that there is a logically necessary connection between the reasons for particular actions and the actions they explain. However, we shall show, with the help of the arguments D.F. Pears uses in an article,<sup>1</sup> that this peculiarity of the knowledge of one's own reasons is explicable as being due to the special character of the concept of a reason for an

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1. See 'Reason, Causes, Actions' by D.F. Pears, published in Epistemology, ed. A. Stroll, pp. 204-228.

action. This peculiarity need not be due to any entailment between a statement concerning a reason and that regarding the performance of the action it explains.

Let us take the agent's desire as his reason. If he wants to determine whether a particular desire of his caused a particular action, he will be immediately aware of his desire as the desire to act in a particular way. Now this awareness of his particular desire implicitly<sup>1</sup> includes the awareness that it is a kind of desire which is nearly always followed by the action desired under certain appropriate circumstances. This is so precisely because of the fact that unless people nearly always acted according to their genuine desires under certain appropriate conditions, we could not communicate with each other about our desires to act. Owing to this special feature of the concept of a desire to act, the agent has a kind of immediate knowledge of his desires as causing his actions. The case is different with regard to the concept of a non-human cause. Although the concept of physical impact does in some way include the idea of such usual effects of impact as movement and fragmentation, yet there are other ways of identifying impacts, both as kinds of impacts and as specific impacts, even apart from referring to its usual effects.<sup>2</sup>

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1. i.e. the agent is only explicitly aware of his desire as the desire to act in a particular way. But this description in fact entails the description, 'it is a kind of desire which is nearly always followed by the action desired in certain appropriate situations'.
  2. See Pears, op. cit., p. 210.

Hence one has to depend on inductive evidence if one wants to prove, for example, that a physical impact caused a movement ~~or~~ a fragmentation.

Those who bring forward the argument regarding the immediacy of an agent's knowledge of his reasons possibly want to say that this immediacy is due to the fact that the identification of a reason entails a reference to the performance of the action it explains. If this were really so, then they could legitimately claim that a reason cannot cause an action.<sup>1</sup> They would argue that the application of the description, 'desire to act' to anything entails the application of a certain other description about its being followed by the action. They would not simply claim that identifying something as 'a desire to perform a certain action' entails the proposition, 'this desire will be followed by the action'. They would rather make qualified claims in the following way.

They would say that it is obvious that the agent would not simply perform the desired action if he suddenly discovered that the appropriate time for it has arrived. He would perform it only if the action were feasible, and he believed it to be so. Moreover, if the desire refers to an action that is to be performed at a later time, then there is the likelihood that the desire may fade away, either due to change of circumstances, ~~or~~ of itself. Keeping in mind

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1. The identification of a cause must not entail a reference to its effect.

complex situations like these, they would claim that the agent's statement that he wants to perform a certain action entails a disjunctive set of propositions.<sup>1</sup> It entails that (i) the agent will act in the desired way, or (ii) the agent does not think it feasible, or (iii) his desire has decreased in the meantime, or (iv) .....

Now we do admit that the concept of desire to act has some connection with the concept of the action that follows this desire. Otherwise we could no communicate<sup>2</sup> with each other about our desires to act. Yet talk of desires need not entail talk of the actual performances of the actions. Successful communication about desires to act merely requires that the disjunctive set of propositions is nearly always true when the agent says that he really wants to perform a certain action.

It is very rarely the case that an agent's statement that he really wants to perform a certain action is true and the disjunctive set of propositions is false. Neither does the agent's statement entail the disjunctive set. If the agent's statement really entailed the disjunctive set, then not only could there be very few cases in which his statement be true and the disjunctive set false, there could be none. Yet it is highly unlikely that there are no cases

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1. The list of alternatives is not complete. It should merely give us a rough idea of what sort of alternatives are needed See Pears, *op.cit.* p. 211.

2. See p. 309

whatsoever in which his statement is true and the disjunctive set  
<sup>1</sup>  
 false.

But although we have tried very hard to show that the peculiarity of our knoweldge of our reasons is not due to any entailment between the identifications of reasons and references to the actions performed, some philosophers have gone <sup>quite</sup> some way towards establishing that identifications of reasons do entail descriptions of actions explained. And they claim that since the notion of a causal sequence implies that cause and effect are intelligible without any logically internal relation of the one to the other, reasons cannot, therefore, be causes of actions.<sup>2</sup>

There are various ways in which it is claimed that statements of reasons entail those about actions. One important way is just to claim that citing the motive or intention is not citing a mental event separable from the action, but only giving a fuller description of the action. Some one may, for example, fail to understand why the driver raised his arm when he approached a turn. Here we may try to explain the action by quoting the motive or intention: 'He raised his arm because he intended to signal that he is taking a turn.' This is in effect the same thing as saying that 'he raised his arm as a way

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1. See pp. 316-317

2. Melden, Free Action, p. 52. See also p. 310, & n. 1.

of signalling that he was preparing to make a turn.' Thus by citing the motive we only explain the isolated action of raising the arm by relating it to the wider context in which the raising of his arm is to be understood as signalling. Moreover, there are ways of checking the truthfulness of declarations of intentions with reference to the further actions of the driver, his further avowals and disavowals, the feelings he betrays etc.<sup>1</sup> This also shows that having an intention is not a matter relating to a single mental event, but to "the whole character of the proceedings that surround the action performed."<sup>2</sup> And what we do when we cite a motive or an intention is only to direct another man's attention to the wider surrounding in which an action is placed. These are the points Wittgenstein had in mind when he remarked, "I am not ashamed of what I did then, but of the intention which I had', - and didn't what I did include the intention? What justifies the shame? The whole history of the incident."<sup>3</sup>

Citing the reason for an action is thus in the opinion of some philosophers, only giving a fuller characterisation of that action. The reason and action are not, therefore, two separable events.

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1. For a further account of such checks see Anscombe's Intentions, sec. 25.
  2. Free Action, p. 100.
  3. Philosophical Investigations, sec. 644.

Description of the action and statement of its reason are thus really different descriptions of one and the same phenomenon. The former is in fact entailed by the latter. Actually, no appropriate description of the intention or motive is in fact possible without bringing in any reference to the action which it explains.<sup>1</sup> We can, for example, explain our driver's action of raising his arm, by referring to his 'intention of informing others that he is approaching a turn.' But how does he 'inform others' except by raising his arm? The statement of the driver's intention thus logically implies a reference to his action of raising his arm.

The first observation that we can make with regard to the objection discussed above is this. Even when we give a causal explanation of a phenomenon we redescribe the phenomenon in terms of its cause. Yet this<sup>in</sup> itself does not imply that the description of the phenomenon and<sup>the</sup> statement of its cause are in fact different descriptions of one identical phenomenon. We can explain an accident, for example, by saying that 'the accident was caused by the driver's ignoring the traffic signals.' Yet by doing so we do not identify the accident with 'the driver's ignoring the signals.' In the same way, I can explain why I flipped the switch by saying 'because I wanted to turn on the light.' Now this explanation is also

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1. Davidson, JP, p. 696, and Macintyre, *op. cit.*, p. 216. "The intention contained a description of the as yet unrealized action."



expressible in the words, 'My flipping the switch was caused by my wanting to turn on the light'. And yet the latter proposition and the statement, 'I flipped the switch' do not describe the same phenomenon. Nor does the statement of the motive behind my action of 'flipping the switch' necessarily imply the description of the action. What sort of logical connection is there between the phrases, 'my wanting to turn on the light' and 'my flipping the switch'?<sup>1</sup> But someone may ask at this stage, although it is possible to describe the reasons in some ways which are not necessarily connected with the descriptions of the actions they explain, is it possible to identify (i.e. specify) such reasons as reasons for actions without referring to actions? How can I, for example, identify a kind of desires as 'my desires to turn on the light' if these desires are never followed by actions that can be interpreted as ways of implementing these desires? We can answer such an objection, again with the help of Pears's arguments,<sup>2</sup> in the following way.

