

The Theravāda Version of Dharmavāda

Y. Karunadasa

University of Kelaniya

What is presented as *dharmavāda* here is the Abhidharmic doctrine which seeks to explain the nature of empirical existence¹ on the basis of its elementary constituents introduced under the technical term, *dharma*. Its Sarvāstivāda version, together with its critique on the part of the Mādhyamaka, has been critically studied by a number of modern scholars. However, its Theravāda version remains less exhaustively dealt with. There are valid reasons to believe that its presentation in the works of the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka represents one of its earliest forms, if not the earliest. In its most developed form, however, it is to be found in the post-Canonical exegetical literature of Sri Lanka and in the medieval Abhidhammic compendiums, the so called “little finger manuals”, such as the *Abhidhammatthasāṅgaha*. In the present study an attempt will be made to trace its origin and development and to show how it led to two other Abhidhammic developments, namely the category of the nominal and the conceptual (*paññatti*) and the theory of double truth, both of which were considered as necessary accompaniments to the doctrine of *dhammas*.

Although the *dhammavāda* is an Abhidhammic innovation, the antecedent trends that led to its formulation and its basic ingredients can be traced to the early Buddhist scriptures which seek to analyse empiric individuality in relation to the external world. In the discourses of the Buddha there are five such analyses. The first, the analysis into *nāma* and *rūpa*,² is the most

elementary in the sense that it signifies the two main components, the mental and the corporeal aspects, of the empiric individuality. The second is that into five *khandhas* (aggregates), namely corporeality (*rūpa*), sensations (*vedanā*), perceptions (*sañña*), mental formations (*saṃkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).³ The third is that into six *dhātus* (elements), namely earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), temperature (*tejo*), air (*vāyo*), space (*ākāsa*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).⁴ The fourth is that into twelve *āyatanas* (avenues of sense-perception and mental cognition), namely the eye (*cakkhu*), the ear (*sota*), the nose (*ghāna*), the tongue (*jivhā*), the body (*kāya*), the mind (*mano*) and the corresponding objects: the visible (*rūpa*), sound (*sadda*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), touch (*phoṭṭhabba*) and mental objects (*dhamma*).⁵ The fifth is that into eighteen *dhātus* (elements). This is a further elaboration of the immediately preceding one, obtained by the addition of the six kinds of consciousness which arise as a result of the contact between the sense organs and the mind on the one hand, and the corresponding objects on the other. Thus the six additional items are the visual, the auditory, the olfactory, the gustatory, the tactile and the mental consciousnesses.⁶

Now the purposes for which Buddhism resorts to these analyses are varied. For instance the main purpose of the *khandha*-analysis is to show that there is no ego either within or without the *khandhas* which go to make the so-called empiric individuality: None of the *khandhas* belongs to me (*netam mama*), they do not correspond to "I" (*neso'ham asmi*), nor are they my self (*neso me attā*).⁷ Thus this analysis has as its main purpose the preclusion of any possibility for the intrusion of the notions of "mine", "I" and "my self", into what otherwise is an impersonal and egoless congeries of mental and physical phenomena. On

the other hand, the analysis into eighteen *dhātus* is often resorted to for the purpose of showing that the so-called consciousness is neither a soul nor a quality of a soul-substance, but that it is a mental phenomenon which comes into being as a result of certain conditions and that it ceases to exist with the cessation of those self-same conditions: There is no independent consciousness which exists by its own right.⁸ In similar fashion each analysis is made use of to explain certain facts connected with the nature of sentient existence. It is in fact with reference to these five kinds of analysis that Buddhism explains its fundamental doctrines. The very fact that there are (at least) five kinds of analysis shows that none of them is taken as final or in an absolute sense. They have only a pragmatic value, the value being determined according to the particular doctrine which is sought to be explained with reference to them. The other fact that should be emphasized here is that each of these analyses represents the totality of the world of experience behind which there is no substratum which serves as its background.

Now what led to the development of the Abhidhammic doctrine of *dhammas* could be traced to these five analyses. It will be seen that if each analysis is examined in relation to the other four, it is found to be further analysable. That the first, i. e. the analysis into *nāma* and *rūpa* is further analysable is seen by the second, the analysis into five *khandhas*. For in the second the *nāma*-component of the first is analysed into four, namely sensations (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), mental formations (*saṃkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). That the analysis into *khandhas*, too, is further analysable is shown not only by the use of the term *khandha* which means 'group', but also by the next analysis, that into six *dhātus*. For in the latter, the *rūpa*-component of the former is analysed into

four, namely earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), temperature (*tejo*) and air (*vāyo*). That the analysis into six *dhātus* is also further analysable is seen from the fact that consciousness (*viññāna*) which is reckoned here as one item is made into four in the *khandha*-analysis. That the same situation is true of the analysis into twelve *āyatanas* is shown by the next analysis, that into eighteen *dhātus*, because the latter is a further elaboration of the former. This leaves us with the last, the *dhātu*-analysis with eighteen items. Can this be considered as final? This is also not possible, because although herein consciousness is itemized as sixfold, its invariable concomitants such as sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) are not separately mentioned, although their presence is implied by the mention of the six kinds of consciousness. It will thus be seen that none of the five analyses could be considered as exhaustive in the sense that one or more items of each analysis is further analysable. This, it seemsto us, is the line of argument that led the Ābhidhammikas to evolve a yet another analysis which in their view is not amenable to further analysis.

This new development which is more or less common to all the systems of Abhidharma is the analysis of the world of experience into what came to be known as *dharmas/dhammas*. The term *dhamma* is not unknown to early Buddhism. It looms large in the discourses of the Buddha and does occur in a variety of senses where the meaning has to be determined according to the context. In the Abhidhamma, however, it assumes a more technical and, therefore, more specific meaning. For herein it mainly refers to those items which result when the previous analyses are subjected to further analysis. In the Theravāda Abhidhamma, for instance, the aggregate of corporeality of the *khandha*-analysis is made into twenty eight items called *rūpa-dhammas*. The

next three aggregates, namely sensations, perceptions and mental formations are together arranged into fifty-two items called *cetasikas*. The fifth, i. e. consciousness is counted as one item and is referred to as *citta*.⁹

Thus the *dhamma*-analysis is another addition to the previous analyses. Its scope is the same, for it is the world of sensory experience that each analysis seeks to examine. Its outstanding feature, however, is that it is much more exhaustive than any of the previous ones. But this situation in itself does not constitute a radical departure from the earlier tradition. For, as yet, it does not involve a view of existence which is at variance with that of early Buddhism. There is, however, this situation to be noted: Since the analysis into *dhammas* is the most exhaustive, the previous five analyses become five of its classifications.

The definition and classification of these *dhammas* and the explanation of their inter-connection form the bulk of the subject matter of the Canonical Abhidhamma. One cardinal principle that is implicitly accepted is that to understand properly any given item is to know it in all relations, under all aspects recognized in the philosophy and practical doctrine and discipline of Buddhism. Therefore the same material is sought to be classified in different ways and from different points of view. This explains why in the *Dhammasaṅgani* and other Abhidhamma *pakaraṇas* one encounters with innumerable lists of classifications. Although they may appear repetitive and therefore monotonous, they serve a useful purpose. For they bring into relief, not only the individual characteristic of each *dhamma*, but also its position in relation to other *dhammas*.

With this same aim in view, in bringing out the nature of the *dhammas*, the

Abhidhamma resorts to two complementary methods, that of analysis (*bheda*) and that of synthesis (*saṅgaha*). The analytical method dominates the *Dhammasaṅgani* which according to tradition is the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, for here we get a complete catalogue of the *dhammas*, each with a laconic definition. On the other hand, the synthetical method is more characteristic of the *Paṭṭhāna* which according to tradition is the last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, for here we get an exhaustive explanation of the conditionality or the mutual relations of the *dhammas*. The combined use of these two methods shows that according to the methodological apparatus employed in the Abhidhamma, “a complete description of a thing requires, besides its analysis, also a statement of its relations to certain other things”.¹⁰ Thus if analysis (*bheda*) plays an important role in the Abhidhammic methodology, no less important role is played by synthesis (*saṅgaha*). If analysis shows that the world of experience is resolvable into a plurality of factors, synthesis shows that these factors are not discrete entities existing *per se*, but are inter-connected and inter-dependent. In fact it is only for the purpose of definition and description that things are artificially dissected. In actual fact the world of experience exhibits a vast network of relational categories.

This fact needs emphasis, because the Abhidhammic doctrine of *dhammas* (as represented by the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka) has sometimes been incorrectly represented as a radical pluralism. Such an interpretation is certainly not admissible. It is mostly Th. Stcherbatsky’s writings,¹¹ mainly based on the Sarvāstivāda sources, that has given currency to this incorrect interpretation. “Up to the present time,” observes Nyanaponika Thera, “it has been a regular occurrence in the history of physics, metaphysics and

psychology that when a whole has been successfully dissolved by analysis, the resultant parts come again to be regarded as little Wholes."¹² This is the kind of process that culminates in radical pluralism. As we shall soon see, about hundred years after the formulation of the *dharma*-theory, such a trend surfaced within certain schools of Buddhist thought and culminated in what is called *sarvamastivāda* or the theory of tritemporal existence. But as far as the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka is concerned, it did not succumb to this error of conceiving the *dhammas* as ultimate unities or discrete entities. Herein it is only in the interests of definition and description that each *dhamma* is postulated as if it were a separate entity. It is not a solitary phenomenon having an existence of its own. This is precisely why the mental and material *dhammas* are often presented in inter-connected groups. In presenting so the danger inherent in completely analytical methods has been avoided. This danger consists in elevating the factors resulting from analysis to the status of genuine separate entities. Thus if analysis shows that composite things cannot be considered as ultimate unities, synthesis shows that the factors into which the apparently composite things are analysed (*ghana-vinibbhoga*) are not discrete entities.¹³