Firstly, we would like to point out that there is no contradiction in saying that we cannot, at least in the present state of our knowledge, identify the desires to act without also referring in some ways to the actions desires; and saying that alternative identifications

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1. There are other ways of turning on the light besides flipping the switch. For example, I may turn it on by joining some wires together and thus completing the circuit.
  2. See Pears's, Epistemology, pp. 214-220.

of desires may one day be discovered. In fact, Pear's has pointed out that it would not be unwise to expect, presuming that some form of physicalism is true, that some specific physical descriptions of states of desires in terms of neurological processes will one day be available.<sup>1</sup> And such descriptions of desires would not entail references to the actions that follow.

Secondly, even if there were no other way of identifying a desire except by referring, in some way, to the consequent performance of the action, yet it is difficult to establish it beyond doubt that a statement like 'I desire to do X' entails 'either I do X, or I do not think it feasible, or my desire has decreased, (i.e. the disjunctive set of propositions<sup>2</sup>).

If the entailment does hold, then we can certainly use the 'disjunctive set of propositions' as a check on the truth of a person's statement that he really wants to perform an action. But is that really possible? Suppose that I myself make that statement with all sincerity. Let us also suppose that the opportunity to perform arrives, to my surprise, immediately and I believe that it is feasible to perform that action. Would I be forced to admit that I had not really wanted to perform that action if no 'disjunctive

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1. See Pears, Epistemology, p. 215.

2. See p. 30

set of propositions' like the one mentioned on p. <sup>311</sup> can be used to describe what happens? Should not the sincerity of the agent's statement sometimes be powerful enough to force us to admit that he really desired to do something?

But we must admit that although we can sometimes insist that the person who has a clear conception of desires to act and who is being sincere about his desire is the final arbiter in a dispute like this, it will be difficult to insist like this in every case. Cases where we can insist in this way are exceptional.

But even if we presume, for the sake of arguemnt, that 'I want to do X' entails the disjunctive set, we can still show that the central and major part of the concept of a desire to act consists of the concept of a 'state' whose application does not entail the application of any such disjunctive set of propositions as the one referred to above. Such a state corresponds to a state of genuine craving or longing, together with its associated feelings and emotions. Pears (possibly) has in mind the concept of such a 'state' as the 'core' of the full concept of a desire to act.<sup>1</sup> This state can certainly be regarded as the cause of performing the action the agent wanted to perform. The description of such a state does not entail any disjunctive set of propositions connecting the desire to act with

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1. See Pears, Epistemology, pp. 219-221. The 'full concept' of a 'desire to act' would perhaps include such factors as the agent's conviction that he wants to perform the action concerned.

the consequent acting. We can conceive that the agent is in that state and still none of the disjuncts applies to what follows. Since this state is the central and major part of the concept of a desire to act, we need not worry about the success of the present defence of our thesis against the entailment-argument if the concept of the 'state' is perhaps a little less than the full concept of desire to act.

However, we have already remarked <sup>1</sup> that unless people nearly always acted according to their genuine desires under certain appropriate circumstances, the concept of desire to act would be unintelligible. Someone may point out that in that case there is an entailment between the statement, 'I desire to do X' and a proposition about the performance of the action. <sup>2</sup> One can claim that 'I (now) desire to do X' entails 'when I desire to do X', usually I do X or the disjunctive set of propositions is true'. We can of course show that the entailment need only be a weaker one, if the concept of desire to act is to be intelligible. Thus we can show 'I (now) desire to do X' entails only the proposition 'usually when people desire to do things either they do them, or the disjunctive set is true'.

The issue would then be, is this conceptual link between the concept of desire and that of action weak enough to allow causality? (Both a strong and a weak conceptual link can be expressed in the

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1. See p. 309

2. See p. 309, n.1.

form of an entailment).

Suppose we say that the condition a cause must satisfy to be cause is that it must be logically conceivable that it occurs without its effect. Now if it is essential to understanding what a desire to do X is that we describe it as 'that which, in given circumstances <sup>1</sup> is always followed by X'; i.e. if we define it in this way, then presumably we could not conceive the desire occurring, in the relevant circumstances, <sup>2</sup> without X happening. On the other hand, if we replace 'always' by 'usually' in the definition, then we could conceive this.

Perhaps it would be a bit clearer to write the absence of the disjunctions referred to by (ii), (iii), ... on p. <sup>311</sup> into the desire itself and say something like 'that feasible, undiminished, ... , thing which is always (or usually) followed by X'. Then the 'usually' version, but not the 'always' version, allows us to conceive that one day we shall be able to say 'here is a case of the feasible, undiminished... , thing, without there being any X following'.

If all this is acceptable, then, the substitution of 'usually' for 'always' does seem to enable the desire to fulfil the condition that it is necessary for it to fulfil if it is to be a cause. and which it cannot fulfil without this substitution.

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1. Namely, the absence of the disjunctions referred to by (ii), (iii) ..., on p. 311
  2. Namely, the absence of the disjunctions referred to by (ii), (iii), ... on p. 311

Perhaps it is a little artificial to put the absence of the disjunctions into the description of the desire! But then those who bring forward the entailment-view are also guilty of introducing artificial means. They claim as if we can easily pick out a specific desire to act as we can pick out a physical object, and then show that talks of such a desire entail a disjunctive set of propositions about the consequent acting. They give the impression that it would be very easy to specify the disjunctions, where as in practice such a specification involves a certain amount of artificiality. Our use of some artificial means of describing the desire can thus be regarded as a tactical concession.

One may also object that it is not very clear how one could pick out 'the feasible, undiminished, ... thing' on occasions where X did not occur. If one could, why is X relevant in any of the cases? We can answer this by saying that if one could pick it out, one could not describe it as 'a desire to do X' unless it was usually followed by X; and that is why the 'usually' clause is needed.

Another objection to treating reasons as causes stems from the Humean definition of a cause. Hume has, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> defined a cause as "an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to

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1. See chapter I, p. 52 . See also Enquiry, p. 76.

the second." Now such a definition of a cause implies that a singular causal statement inevitably implies a general statement connecting events of a particular kind with events of another kind. By contrast, if we say that one man acted in a particular way because another threatened him, (thereby explaining what he did in terms of the reason), it would be absurd to claim that generally he or other persons comply when they are threatened. "The assertion that he acted because of the threats carries no implication that, given similar circumstances, he would act again in this way or that, in similar circumstances, he or other persons had always acted in that way." <sup>1</sup>

We can answer such an objection in the following way. We can say that there do exist certain rough generalisations connecting reasons and actions. People do tend to behave in a more or less uniform way when motivated by reasons of certain kinds. It is true that threatened people do not always comply with threats. But then we must always distinguish between different sorts of threats and different agents. Some agents may have a weak personality and may easily give in to threats. Others may have certain guiding principles due to which they may ignore a threat even involving their own lives. We must consider counteracting circumstances.

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1. Hart and Honore', Causation in the Law, p. 52.

We can, following MacIntyre, put forward a good example of a causal generalisation connecting a reason and a particular behaviour. I am puzzled why I lose my temper while playing cards and behave angrily. Others and I myself notice that I do so pretty soon after I start losing the game. People who wish to make me angry will very happily rely on this correlation between my losing the game and my performing angry actions. This is a very good case of Humean causation and nothing is affected if I manage to change my behaviour on discovering its cause. For the generalisation required will take the following form: 'whenever I am losing at cards, and so long as I do not know what is going to happen to my behaviour as a result, I shortly after behave angrily.'<sup>1</sup>

So far we have dealt with different arguments trying to prove that since actions are to be explained in terms of motives and kindred concepts, they cannot therefore be explained causally. But a group of philosophers make the claim that causal explanations are out of court together so far as actions are concerned. There are various arguments in support of this claim.

One argument runs like this. Causes can explain bodily movements. But since the word 'cause' is applicable to bodily movements, it

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1. MacIntyre, 'Antecedents<sup>of</sup> Action', British Analytical Philosophy, p. 222.



cannot, for this very reason, be applied to human actions (or behaviour). The logic of the language of movements is different from that of the language of actions. (Talk of actions, for example, is unintelligible without concepts like 'purpose', 'meaning', and 'goal'. No such concepts are however necessary for understanding any talk of movements). Thus in so far as we are talking of 'causes', we are restricting ourselves to the domain of movements. We cannot, therefore, apply the word 'cause' any longer to actions, which belong to a different domain. This argument has been advanced by both Melden and Waismann.<sup>1</sup> Waismann, for example, makes his point in the following way.

The word 'action' is ambiguously used. It is sometimes used in the sense of 'bodily movements' and sometimes in the sense of 'human behaviour'. Thus, "an action may be viewed as a series of movements caused by some physiological stimulus.... or as something that has a purpose or meaning.... An action in the first sense is determined by causes, an action in the second sense by motives or reasons. It is generally believed that an action is determined both by causes and by motives". But, Waismann says, if we talk of 'causes' of actions then we are limiting ourselves to the sphere of 'bodily movements'. We cannot then also speak of 'motives' of these same actions; because the words 'motives' or 'reasons' refer only to

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1. For Melden see Free Actions, pp. 6-7, 72. For Waismann see Language Strata, pp. 30-31. / 208; cf. MacIntyre, op. cit. pp. 216-17.

'behaviour'. Similarly, if we speak of 'motives' then we cannot also speak of 'causes' of actions. Hence if we claim that both causes and motives determine actions, then we will be guilty of using the word 'actions' in an ambiguous way.<sup>1</sup>

Now we grant that actions cannot, in the same way, be said to be determined both by causes and by motives, if the word 'causes' referred only to bodily movements and the word 'motives' only to behaviour. But are the words really restricted in this way in their references? It is true that the word 'cause' is generally used in statements about bodily movements. It is also true that the language of bodily movements has a different logic from the language of behaviour. But it does not follow from this that the word 'cause' cannot therefore be used in discussions of behaviour as well.

There is no reason to think that since a word is generally used in statements belonging to one particular logical order or stratum, it must therefore be confined to such statements. And one of the words which cannot be so confined is the word 'cause' and its logical kith and kin. We can, for example, say that the notion of colour is of a different logical order from that of a wavelength of

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1. Waismann, Language Strata, pp. 30-31, quoted by Macintyre in his article, 'The Antecedents of Actions', in British Analytical Philosophy, p. 220.

light. "But we unhesitatingly explain alterations in colour as caused by changes in the wavelength of light. So that although the notion of bodily movements may be of a different logical order from that of an action, it certainly cannot follow that the word 'cause' is restricted to the stratum to which bodily movements belongs. and denied to the stratum to which action belongs." <sup>1</sup>

An attempt has been made to establish the point that actions cannot have any causal explanations with the help of another argument as well. This argument emphasizes the point that causes explain only 'happenings'. Since actions are more than 'happenings', causes cannot explain them. This is what Melden means when he says, "It is futile to attempt to explain conduct through the causal efficacy of desire — <sup>all</sup> that can explain is further happenings, not actions performed by agents. The agent confronting the causal nexus in which happenings occur is a helpless victim of all that occurs in and to him." <sup>2</sup>

The statement that causes can only explain 'happenings' seems also to be the presupposition of another argument against the causal

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1. Macintyre, British Analytical Philosophy, p. 220. Italics ours.
2. Melden, Free Action, pp. 128, 129. Italics as in the original.

explanation of 'actions' brought forward by R.S. Peters. He argues that it is impossible to give a causal explanation of human 'actions', although such an explanation is possible of 'what happens to a man' or 'a breakdown of his actions', because we cannot "specify an action exhaustively in term of movements of the body or within the body."<sup>1</sup> There are indefinitely many ways in which an action, for example, the signing of a contract can be performed. And while there may be a general range of movements which must occur if a contract is to be signed, there are "no specific movements of the muscles, limbs or nervous system, which must occur before it would be conceded that a contract has been signed."<sup>2</sup> But someone may ask, 'is not the same thing true of events which are not actions'? For example, a man may 'fall down' (not an action) in an indefinite number of ways! But Peters informs us of a certain character of an 'action' which helps us to understand the difference between an action and a happening. He says that action descriptions imply norms.<sup>3</sup> What he means is probably that we call something an 'action', only when it occurs within the context of certain institutions with rules, standards, or values. For example, the signing of a contract must occur in the context of certain social and legal

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1. Peters, The Concept of Motivation, p. 12.

2. Ibid., p. 13. Italics<sup>as</sup> in the original.

3. Peters, Concept of Motivation, p. 14.

institutions only, whereas any number of movements may happen outside these contexts which would not be called 'signing of a contract'. Peters concludes, "we could never give a sufficient explanation of an action in causal terms because we could never stipulate the movements which would have to count as dependent variables." <sup>1</sup>

The whole of the argument quoted above rests upon the presupposition that causal explanations are possible of happenings only. Why can't we give direct causal explanation of human actions? Why do we have to trace them through bodily movements? This is because a happening alone can be causally explained.

But why should what is caused necessarily be a happening and not an action? The reason is possibly this. An action is the action of a free agent. The agent may, if he so wishes, not perform it and perform a different action instead. But what is caused us a mere happening. Once the causal processes responsible for its production are started, there is no way of stopping them from bringing this about. If an action is caused, the agent will then no longer remain free not to do it. He will be a 'helpless victim' of a mere happening which he can not alter.

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1. Ibid., p. 14.

Peters and Melden are both arguing that if human actions are caused by anything whatsoever, then they become a mere happenings. In this way, even if desires etc. cause a man's actions then that man becomes these philosophers would suggest, a 'helpless victim' of a mere happening. But such a suggestion rests upon a false assumption that desires etc. are not part of an agent's being and that they are something which 'bypass' him. We would try to establish our point with the help of an example. Suppose a man has a raving passion to murder someone. Let us also suppose that this passion actually causes him to commit a murder. He could, to give an unlikely example, might have said to himself, 'Good, Lord, I have this terrible passion to commit a murder, what shall I do?' This would then possibly be a case where his desire would 'bypass' this man. But let us suppose that immediately after he has this raving passion, this man has a second desire of curbing the passion and not acting according to its dictates. Let us also suppose that he actually succeeds in curbing his raving passion with the help of his second desire. Now the second desire is as much a cause as the first murderous passion. Yet the second desire is not something that is 'bypassing' him.

Section ii

Is There a Distinction in Buddhist Philosophy Between Reasons and Causes?

Buddhist philosophy abounds in discussions about what is generally known in Western philosophy as 'springs of actions'. In the Āṅguttara Nikāya, for example, perception ('phassa') is described as the cause (i.e. 'nidāna') of behaviour.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that perception normally arouses desire in men, and this desire prompts them into different actions. If, for example, I perceive an agreeable object, then my desire for the object grows and I strive to grasp that object.<sup>2</sup> Perception can, in this sense, be said to set a man into action.