If this Ahhidhammic view of existence, as seen from its doctrine of *dhammas*, cannot thus be interpreted as a radical pluralism, it does not lend itself to be interpreted as an out-and-out monism either. For what are called *dhammas* or the component factors of the universe, both within and without us, are not fractions of a whole indicating an absolute unity but a multiplicity of co-ordinate factors: They are not reducible to, nor do they emerge from, one single reality as is wont to be explained in monistic metaphysics. If they are to

be interpreted as phenomena, this should be done with the proviso that they are phenomena with no corresponding noumena. For they are not manifestations of an underlying metaphysical substratum, but appearances due to the interplay of a multitude of conditions.

In evolving thus a view of existence which cannot be interpreted in either monistic or pluralistic terms, the Abhidhamma is in accord with the Middle Doctrine of early Buddhism. It consists in avoiding in toto not only the eternalist view of existence which maintains that everything exists absolutely (*sabbam atthi*)¹⁴ but also the opposite nihilistic view which maintains that absolutely nothing exists (*sabbam natthi*).¹⁵ It also consists in avoiding, on the one hand, the monistic view that everything is reducible to a common ground, some sort of self-substance (*sabbam ekattam*)¹⁶ and, on the other, the opposite pluralistic view that the whole of existence is resolvable into a concatenation of discrete entities (*sabbam puthuttam*).¹⁷ Transcending these two pairs of extremist views, the Middle Doctrine explains that phenomena arise in dependence on other phenomena without a self-subsisting noumenon which acts as their *raison d'être*.

The inter-connection and inter-dependence of these *dhammas* are not explained on the basis of the dichotomy between substance and quality. Consequently, a given *dhamma* does not inhere in another as its quality. Nor does it serve another as its substance. The so-called substance is only a product of our imagination. This denial of the distinction between substance and quality is because its acceptance leaves the door open for the intrusion of *ātmavāda* with all that it entails. Hence it is with reference to causes and conditions that the inter-connection of the *dhammas* should be understood. The

conditions are not different from the *dhammas*, for it is the *dhammas* themselves that constitute the conditions. How each *dhamma* serves as a condition (*paccaya*) for the origination of another (*paccayuppanna*) is explained on the basis of what is called *paccayākāra-naya*,¹⁸ the system of conditioned genesis. This consists of twenty four conditions and it aims at explaining the inter-dependence and dependent co-origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) of all *dhammas* both in respect of their temporal sequence and spatial concomitance.

The foregoing is a brief *resumé* of the earliest phase of the *dharmavāda* as presented in the books of the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka, particularly the *Dhammasaṅgani* and the *Paṭṭhāna*. About hundred years after its formulation, as a reaction against it, there emerged what came to be known as *puggalavāda* or personalism.¹⁹ Its relevance to the subject under discussion is that it led to a further clarification of the nature of *dhammas*. Now here it may be noted that according to the early Buddhist discourses there is no denial as such of the concept of *puggala* (person), if by *puggala* is understood, not an entity distinct from the five *khandhas*, nor a substance enduring in time, nor an agent within the five *khandhas*, but the sum total of the causally connected and ever-changing five *khandhas*. From the point of view of the *dhamma*-analysis, this can be restated by substituting the term *dhamma* for the term *khandha*, for the *dhammas* are the factors that obtain by subjecting the *khandhas* to further analysis. However, this way of defining the concept of person (*puggala*) did not satisfy some Buddhists. In their opinion the *dharmavāda* as presented by the Theravādins led to a process of complete depersonalization and consequently it failed to provide an adequate explanation of such concepts as rebirth and moral responsibility. Hence they insisted on the necessity of postulating a

puggala in addition to, and distinct from, the *khandhas/dhammas*. As recorded in the *Kathāvatthu*, the Points of Controversy, the main contention of the Puggalavādins (Personalists) is that the *puggala* is known in a real and ultimate sense: *Saccikatthaparamatthena upalabbhati*.²⁰ Against this proposition a number of counter-arguments are adduced. But they need not concern us here. As far as our subject is concerned, what interests us here is that in denying that the *puggala* is known in a real and ultimate sense, the Theravādins admit that the *khandhas/dhammas* are known in a real and ultimate sense. Thus in their view what is *saccikattha* and *paramattha* is not the *puggala* but the *khandhas/dhammas* that enter into its composition.²¹