Causes are more directly assigned to actions, e.g. in the Āṅguttara Nikāya by saying that three factors, namely, greed ('lobho'), hatred or aversion ('doso'), and delusion ('moho') are causes of actions.<sup>3</sup> It is of course demeritorious ('akusala') actions which

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1. "Phasso....kammānam nidānasambhavo." A N., III, 415. Italic ours.
  2. This is possibly what is implied in such Āṅguttara Nikāya statements as: the cause of craving is an agreeable object. In the case of a person who reflects wrongly on an agreeable object, craving which has not yet arisen arises. See A N., I, 200. Cf. Gradual Sayings, I, p. 181.
  3. A N., I, 134. "Tin'imāni....nidānāni kammānam samudayāya, Katamāni tini? Lobho, doso, moho...."
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result from such evil motives. Meritorious ('kusala') actions are, on the other hand, resultants of the contraries of the motives mentioned above, viz. absence of greed, absence of aversion, and absence of delusion.

The Dhammasaṅgani discusses the function of these three motives in detail. This work discusses not only the actions which ensue from these motives, but also further mental tendencies and qualities which ensue from them. But since our main concern here is with the causes of actions, we shall therefore confine ourselves only to the account of actions performed from these motives. We can gather the following information about actions issuing from these motives, basing ourselves on the commentary of the Dhammasaṅgani, the Atthasālinī.

Greed makes people madly chase sensuous objects in order to gratify their desires. They attach themselves to sensuous objects in the way a piece of fresh meat thrown into a heated utensil sticks to it, or the way the pigment from oil lamps sticks to certain objects. As a result individuals madly rush after some objects by letting go others. In this way their greed, increasing continuously with its progress, carries them to a very low sphere of existence just as a stream carries any object fallen into it to the great ocean.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Atthasālinī, p. 249. "Tesu lobho ārammaṇagahaṇalakkhano.... apāyam eva gaheṭvā gacchatī ti daṭṭhabbo."



Hatred or aversion makes a man behave offensively, rudely, and agrily. Due to hatred or malevolence an individual offends or injures another like an enemy. Hatred is usually accompanied by states like envy ('issā', Sanskrit, 'īrṣyā') and meanness ('macchariya', Sanskrit 'mātsarya'). As a result a mevolent man cannot endure the prosperity of others and turns his face away from such prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

Delusion is really another name for 'avijjā' or 'aññāna', the primary cause of all evils, the primary cause of the 'vicious' worldly existence.<sup>2</sup> It covers the intrinsic nature of objects and accuses us to revel in all sorts of demeritorious actions. It is in this sense described as the root of all evils,<sup>3</sup> because if we could see through the worldly objects as they are in themselves, we should feel no desire for them and should not consequently indulge in actions set after procuring them.

The contraries of these three motives, absence of greed, absence of hatred, and absence of delusion are, however, conducive

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1. Atthasālinī, p. 257. "Tesu issatī ti issā....parasampatti-padaṭṭhānā saṃyojanan ti daṭṭhabbā."

2. It is the first member of the 'twelve-membered dependent origination'.

3. Atthasālinī, p. 249. "Moho....sabbākusalānaṃ mūlan ti daṭṭhabbo."

to the following meritorious actions.

To start with, absence of greed helps an individual to behave in an unattached way. He remains unattached to sensuous objects. Just as water drooped on a lotus leaf does not cling to it, so he does not cling to sensuous objects. Like a saint who has renounced worldliness, a non-greedy man does not strive to acquire worldly possession. Above all 'alobho' helps a man to be generous. It prompts a man to charity ('dānaḥetu').<sup>1</sup> Through absence of greed one does not, as opposed to the greedy one, take more than is necessary. Again, absence of greed helps a man to disclose a defect whenever he detects it. But a greedy man is always very eager to cover and conceal defects.<sup>2</sup>

Absence of hatred ('adoso') or amity is conclusive to pleasant and charming behaviour. It stops a man from behaving rudely and resentfully with his fellow beings. It helps an individual to lead a harmonious life with all others. ('Sabbesaṃ sukhānaṃ saṃvāsātā hoti'). Absence of hatred makes us disclose virtues when we detect them. But a person ruled by hatred will reject virtues and belittle them.

Absence of delusion is really another name for 'analytical' and

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1. Atthasālinī, p. 127.

2. Ibid., p. 127. "Alobhena c'ettha....dosam paṭicchādeti".

appreciative understanding ('paññā', Sanskrit 'prajñā').<sup>1</sup> It is responsible for the actual practice of all that leads to self-perfection<sup>2</sup> and ultimately to Liberation. Absence of delusion operates especially among recluses and allows them to live happily.<sup>3</sup> This is because it is they who have perceived the non-substantiality ('anattā')<sup>4</sup> of worldly things and taken to the right path.<sup>5</sup> Finally, absence of delusion prompts a man to reveal things as they really are, while a man dominated by delusion perceives true as false and false as true.

We have briefly described how men behave under the influence of motives like greed, hatred and delusion, and their contraries, in some Buddhist texts. The question can be asked now, do the Buddhist texts analyse such motives as something different from causes? Of course we cannot find any extensive discussion in Buddhist literature about the distinction between a 'reason' and a 'cause' comparable to the one we have reproduced in this chapter. The question of the distinction between 'reasons' for actions and 'causes' is possibly of a very recent origin. But the question

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1. Atthasālinī, p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 129.

3. Ibid., p. 128.

4. Ibid., p. 129.

5. 'Right Path' = 'the Middle Path,' Atthasālinī, p. 128.

whether the Buddhists understood by these motives 'causes' for actions or something else (i.e. 'reasons') can still be answered in an indirect way. It can be answered, for example, by asking whether the Buddhist texts used one word to refer to what is generally known as 'causes', and a completely different one to refer to 'springs of actions' or motives. If they used two different words on these two occasions, then one can possibly argue that the Buddhist philosophers made a distinction between 'motives' and 'causes'.

By looking at the word the Anguttara Nikāya chooses to refer to motives of actions one may, at the outset, form the opinion that the Buddhist philosophers understood by motives something different from 'causes'. The Anguttara Nikāya has referred to these motives as 'nidānas' of actions ('kamma'),<sup>1</sup> whereas the standard word found in Buddhist texts, <sup>to</sup> refer to causes are words like 'hetu' and 'paccaya' ('pratyaaya'). Is this merely a coincidence, or is it indicative of a fundamental distinction these texts made between a 'reason for action' and a 'cause'? We can answer the question in the following way.

It is true that the Anguttara Nikāya refers to these motives as 'nidānas'. Yet other texts belonging to early Buddhist schools refer

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1. See notes 1 and 3, p.329 of the present chapter.

to them as 'hetu-paccayas'. And although a 'hetu-paccaya' is undoubtedly different from the other 'paccayas', it is nevertheless a species of the higher class, 'paccaya'. Referring to motives as 'paccayas' is thus indicative of the fact that motives form a species of the higher class of causal conditions ('paccayas'). There are different species of causal conditions, and they condition their effects in different ways. One such species is exhibited by the class that is generally known as motives for actions.

The Visuddhimagga has, for example, referred to the motives of actions greed, hatred and delusion as 'hetu-paccayas' ('root-conditions'). It explains the compound word 'hetu-paccaya' in the following way. The word 'hetu' signifies root and the word 'paccaya' means 'that which helps another' ('upakāra'). 'Hetu-paccaya' thus means 'that which helps another as a root.'<sup>1</sup> The Visuddhimagga speaks of three 'dhammas' as being roots of meritorious ('kusala') actions and three 'dhammas' as being roots of demeritorious ('akusala') actions.<sup>2</sup> Since the triplets greed, hatred, delusion and

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1. VM, p. 533. "Iti mūlatṭhena hetu...mūlatṭhena upakāraḥ dhammo hetu-paccayo."

2. "Tayo kusalahetū, tayo akusala<sup>a</sup>hetū ti." VM, p. 532.

their contraries constitute the roots of such actions,<sup>1</sup> they are therefore included in the 'hetu-paccaya' by the author of the Visuddhimagga. The Paṭṭhāna also speaks of these pairs of triplets as 'hetu-paccayas'.