Now the use of the two words, *saccikattha* and *paramattha*, as indicative of the nature of *dhammas* seems to give the impression that in denying the reality of the *puggala* the Theravādins have overstressed the reality of the *dhammas*. Does this amount to the admission that the *dhammas* are real and discrete entities existing *per se*? Such a conclusion, it appears to us, is not tenable. For if the *dhammas* are defined as *saccikattha* and *paramattha*, this means, not that they partake the nature of absolute entities, but that they are not further reducible to any other reality, to some kind of substances which underlie them. That is to say, there is no under-the-surface substance from which they emerge and to which they finally lapse. In other words, this means that the *dhammas* represent the final limits of the Abhidhammic analysis of empirical existence. Hence this new definition does not erode the empirical foundation of the *dhammavāda* as presented by the Theravādins. What is more, this view is quite in consonance with the statement occurring in the earlier texts, namely that the *dhammas* emerge into existence without having been (*ahutvā sambhonti*) and

disappear without any residue (*hutvā paṭiventi*).²²

Why, unlike the *dhammas*, the *puggala* is not recognized as *saccikattha-paramattha* needs explanation. Since the *puggala* is the sum total of the causally connected mental and corporeal *dhammas* that constitute the empiric individuality, it lends itself to further analysis. And what is analysable is not given as an irreducible datum of cognition. In contrast, the opposite situation is true of the *dhammas*. This brings into focus two levels of reality: that which is amenable to analysis and that which defies further analysis. Analysability is the mark of the things composite and non-analysability is the mark of the elementary constituents (= *dhammas*).

Another doctrinal controversy that left its impress on the Theravāda version of *dharmavāda* is the one concerning *sarvamastivāda*, the theory of tritemporal existence. What is rather revolutionary about this theory is that it introduced a metaphysical dimension to the doctrine of *dhammas* and thus paved the way for the erosion of its empirical foundation. For this theory makes an empirically unverifiable distinction between the actual being of the *dhammas* as phenomena and their ideal being as noumena. It assumes that the substances of all *dhammas* persist in all the three divisions of time, past, present and future, while their manifestaion as phenomena are impermanent and subject to change. Accordingly a *dhamma* actualizes itself only in the present moment of time, but in *essentia* it continues to subsist in all the three temporal divisions. As is well known, this resulted in the transformation of *dharmavāda* into a *svabhāvavāda*, the doctrine of own-nature. It also paved the way at least for a veiled recognition, if not for a categorical assumption, of the distinction between substance and quality. What interests us here is that although the

Theravādins rejected this metaphysical theory of tritemporal existence, including its qualified version as accepted by the Kāśyapīyas,²³ it was not without its influence on the Theravāda version of *dharmavāda*.

This influence is to be seen in the post-Canonical exegetical literature of Sri Lanka where, for the first time, the term *sabhāva* (Skt *svabhāva*) came to be used as a synonymous expression for *dhamma*. Hence we get the oft-recurrent definition: *Attano sabhāvaṃ dhārentī ti dhammā*²⁴, i.e. *Dhammas* are so called because they bear their own-nature. Now the question that arises here is whether the Theravādins used the term *sabhāva* in the same sense as *svabhāva* was understood by the Sarvāstivādins. Does this assume the metaphysical view that the substance of the *dhamma* persists throughout the three phases of time? In other words, does this amount to the admission that there is a duality between the *dhamma* and its *sabhāva*, between the bearer and the borne, a dichotomy which goes against the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*?

This situation has to be considered in the context of the logical apparatus used by the Ābhidhammikas in defining the *dhammas*. This involves three main kinds of definition. The first is called *kattusādhana* because it attributes an agency to the thing which is sought to be defined. Such, for example, is the definition of *citta* (consciousness) as “that which thinks” (*Cinteti ti cittaṃ*).²⁵ The second is called *karaṇasādhana* because it attributes instrumentality to the thing which is sought to be defined. Such, for example, is the definition of *citta* as “that through which one thinks” (*Cinteti ti etena cittaṃ*).²⁶ The third is called *bhāvasādhana* whereby the abstract nature of the thing which is sought to be defined is brought into focus. Such, for example, is the definition of *citta* as “the mere fact of thinking itself is *citta*” (*Cintanamattam eva cittaṃ*).²⁷

The first two kinds of definition, it is maintained, are provisional and, as such, they are not valid from an ultimate point of view (*Na nippariyāyato labbhati*).²⁸ This is because the attribution of agency and instrumentality invests a *dhamma* with a duality which in actual fact is a unitary and unique phenomenon. It also leads to the wrong assumption that a given *dhamma* is a substance with inherent qualities or an agent which accomplishes some kind of action. Such definitions are said to be based on *samāropana* (tentative attribution)²⁹ and because of this very circumstance they are not ultimately valid (*Tadākāra-samāropanato pariyāya-kathā*).³⁰ It is as a matter of convention (*vohāra*) and for the sole purpose of facilitating the grasp of the idea to be conveyed (*sukhagahaṇattham*)³¹ that a duality is assumed by the mind (*buddhi-parikappita-bheda*)³¹ in defining the *dhamma*, which in actual fact is devoid of duality. Thus it is for the convenience of description that both *kattusādhana* and *karaṇasādhana* definitions are resorted to and, as such, they are not to be understood in their direct literal sense. On the other hand, what is called *bhāvasādhana*-definition is the one that is admissible in an ultimate sense (*Cittacetasikānaṃ dhammānaṃ bhāvasādhanam eva nippariyāyato labbhati*).³³ This is because in the case of *bhāvasādhana* the abstract nature of a given *dhamma* is brought into focus without resorting to the provisional device of attributing agency or instrumentality, an attribution which creates the false notion that there is a duality within a unitary *dhamma*.

It is in the context of these implications that the definition of *dhamma* as that which bears its own-nature has to be understood. Clearly, it is a definition according to *kattuādhana*. Hence its validity is provisional. From this definition, therefore, one cannot conclude that a given *dhamma* is a bearer

(substance) of its *sabhāva* (own-nature, quality). The duality between *dhamma* and *sabhāva* is only an attribution, an attribution made for the convenience of definition. For in actual fact both mean the same. Hence it is categorically stated that apart from *sabhāva* there is no distinct entity called *dhamma* (*Na ca sabhāvā añño dhammo nāma atthi*),³⁴ and that the term *sabhāva* is indicative of the mere fact of *dhamma* (*Dhammamatta-dīpanaṃ sabhāva-padam*).³⁵

If the *dhamma* has no function distinct from its *sabhāva* (*sabhāvavinimmuttā kāci kiriyā nāma natthi*)³⁶ and if *dhamma* and *sabhāva* mean the same thing (*dhammo ti sabhāvo*),³⁷ why is the *dhamma* invested with the function of bearing its own-nature? For this implies the recognition of an agency distinct from the *dhamma*. This, it is observed, is done not only in conformity with the inclinations of those who are to be instructed (*bodheyyajanānurodhavasena*),³⁸ but also to impress upon the fact that there is no agent behind the *dhamma* (*Dhammato añño kattā natthi ti dassetuṃ*).³⁹ What is attempted to impress upon is that the dynamic nature of the world of sensory experience is not due to causes other than the self-same *dhammas* into which the world of sensory experience is finally reduced. It is the inter-connection of the *dhammas* through causal relations that explains the variety and diversity of contingent existence and not some kind of transempirical reality which serves as their *raison d'etre*. Nor is it due to the fiat of a Creator God (*Na issarādihetukaṃ*)⁴⁰ because there is no Divine Creator over and above the flow of mental and material phenomena (*Nāmarūpato uddhaṃ issarādīnaṃ abhāvato*).⁴¹

Stated otherwise, the definition of *dhamma* as that which bears its own-nature means that it represents a distinct fact of empirical existence, which is not shared by other *dhammas*. Hence *sabhāva* is also defined as

anaññasādhāraṇa,⁴² not held in common by others, as *āveṇika-sabhāva*,⁴³ the nature peculiar to each *dhamma* and as *asādhāraṇa-sabhāva*,⁴⁴ the own-nature which is not predicable of other *dhammas*. It is also observed that if the *dhammas* are said to have own-nature (*saka-bhāva* = *sabhāva*), this is only a tentative device to impress upon the fact that there is no other-nature (*para-bhāva*) from which they emerge and to which they finally lapse.⁴⁵

Now this commentarial definition of *dhamma* as *sabhāva* poses one important problem. For this seems to go against an earlier Theravāda tradition as recorded in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. In this Canonical text it is specifically stated that the *pañcakkhandha*, the pentad of aggregates into which the empiric individuality is analysed, is “*sabhāvena suññaṃ*”,⁴⁶ i.e. devoid of own-nature. Since the *dhammas* are the elementary constituents of the *khandhas*, this should necessarily mean that the *dhammas*, too, are devoid of own nature. What is more, does not the very use of the term *sabhāva*, despite all the qualifications under which it is used, give the impression that a given *dhamma* exists *per se*? And does this not amount to the admission that the *dhammas* are some kind of substances?

The commentators were not unaware of these implications. Hence they took the necessary steps to prevent the possibility of such a conclusion. This was sought to be done by supplementing the former definition with another which actually nullifies the above situation to which we drew attention. This is the one which states that a *dhamma* is not that which bears its own-nature, but that which is borne by its own conditions (*Paccayehi dhāriyantī ti dhammā*).⁴⁷ The earlier definition is *kattusādhana* (agent-denotation) because it attributes an active role to the *dhamma*, whereby it is elevated to the position of an agent.

Whereas the new definition is *kammasādhana* (object-denotation) because it attributes a passive role to the *dhamma* and thereby it is downgraded to the position of an object. What is radical about this new definition is that it reverses the whole process which otherwise would culminate in the conception of *dhammas* as substances or bearers of their own nature. What it seeks to show is that, contrary to being a bearer, a *dhamma* is being borne by its own conditions. In consonance with this situation, it is also maintained that there is no other thing called *dhamma* than the “quality” of being borne by conditions (*Na ca dhāriyamāna-sabhāvā añño dhammo nāma atthi*).⁴⁸ The same idea is expressed in the oft-recurrent statement that what is called *dhamma* is the mere fact of occurrence due to appropriate conditions (*Yathāpaccayaṃ hi pavattimat-tam etaṃ sabhāvadhhammo*).⁴⁹ In point of fact, in commenting upon the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*-statement that the pentad of *khandhas*, by implication the *dhammas*, too, is devoid of *sabhāva*, the commentator observes that since it has no self-nature, therefore it is devoid of own-nature (*Attano eva vā bhāvo etasmim natthi ti sabhāvena suññam*).⁵⁰ It will thus be seen that although the term *sabhāva* is used as a synonymous expression for *dhamma*, it is interpreted in such a way as to mean the very absence of *sabhāva*.