The fact that one Buddhist text refers to motives as 'nidānas' is thus not sufficient evidence for reaching the conclusion that Buddhist philosophers in general distinguished motives from causes, because other texts have referred to motives as belonging to the higher class of 'paccayas'. We cannot even be sure that the Āṅguttara Nikāya itself maintained a distinction between a motive for action and a cause; because according to some Buddhist scholars the words 'nidāna', 'hetu', 'paccaya' etc. all signify, in slightly different senses, the same thing. Buddhaghosa has, for example, said that although the words 'paccaya', 'hetu', 'kāraṇa', 'nidāna', 'sambhava', 'pabhava' are different in form, they nevertheless mean the same thing.<sup>2</sup> Hence although the Āṅguttara Nikāya might have chosen the word 'nidāna' to refer to motives, it does not follow that the Āṅguttara Nikāya meant by 'nidāna' something essentially different from 'paccaya'. Of course it may be insisted, (as has already been remarked) that there must be some difference in the

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1. The Dīgha Nikāya also refers to them as roots of meritorious and demeritorious actions. See DN, III, p. 214.

2. See VM, p. 533.

meaning of these words; otherwise why should people use so many words instead of using one single word? But then the difference between these words need not be a difference of kind. Just as the word 'hetu' signifies only a species of 'paccaya' and not something different in kind from 'paccaya',<sup>1</sup> so the word 'nidāna' may also signify a species of 'paccaya'. 'Nidāna' may stand for one particular species of causes, e.g causes of actions. Moreover, in chapter V<sup>2</sup> we have given the reasons why we think that the words 'paccaya', 'hetu', 'kāraṇa', 'nidāna', 'sambhava', 'pabhava' were probably all used by Buddhist philosophers to refer to some aspect or other of causation. If this is the case, and if motives are referred to as 'nidānas', there is no need to suppose that the Anguttara Nikāya must have meant by 'nidānas' something different from 'causes'.

We can now come to the conclusion that our study of the concepts of motives and intentions, as found in Buddhist philosophy, does not give us conclusive evidence to prove that the concept of cause has been distinguished in it from that of the reason for action. Yet the lack of the distinction in Buddhist philosophy between a cause and a reason does not stand in the way of our comparing the concept of cause as found in Buddhist philosophy with

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1. See ch. W, pp. 151-152

2. See ch. V, pp. 251-252, and 252 n.1.

that found in the philosophy of certain British philosophers. For, as we have already remarked,<sup>1</sup> the distinction between a cause and a reason is not fundamental, and philosophers like Hume and Mill did not, either explicitly or implicitly, distinguish a 'cause' from a 'reason' for action.

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1. See pp. 303-304



APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IFURTHER ATTEMPTS TO PROVE THAT THERE IS A LOGICALLY NECESSARY  
BETWEEN A CAUSE AND AN EFFECT

Although Hume quite persuasively argued that the cause does not have any logically necessary connection with the effect, the issue as to whether there is any internal logical relation between the cause and the effect was not abandoned at this point. It survived in Western philosophy for a long time even after Hume. In fact, even in recent times philosophers like A.C. Ewing<sup>1</sup> and B. Blanshard claim that the relation between a cause and its effect is a logically necessary one. But it should be noted that although the Buddhist philosophers were, just like the empiricist philosophers, very involved with questions like whether there is in reality anything like 'production' and 'causal efficacy', they do not appear to have been involved with the question about the logically necessary connection between the cause and the effect. We shall briefly mention the sort of arguments philosophers like Blanshard bring forward. We do not think that these arguments succeed in proving that the cause and the effect are connected by a logically necessary connection. Blanshard bases his view in many important respects on Ewing.

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1. See Ewing, Idealism, pp. 166f.

We shall examine here mainly the views of Blanshard. We can put his arguments for causal necessity into three main groups.

(a) He appeals first to inferences (in general).  
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When we infer, /entertainment of the premise or premises is the cause (or part of the cause) of the emergence of the conclusion in our minds. "When one passes in reasoning from ground to consequent the fact that the ground entails the consequent is one of the conditions determining the appearance of this consequent rather than something else in the thinker's mind."<sup>1</sup> Thus since the objects of the two thoughts, viz. the entertainment of the premise and that of the conclusion, are logically related, our entertainment of the premise determines (i.e. compels) the emergence of the conclusion in our minds.

But it is doubtful whether his arguments succeed in proving that the emergence of the premise and that of the conclusion of an inference are logically related.

We very often experience our inability to draw a conclusion when presented with a certain premise, even though the premise entails the conclusion. Yet, if two things are necessarily related, then we expect that if one of them is given, the other will inevitably follow it. Even though it is an indisputable fact that

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<sup>The</sup>  
1. /Nature of Thought, II, p. 496.

in cases of valid inferences the ground logically entails the consequent, yet this fact in itself, is not sufficient to ensure the necessary emergence of the conclusion in the thinker's mind at the sight of the premise or premises.

Now Blanshard might qualify his previous statement at this point by saying that what he means by saying causality involves logical necessity is only that logical necessity must be one of the factors, among many, that determines the effect. In the case of inference, he claims, the premise's logically entailing the conclusion is such a factor.

But it can be easily shown that the premise's entailing the conclusion is not a sine qua non of inferences. We very often arrive at a wrong conclusion from certain premises. The thought of the premise and that of the conclusion are undoubtedly causally related in those cases, yet the objects of the two thoughts are not logically related.<sup>1</sup>

Another vital objection against Blanshard's claim is to the effect that, since logical relations are timeless, how can they be elements of causation which is a temporal process? Blanshard's

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1. Cf. Nagel, Sovereign Reason, pp. 287-88.

answer to such an objection is that the events causality connects are not bare events, stripped of all sorts of characters. Logic deals with characters which are non-temporal entities. Hence one can claim that the non-temporal characters dealt with by logic can undoubtedly be parts of causal processes. A case in point he claims, is the relation of similarity. "It would be idle to deny", he says, "that the similarity of content does at times have something to do with the appearance of an associate."<sup>1</sup> (By appearance he perhaps means here the appearance of the associate in the mind).

Now although it is true that the relation of similarity is a non-temporal entity, yet this in itself does not establish what Blanshard eventually wants to prove, viz., a logical relation can be an element of causation. The relation of similarity is not a logical relation. A shilling coin may resemble another foreign coin in size. But although this shilling coin and the foreign coin may be related by way of similarity, it would be absurd to claim that they are logically related.

Blanshard made a fresh attempt to prove his point in his Reason and Analysis which he published later than The Nature of Thought. There he says that although the common conception of cause is based on an arbitrary selection of the conspicuous change

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1. The Nature of Thought, II, pp. 497-8.

occurring before the effect, yet the word 'cause' should be legitimately applied to the sum of the conditions given which alone the effect will occur. And in this sense of the word, the necessity linking the objects of the thought cannot be omitted from the cause. We do agree with Elanshard that the word 'cause' is really a collective name for many factors. Yet there is nothing in that admission which requires that a logical necessity is one of the factors constituting a causal complex. In fact, each of the examples of the necessary conditions he has been able to give, in the course of the arguments, except the unique condition of logical necessity, is either an element or a thing or its character (like the exerting of the normal pull by gravitation, density of the air, a particular level of the table).<sup>1</sup>

Another argument Elanshard brings forward to prove a logically necessary connection between a cause and an effect is as follows. Unless the premises entailed the conclusion and unless this entailment in some way compelled us to accept this particular conclusion rather than another, we could never say that we arrived at valid conclusions because of entertaining certain premises. (Cf. "No conclusions are arrived at because the evidence requires them." The Nature of Thought, II, p 498). Thus in the case of valid inferences at least, we have to admit

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1. Cf. Reason and Analysis, p. 457.

that our arriving at the valid conclusion is caused, among other things, by entailment, a logical relation.

An opponent might say at this stage that granted that the inference becomes invalid if the premises do not entail the conclusion, there is yet nothing in that admission to prove that necessity is involved in the movement of inference. If anything does play a part in the movement of inference at all, it is the 'apprehension of necessity'. Blanshard's answer to such a possible objection can be found in his Reason and Analysis.

There he argues that such an explanation of inference already assumes what has to be proved. Our task is to explain how we arrive at the conclusion. But in order to intuit the entailment of the conclusion by the premise, both the conclusion and the premise must be present at the same time before us, and this amounts to saying that the conclusion emerged because it had already made its appearance

A deeper scrutiny will reveal that Blanshard himself is really begging the question here in saying that it is logical entailment which is responsible for the emergence of the conclusion in the thinker's mind. He starts by thinking that there must be a cause for the appearance of a certain conclusion in the mind. The human mind is such a complex entity that it is extremely difficult to ascertain what is causing what in the mental world. It may be, for all we know, that some of the thoughts are not caused at all. But

Blanshard assumes from the very beginning that the appearance of the conclusion in a certain thinker's mind must be caused. And since he cannot find any other entity to enact the role of a cause, he fancies the logical entailment to enact such a role. Moreover, if entailment were a sufficient condition for the emergence of the conclusion then our thoughts would be rather overloaded! The reason is, a proposition does not entail only one other proposition, but in fact many propositions. So if entailment were a sufficient condition, then several thoughts would appear in our mind the moment we think of one premise.

Blanshard is arguing all the time that entailment is one of the causes that makes us accept one conclusion rather than another. But proving that entailment is one of the causes of inferring is different from proving that, there is a logically necessary connection between the emergence of the conclusion in the mind of the person inferring and the causes of that emergence. And unless Blanshard can prove the second thesis he cannot hope to demonstrate that there is a logically necessary connection between the cause and the effect.

(b) According to Blanshard, the presence of logical necessity can be traced, besides inference, in other spheres of mental causation as well. But the necessity present in these spheres is, according to him, not absolute, but tinged with an element of contingency as well. Some of us will undoubtedly be very surprised

at such a comment. Surely, necessity admits of no degree!

Yet we find Blanshard saying, "necessity, whatever our first impressions, is a matter of more and less, and that between a complete demonstration and a mere accidental conjunction it may be present in very many degrees."<sup>1</sup> By examining Blanshard's further comments on this point we can see that he is here interpreting the term 'logically necessary' in a way different from that in which it is normally understood. He is thinking that the proposition, 'X is logically necessary' means the same sort of thing as 'there is a cause or reason for X'.

He writes, "a painter is painting a landscape that is half completed, and he finds himself moved to put a tree in the foreground. Is such a development normally quite unintelligible? Certainly most painters would not say so. Is it then an example of pure necessity? No again; it clearly falls somewhere between."<sup>2</sup> Clearly, Blanshard is taking 'intelligibility' to mean that <sup>(i)</sup> there is a cause why something happened in a particular way, and 'unintelligibility' to mean that <sup>(ii)</sup> an occurrence is accidental.

However, when we grasp why an event is like that and not otherwise, we can at most claim that there is some cause for its being

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1. The Nature of Thought, II, p. 499.
  2. The Nature of Thought, II, p. 499-500.



so. But it is a far cry to say that intelligibility is the criterion of logical necessity. Yet Blanshard's remarks on page 500 of The Nature of Thought, II, do give us the impression that he is claiming so: "Does the ... premise here, 'All who think lightly of their own deserts are grateful', express a causal or a logical connection? We suggest that it expresses both. If a man whom we know to think little of himself proves grateful for another's esteem, is that, apart from inductions made on such people in the past, ... as unpredictable and unintelligible, as if he had begun talking in a Sumerian tongue?"

Blanshard is trying to establish that there is both a causal and a logical connection between somebody's having low self-esteem and his being grateful for another's praises. He wants to say that the proposition, 'low self-esteem always causes people to feel grateful for others' praises', is analytic.

Now of course this proposition expresses a causal connection. And it is extremely ambiguous to say that a proposition stating such a connection is at the same an analytic one. The reason is, if two things are causally related then there must be a way of identifying the cause which does not entail any reference to the effect being caused by it. A proposition about a causal connection must therefore be synthetic. Hence it would be highly ambiguous to suggest that such a causal proposition is analytic. Such a proposition would then have to be both analytic and synthetic at

the same time! A proposition could at most be said to be partly analytic and partly synthetic. But to claim that it is at one and the same time full-blooded analytic and full-blooded synthetic is highly unintelligible.

(c) Next we shall deal with Blanshard's arguments for proving the necessity of causation in physical nature. And these undoubtedly constitute the most important part of his defence of the necessity of causation.

Blanshard says that when we make successful predictions concerning the future occurrence of events, on the basis of past experience, we rely on the argument that 'because b has followed a in the past, it will continue to do so.' It is often argued that such arguments are valid because they are based on the principle of the uniformity of nature, according to which, 'the same cause produces the same effect.' Now if the principle of the uniformity of nature is to justify the argument quoted above, it must itself state an intrinsic connection between the characters of the thing called 'cause' and those of the thing called effect'.<sup>1</sup> Hence the connection between the cause and the effect, which is the basis of our prediction of their future connection, should be intrinsic, necessary.

What justifies the principle, 'same cause, same effect', Blanshard maintains, is our realization that when something produces something else, it does so by virtue of its special nature. The

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1. See The Nature of Thought, II, p. 511.

special nature of a cause must have something to do with the production of the effect. Otherwise, why say it produces something? "To say that a produces X in virtue of being a and yet that, given a, X might not follow, is inconsistent with the laws of identity and contradiction." For "a's behaviour is the outgrowth or expression of a's nature. And to assert that a's behaviour could be different while a was the same would be to assert that something both did and did not issue from the nature of a. And that is self-contradiction. The statement would also ... conflict with the law of identity. It implies that a thing may remain itself when you have stripped from it everything which it is such as to be and to do. To strip it of these things would be to strip it, so to speak, of the suchness that makes it what it is, i.e., to say that it is other than it is." <sup>1</sup>

Let us try to analyse the implications of Blanshard's claim with the help of an example. Othello strangled Desdemona. According to Blanshard, Othello's strangling was the outgrowth of Othello's special nature. To imagine that he did not strangle would be to strip him of the suchness that made him what he was. Since Othello's behaviour is an 'outgrowth' of Othello's nature, in the absence of his act of strangling, his nature must logically be admitted to be different.

What then is Othello's special nature? Blanshard says that he

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1. The Nature of Thought, II, pp. 513-14.

means by the nature of a non-relational thing its properties.<sup>1</sup> What properties of Othello would then be different if Othello did not kill Desdemona? It is extremely difficult to point out any such property. But of course Othello would no longer possess the relational property of being the killer of Desdemona. And the absence of such property may be said to imply the alteration of Othello's nature if and only if Othello's nature is made identical with the total set of attributes that may be truly predicated of him. But then the argument will amount to a tautology. If we already define X's nature as 'the total set attributes that are truly predicable of him', then if any of the truly predicable attributes is missing from the totality, we would obviously say that X's nature is changed.

Elanshard makes some fresh attempts to prove his case in Reason and Analysis. He remarks that what he says is certainly true if the causal properties of a thing are introduced into its definition. If gold did not dissolve in aqua regia we should not call it gold; since gold is that which is soluble in aqua regia. Bearing in mind Stebbing's comment,<sup>2</sup> that we do not include all the causal properties of a thing in its nature, he says that including a

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1. The Nature of Thought, II, p. 478.