Another oft-recurrent definition of *dhamma* is that it bears its own characteristic, *salakkhaṇa* (*Attano lakkhaṇam dhārenti ti dhammā*).⁵¹ Since *salakkhaṇa* is used in the same sense as *sabhāva*, this definition carries more or less the same implications. That each *dhamma* has its own characteristic is illustrated with reference to colour, which is one of the secondary material elements: Although colour is divisible as blue, yellow, etc., yet the characteristic peculiar to all varieties of colour is their visibility (*sanidassanata*).⁵² Hence

it is also called *paccatta-lakkhaṇa*, individual characteristic.⁵³ As in the case of *dhamma* and *sabhāva*, in the case of *dhamma* and *salakkhaṇa*, too, the duality between them is only assumed, an assumption made for the convenience of definition. For it is a case of attributing duality to where there is no duality (*abhede pi bheda-parikkappanā*).⁵⁴ And since it is only an attribution it is based on interpretation (*kappanā-siddha*)⁵⁵ and not on actuality (*bhāvasiddha*).⁵⁶ Hence the definition of *paṭhavī-dhātu* (earth-element) as that which has the characteristic of solidity-cum-extension (*Paṭhavīdhātu kakkhalatta-lakkhaṇā*)⁵⁷ is said to be not valid from an ultimate point of view, because of the assumed duality. The correct definition is said to be the one which states that the very fact of solidity-cum-extension is *paṭhavī-dhātu*. For this does not assume a distinction between the characteristic and what is characterized thereby.⁵⁸

As *salakkhaṇa* represents the characteristic peculiar to each and every *dhamma*, what is called *sāmañña-lakkhaṇa* stands for the characteristics common to all the *dhammas*. If the former is individually predicable, the latter is universally predicable,⁵⁹ Their difference goes still further. As *salakkhaṇa* (own-characteristic) is another name for *dhamma*, it represents a fact having objective counterpart. It is not a product of the synthetic function of mind (*kappanā*),⁶⁰ but an actual datum of objective existence and as such it obtains as an ultimate datum of sense-experience. On the other hand, what is called *sāmañña-lakkhaṇa* (universal characteristic) has no objective existence because it is a product of the synthetic function of mind and is superimposed on the ultimate data of empirical existence. On this interpretation, the three characteristics of that which is conditioned (*saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*), namely origination (*uppāda*), cessation (*vaya*) and otherwiseness of that which exists (*thitassa aññathatta*) are

*sāmañña-lakkhaṇ*s. Because they have no objective reality they are not elevated to the status of *dharmas*. If they were to be so elevated, that would undermine the very foundation of the *dharmavāda*. If, for instance, origination (*uppāda*), subsistence (*thiti*) and evanescence (*bhaṅga*)⁶¹ are postulated as real and discrete entities, then it will be necessary to postulate another set of secondary characteristics to account for their own origination, subsistence and evanescence, thus resulting in a process ad infinitum (*anavattāna*).⁶² This is the significance of the commentarial observation: "It is not correct to assume that origination originates, decay decays and cessation ceases because such an assumption leads to the fallacy of infinite regress."⁶³ The difference between *salakkhaṇa* and *sāmañña-lakkhaṇa* is also shown in the way they become knowable (*ñeyya*), for while the former is known as a datum of sense-perception (*salakkhaṇānubodho paccakkhañānaṃ*), the latter is known through a process of inference (*sāmaññalakkhaṇānubodho anumānañānaṃ*).⁶⁴

In what sense the *dharmas* represent the final limits into which empirical existence can be analysed is another question that drew the attention of the Theravāda commentators. It is in answer to this that the term *paramattha* came to be used as another expression for *dhamma*. It was noted earlier that the use of this term in this sense was occasioned by the Theravādins' response to the Puggalavādins' assertion that *puggala* exists as *saccikattha-paramattha*. In the Abhidhammic exegesis this term is defined to mean that which has reached its highest (*uttama*),⁶⁵ implying thereby that the *dharmas* are ultimate existents with no possibility of further reducibility. Hence own-nature (*sabhāva*) came to be further defined as ultimate nature (*paramattha-sabhāva*).⁶⁶ The term *paramattha* is sometimes paraphrased as *bhūtattha* (the actual).⁶⁷ This is