2. Stebbing, A Modern Introduction to Logic, pp. 285f.

causal property in the definition of a thing is not the only way of arguing that its causal property is its necessary property. He says that, "Even if a thing is not its behaviour, still if we say that it behaves in this way in virtue of having this nature,... then we are saying,... that it could not lack the causal property while possessing this nature." <sup>1</sup>

If we scrutinize this argument, we shall find that although Blanshard professes not to include the causal properties of a thing in its nature, yet he is virtually doing the same thing: in disguise by introducing the expression 'in virtue of'. If we strip away the disguise, we shall find that this means nothing but 'in the nature of'. And if it is in the nature of a thing to behave in a particular way, then obviously 'it could not lack that behavioural property while possessing this virtue.' Blanshard would obviously claim that a proposition like 'food must-nourish' is a necessary statement. If anything is food, then it must nourish. Yet we can conceive of many conditions under which food does not nourish. Blanshard would probably say then that it is wrong to call something 'food' if it does not nourish. 'Food' means that which nourishes. But it is needless to point out that his argument is then reduced to a mere tautology. Blanshard wants to say that the reason why a certain thing produces something else is because there is a logically necessary connection between the thing's being what it is and its producing the

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1. Blanshard, Reason and Analysis, p. 471. Italics as in the original.

other thing. However, we would like to point out that there is no such connection. Blanshard may ask then, why does the thing act in that particular way in that case? We could answer that question with the help of the concept of probability. We could say that the reason why, for example, a kettle boils when placed on fire is that *the* atomic configurations of a kettle of water makes it more probable that it should boil when put on fire than assume any other state. But the question may still be asked, why should the atomic configurations make it so probable? We may answer by saying that the world of nature is as <sup>it</sup> is - the laws of nature are as they are. If the kettle of water behaved in a different way when put on fire, e.g., if it froze, then only we could have asked the question why. There is one chance in a million, so to speak, of the kettle's freezing when put on fire. If it did freeze inspite of this, we could have asked, why was that probability realised? On the contrary, the chances of the kettle's boiling overweighs the probability of its freezing. Therefore, the question cannot be asked, why do the atomic configurations of water make it probable that water boils when put on fire.<sup>1</sup>

Another recent phase of the battle for and against 'causal

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1. Of course, these questions can be answered properly only by a physicist. And we should not trespass into the territory about which we know so little. Whatever comments we have made so far have really been made from a layman's point of view.

necessity' is traceable in the writings of philosophers like Popper and Kneale.

However, the issue of causal necessity is, in their writings, couched in slightly different terms than what we have so far considered. There is, obviously, a close connection between statements expressing causal connections and those expressing laws of nature. It is possible to explain a statement expressing a causal connection in terms of a statement expressing a law of nature. Take for example, a proposition like 'This kettle of water was caused to boil by being heated.' One can, if one so wishes, explain it with the help of a statement about a corresponding law of nature, in the following way: 'This kettle of water was heated, and it boiled. And there is a law of nature of the form, water heated at  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$  at sea level always boils,<sup>1</sup> from which it can be deduced that, whenever a kettle of water was heated at  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,<sup>2</sup> it boiled.'

Such a conception of a law of nature can easily be interpreted as conveying the notion of a necessary connection between cause and effect. Kneale has in fact argued that the laws of nature are logically necessary laws in an article titled, 'Universality and Necessity' which was published in The British Journal for the

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1. Some philosophers, e.g. Kneale, would like to interpret the words 'always boils' as 'must boil'.
  2. And presuming some other negative conditions which are understood here.

Philosophy of Science.<sup>1</sup> A diametrically opposite view is held by Popper, who thinks that the words like 'must' and 'necessary' which we use in connection with laws of nature do not stand for 'logical must' or 'logically necessary'. In fact he says that, "I regard, unlike Kneale, 'necessary' as a mere word, as a label for distinguishing the universality of laws from 'accidental universality'... I largely agree with the spirit of Wittgenstein's paraphrase of Hume: "A necessity for one thing to happen because another has happened does not exist. There is only logical necessity'. [Tractatus, 6. 37.]\* Only in one way is  $a \xrightarrow{N} b$ <sup>2</sup> connected with logical necessity: the necessary link between a and b is neither to be found in a nor in b, but in the fact that the corresponding ordinary conditional (or material implication',  $a \rightarrow b$ <sup>3</sup> without 'N') follows with logical necessity from a law of nature."<sup>4</sup>

How does Professor Popper explain then the word 'necessary' which, when applied to the laws of nature, serves to distinguish them from 'accidental universality'?<sup>5</sup> He says, "A statement may be

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1. Vol. XII, pp. 89-102.
  2. i.e. 'if a then necessarily b'.
  3. i.e. 'if a then b'.
  4. Logic of Scientific Discovery, p. 438. Italics as in the original.
  5. An example of accidental universality is the fact that, All mountains in the United Kingdom are less than 5,000 ft. in height.
- \* Cf. a different translation by Pears & Macguinness(1968), p.143.



said to be naturally or physically necessary if, and only if, it is deducible from a statement function which is satisfied in all worlds that differ from our world, if at all, only with respect to initial conditions."<sup>1</sup> Kneale interprets the above definition of 'physical necessity' to be really a definition of 'logical necessity' in disguise. He says that, saying that a statement function is satisfied in all worlds that differ from the actual world, if at all, only with respect to initial conditions, is saying in effect that it holds for all possible worlds.<sup>2</sup> And he claims that what holds for all possible worlds is obviously necessary.<sup>3</sup>

But a reflection on what Popper means by the phrase 'all worlds which differ from our world with respect to initial conditions' will reveal that Popper cannot be charged with presenting a definition of 'logical necessity' in the disguise of 'natural necessity'. He means by it 'all worlds which have the same structure - or the same natural laws - as our own world.'<sup>4</sup> The 'initial conditions' here stand for things like the distance

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1. Logic of Scientific Discovery, p. 433. Italics as in the original.

2. Kneale, 'Universality and Necessity', British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, vol. XII, p. 99. Popper does grant that such a statement function holds for all possible worlds, but he would add that the word 'possible' stands here for 'physically possible.'

3. Kneale, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

4. Popper, Logic of Scientific Discovery, p. 435.

of the planets, their masses, and the mass of the sun.<sup>1</sup> If a statement is logically necessary then it will have to be true in all possible worlds - both physically and logically possible worlds. And a logically possible world need not only be a world with the same natural laws as ours but different initial conditions. A logically possible world may not have the same natural laws which govern our planet. We can easily imagine<sup>2</sup> a world where fire freezes water, and unsupported bodies (near the surface of the earth) go up in the sky. Thus what holds true for 'all worlds having the same natural laws, but only different initial conditions' is not the same as what is logically necessary. In fact, Popper defined 'logical necessity' in the following way: "a statement may be said to be logically necessary if and only if it is deducible (for example, by particularization) from a 'universally valid' statement function which is satisfied by every model. (This means, true in all possible worlds)." <sup>3</sup> While the above (i.e. Popper's) definition of 'physical necessity' will help us to distinguish laws of nature from 'accidental generalizations'

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1. Popper, Logic of Scientific Discovery, p. 435.
  2. As is obvious from fairy tales.
  3. Popper, Logic of Scientific Discovery, p. 432. Popper possibly means by 'all possible worlds' - 'all physically and logically possible worlds.'

(since in different initial conditions, the statement 'all mountains in the U.K. are less than 5,000 ft. in height' may not be true); it will, at the same time, show that a law of nature is not a logically necessary law.

But we must point out that although Popper succeeds in showing that laws of nature are not logically necessary laws, yet his treatment of laws of nature as laws having 'physical necessity' leaves us extremely unhappy.