explained to mean that the *dhammas* are not non-existents such as an illusion or mirage (*māyā-marīci-ādayo viya*) or like the *purisa* (soul) and *pakati* (primordial nature) of the sectarian schools of thought.⁶⁸ The evidence for their existence is not based either on conventions (*sammutivasena*) or on mere scriptural authority (*anussavavasena*).⁶⁹ On the contrary, their very existence is vouchsafed by their own intrinsic nature (*Attano pana bhūtatāya eva saccikattho*).⁷⁰ The very fact of their existence is the very mark of their reality. As the *Visuddhimagga* observes: “It (= *dhamma*) is that which, for those who examine it with the eye of understanding, is not misleading like an illusion, deceptive like a mirage, or undiscoverable like the self of the Sectarrians, but is rather the domain of noble knowledge as the real unmisleading actual state.”⁷¹ The kind of existence implied here is not the past and future existence, but the present, actual and verifiable existence (*samvijjānātā*).⁷² This emphasis on their actuality in the present phase of time is to rule out any association with the Sarvāstivādins’ theory of tritemporal existence. Thus as far as the Theravāda is concerned, the use of the term *paramattha* does not carry any substantialist connotation. It only means that the mental and material *dhammas* represent the utmost limits to which the analysis of empirical existence can be pushed.

The description of *dhammas* as *paramattha* means not only their objective existence (*paramatthato vijjānātā*) but also their cognizability in an ultimate sense (*paramatthato upalabbhamātā*).⁷³ The first refers to the fact that the *dhammas* obtain as the ultimate, irreducible data of empirical existence. The second refers to the fact that, as such, our content of cognition can also be finally analysed into the self-same elements. This is not to suggest that it is only the *dhammas* that become our objects of knowledge. For it is specifically

stated that even *paññattis*, i.e. the products of the synthetical function of the mind, hence with no objective counterparts, are also knowable (*ñeyya*).⁷⁴ In point of fact, in the technical terminology of the Abhidhamma, (the term) *dhamma* is sometimes used in a wider sense to include anything that is knowable (*dhammasaddassa ñeyyavācakattā*).⁷⁵ In this sense, not only the objective data (*dhammas*) but also the products of mental interpretation are also called *dhammas*. To distinguish the latter from the former, the latter is called *asabhāva-dhamma*,⁷⁶ i.e. *dhammas* devoid of objective reality. The use of this term in this wider sense is reminiscent of its earlier meaning as shown in the Pali Nikāyas. For here it is used in a very generic sense to include all cognizable things on the empirical level. However, there is this situation to be noted: Although both *dhammas* and *paññattis* (= *asabhāva-dhamma*) constitute the content of knowledge, it is into the *dhammas* that the content of knowledge could be finally analysed. Thus there is a close parallelism between the *dhammas* on the one hand and the contents of knowledge on the other. That is to say, the ultimate irreducible data of cognition are the subjective counterparts of the ultimate irreducible data of objective existence.

If the term *paramattha* brings into focus the irreducibility of the *dhammas*, the term *aviparītabhāva* shows their irreversibility.⁷⁷ This means that the essential characteristic of a *dhamma* is non-alterable and non-transferable to any other *dhamma* (*lakkhaṇa-anaññathatta*).⁷⁸ This also means that it is impossible for a given *dhamma* to undergo any modification of its specific characteristic even when it is in association with some other *dhamma* (*Na hi sabhāvā kena ci sahabhāvena saṃ sabhāvaṃ jahanti*).⁷⁹ The same situation remains true despite the differences in the time-factor, for there is no modification in the

nature of a *dhamma* corresponding to the divisions in time (*Na hi kālabhedena dhammānaṃ sabhāvabhedo atthi*).⁸⁰ What this amounts to is that since a *dhamma* and its intrinsic nature are the same (for the duality is only an assumption), to admit that its intrinsic nature undergoes modification is to deny its very existence.

The relative position of the *dhammas* is another aspect of the subject that requires clarification. Do they harmoniously blend into a unity or do they divide themselves into a plurality? In this connection we may do well to examine two of their important characteristics. One is their *samsatṭhata/avinibhogatā* or actual inseparability.⁸¹ The other is their *sappaccayatā* or conditioned origination.⁸²

The first refers to the fact that in a given instance of mind or matter, the elementary constituents (= *dhammas*) that enter into its composition, are not actually separable, one from another. They exist in a state of inseparable association forming, so to say, a homogenous unity. This idea is in consonance with an earlier tradition as recorded in the early Buddhist discourses. For example, in the Mahāvedalla Sutta of the *Majjhimanikāya* it is recorded that the three mental factors, sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) are so harmoniously blended (*samsatṭha*) that it is impossible to separate them from one another and thus establish their identity (*Na ca labbhā imesaṃ dhammānaṃ vinibbhujitvā vinibbhujitvā nanākaraṇaṃ pañṇāpetuṃ*).⁸³ The same idea finds expression in the *Milindapañha*.⁸⁴ When Nagasena Thera is asked by King Milinda whether it is possible in the case of mental factors which exist in harmonious combination (*ekato bhāvagata*) to separate them from one another and establish a plurality as: This is contact,

and this sensation, and this mentation, and this perception and so on, the Thera's answer is illustrated as follows: "Suppose O king, the cook in the royal household were to make a syrup or a sauce and were to put into it curds, and salt, and ginger, and cuming seed, and pepper and other ingredients. And suppose the king were to say to him: Pick out for me the flavours of the curds, and of the salt, and of the ginger, and of the cuming seed, and of the pepper and of all the things you have put into it. Now would it be possible, great king, separating off one from another those flavours that had thus run together, to pick out each one, so that one could say: Here is the sourness, and here the saltiness, and here the pungency, and here the acidity, and here the astringency and here the sweetness?"⁸⁵ In like manner, it is maintained, should be understood the position of the mental *dhammas* in relation to one another.⁸⁶