According to Popper laws of nature have some sort of 'physical necessity or invariability'. They do not only refer to what happens as a matter of fact. Yet what sort of necessity do they possess? It is obviously not logical necessity. A statement of a law is necessary in the sense that 'it can be deduced from a statement function which is satisfied in all worlds that have initial conditions' different from those of our world. Yet a deeper scrutiny will reveal that Popper is really explaining this 'invariability' as 'that which always happens with the same laws of nature as ours.' The reason is, Popper means by 'all worlds which differ from our world with respect to initial conditions', 'all worlds which have the same natural laws as our actual world.' Hence Popper is really explaining 'invariable' in this context as 'that which happens in accordance with our laws of nature'. Yet Popper professed to explain the difference between natural laws and 'accidental universality' by showing that natural laws are

those which hold good invariably' ! He is thus arguing in a circle.

Popper was probably led into this unhappy position because he wanted to say that statements of laws of nature are different from statements of what happens as a matter of fact. Hence he claimed that they have some sort of necessity. Yet he found it difficult to explain what sort of necessity it is. He said that a natural law is invariable because it is not confined to the actual world, but would in fact be true in all worlds which only have 'different initial conditions.' But is it not possible that even the laws, as we know them, would be different with different conditions'? He ruled out such a possibility. A law would not be a law if it did not hold good in conditions different from the actual ones! A law of nature is thus, strangely enough, a law which holds good even with different 'initial conditions', as long as the laws of nature remain the same! But the circular reasoning is hidden from our view by Popper's intricate explanation of 'physically necessary' in terms of 'all worlds which differ from.... to initial conditions'. (See p.355).

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CORRIGENDA

- p. 6, line 6, read 'Kamalaśīla' instead of 'Kamalsīla'.
- p. 7, line 15, delete '268'.
- p. 13, line 5, delete comma after 'like'.
- p. 14, line 6, read 'secondly' instead of 'secodnly'.
- p. 15, line 6, read 'incongruity' instead of 'inconguity'.
- p. 19, line 11, read 'Is it' instead of 'It is'.
- p. 29, line 18, read 'an effect' instead of 'a cause'.
- p. 32, line 13, read 'proposition' instead of 'popotion'.
- p. 40, n. 1, line 16, read 'of' instead of 'or'.
- p. 42, line 6, read 'to' instead of 'the'.
- p. 42, line 26, delete 'in'.
- p. 49, n. 2., read 'p. 48' instead of 'p. 16'.
- p. 50, line 4, read 'he thinks' instead of 'they think'.
- p. 62, line 11, read the following words between 'connexion'. and 'since':  
'Thus Hume cannot be, in Flew's opinion, charged with inadequate representation of the idea of necessary connexion'.
- p. 76, line 10, read 'satīdam' instead of 'sati idam'.
- p. 76, line 11, read 'nirodhād' instead of 'norodhād'.
- p. 77, last line, read 'is not' instead of 'isnnot'.
- p. 81, line 9, read 'Sāṅkhyists' instead of 'Sankhyists'.
- p. 82, line 5, read 'nāpyāhetutaḥ' instead of 'nāpi ahetutaḥ'.
- p. 87, line 2, delete 'to' after 'conditions'.
- p. 91, line 8, read 'view-point' instead of 'view-poing'.
- p. 99, line 7, delete 'actual' before 'words'.
- p. 99, n. 3, read 'tadānim' instead of 'tadanim'.
- p. 108, n. 1, line 20, read 'which' instead of 'who'.
- p. 118, n. 1, line 3, read 'taj jñānam' instead of 'tat jñānam'.
- p. 119, line 9, read 'at the' instead of 'as the'.
- p. 121, n. 1, line 2, read 'bījam āhitam' instead of 'bījamāhitam'.
- p. 145, line 14, read 'ignoring' instead of 'ignorning'.
- p. 153, line 4, read 'determining' instead of 'determing'.
- p. 154, line 10, read 'perceptual' instead of 'perceptional'.
- p. 158, line 13, read 'simultaneous' instead of 'simulatneous'.
- p. 190, line 6, read 'satīdam' instead of 'sati idam'.
- p. 194, line 9, read 'commotion' instead of 'commotions'.
- p. 194, n. 1, read 'duḥkha' instead of 'dukkha'.
- p. 194, n. 5, line 3, read '193' after 'p.'.
- p. 196, line 2, read 'in' instead of 'is'.
- " " , line 3, read 'meditation' instead of 'mediation'.
- p. 206, n. 2, lines 3-4, read 'dhūmo gavāder evānantaram bhavati, asaty api'  
instead of 'dhume gavadeḥ eva anantaram bhavati, asati api'.
- p. 212, line 17, read 'causes' instead of 'causes's'.
- p. 213, line 5, read 'in spite' instead of 'inspite'.
- p. 214, n. 4, read 'satīdam' instead of 'sati idam'.
- p. 220, line 2, read 'Buddhologists' instead of 'Buddologists'.
- p. 229, n.5, read 'Ātmavāda' instead of 'Ātmavada'.

- p. 231, line 11, read 'ayoniśo' instead of 'ayoniso'.
- p. 232, n. 3, line 2, read '230' after p. and '3' after 'n.'.
- p. 233, line 1, read 'Atthasālinī' instead of 'Atthasālinī'. Read all later 'Atthasālinī' as 'Atthasālinī'.
- p. 234, line 9, read 'meant' instead of 'meants'.
- p. 235, n. 1, line 7, read square bracket '[' before 'literally' and not before 'adhivacana'.
- p. 235, n. 2, line 2, read 'Trimsika' instead of 'Trimsika'.
- p. 236, n. 1, line 4, read 'samjñā' instead of 'samjñā'.
- p. 239, line 2, read comma after 'having' and not after 'depend'.
- p. 239, line 5, read comma after 'have' and not after 'depend'.
- p. 262, n. 1, line 5, read 'n. 7', instead of 'n. 1'.
- p. 266, n. 4, delete 'and above'.
- p. 272, line 8, read 'possible' instead of 'possibly'.
- p. 276, line 17, read 'but' instead of 'bit'.
- p. 280, line 19, read 'wakes' instead of 'makes'.
- p. 285, line 1, read 'Madhyamakakārikas' instead of 'Madhyamakārikas'.
- p. 289, n. 1, line 9, read 'phrase' instead of 'phase'.
- p. 292, n. 1, last line, read first bracket ')' after '171'.
- p. 297, line 5, read '2<sup>57</sup>' after 'p.'.
- p. 299, line 4 read 'principle' instead of 'principles'.
- p. 311, line 2, read 'perform' instead of 'performa'.
- p. 311, line 8, read 'not' instead of 'no'.
- p. 315, last line, read 'desired' instead of 'desires'.
- p. 315, n. 2, read 'Pears' instead of 'Pear's'./p. 316, line 1, read 'Pears' instead of 'Pear's'.
- p. 319, line 11, read 311, after 'p'.
- p. 327, line 16, read 'is' instead of 'us'.
- p. 328, line 2, delete 'a' after 'become'.
- p. 328, line 3, delete 'even' before 'if'.
- p. 331, line 2, read 'angrily' instead of 'agrily'.
- p. 332, line 13, read 'conducive' instead of 'conclusive'.
- p. 332, line 15, read 'an' instead of 'and' after 'helps'.
- p. 336, lines 19-20, delete '(as has already been remarked)'.
- p. 336, delete n. 3.
- p. 339, title, read 'CONNECTION' after 'NECESSARY'.
- p. 348, line 7, read 'undoubtedly' instead of 'undoutedly'.
- p. 348, line 9, read 'make' instead of 'nake'.
- p. 350, line 10, read 'of' after 'set'.
- p. 351, line 14, read 'nature' instead of 'virtue'.
- p. 362, last line, read 'Cracow' instead of 'Krakowie'.
- p. 364, last line, read 'vijñaptimātra' instead of 'vijñaptimatra'.