This situation is true of the material *dhammas*, too. In this connection the *Atthasālinī* adds that the material *dhammas*, such as colour, savour, odour, etc. cannot be separated from one another like particles of sand.⁸⁷ The colour of the mango, for instance, cannot be physically separated, say, from its savour or odour. They remain in inseparable association. This is what is called *padesato avinibhogatā* or positional inseparability.⁸⁸ On the basis of this principle of positional inseparability it is maintained that there is no quantitative difference (*pamāṇato*) between the material elements that enter into the composition of material objects. The difference is only qualitative. And this qualitative difference is based on what is called *ussada*, i.e. intensity or extrusion.⁸⁹ To give an example: Now it is the case that the four primary elements of matter (*mahābhūta*) are invariably present in every instance of matter, for they are necessarily co-existent (*sahajāta*) and positionally

inseparable (*padesato avinibhoga*).⁹⁰ The question then arises as to why there is a diversity in the material objects. The diversity, it is maintained, is not due to a difference in quantity (*pamāṇa*) but due to a difference in intensity (*ussada*).⁹¹ That is to say, in a given material object one primary element is more intense than the others. For instance, in a comparatively solid thing, say, in a stone, although all the primary elements are present, yet the *paṭhavī-dhātu* (solidity-cum-extension) is more intense or more extruded than the others. So is *āpo-dhātu* (viscosity and cohesion) in water; *tejo-dhātu* (temperature of cold and heat) in fire; and *vāyo-dhātu* (mobility and distension) in air.⁹² The best illustration for the relative position of the material elements is given in the *Visuddhimagga* where it is said: “And just as whomsoever the great creatures such as the spirits grasp hold of (possess), they have no standing place either inside him or outside him and yet they have no standing independently of him, so too these elements are not found to stand either inside or outside each other, yet they have no standing independently of one another.”⁹³ This explanation is justified on the following grounds: If they were to exist inside each other, then they would not perform their respective functions. If they were to exist outside each other, then they would be resolvable.⁹⁴ The principle of positional inseparability (*padesato avinibhogatā*) is also resorted to as a critique of the distinction between substance and quality. Hence it is contended that in the case of material elements which are positionally inseparable it is not possible to say: this is the quality of that one and that is the quality of this one.⁹⁵

The foregoing observations should show that the mental as well as the material *dhammas* are not actually separable, one from another. In the case of the mental *dhammas*, the term used is *samsatṭha* (conjoined) and in the case of

the material *dhammas*, the term used is *avinibhoga* (inseparable). Then the most cogent question that arises here is why the *dhammas* are presented as a plurality. The answer is that, although they are not actually separable, yet they are distinguishable (*vibhāgavanta*), one from another.⁹⁶ It is this distinguishability that serves as the foundation of the *dhammavāda*. Hence it is often mentioned in the Pali sub-commentaries that the real nature of the things that are distinguishable can be brought into focus only through analysis (*Vibhāgavāntānaṃ dhammānaṃ sabhāravivhāvanāṃ vibhāgena eva hoti*).⁹⁷ This distinguishability is possible because although the *dhammas* are harmoniously blended (*ekato bhavaṃgata*), yet they are characterized by what is called *gocaranānattatā*,⁹⁸ i.e. the susceptibility to be cognized severally and thus to be established as if they were separate entities. It is, however, maintained that in the case of material *dhammas*, their distinguishability is much more easy than in the case of mental *dhammas*.⁹⁹ Thus, for instance, the distinction between colour, odour, savour, tactation, etc. is easily observable even for an ordinary person. On the other hand, in the case of mental phenomena the distinguishability of one state from another is said to be the most difficult thing to be accomplished. This situation is very well illustrated in the following reply given by Nagasena Thēra to King Milinda: Suppose, O king, a man were to wade down into the sea, and taking some water in the palm of his hand, were to taste it with his tongue. Would he distinguish whether it were water from the Jumna, or from the Aciravati, or from the Mahi?. More difficult than that, great king, is to have distinguished between the mental conditions which follow on the exercise of any one of the organs of sense, telling us that such is contact, and such sensation, and such idea, and such intention, and such thought.¹⁰⁰

The other characteristic which was referred to earlier is *sappaccayatā* or the conditioned origination of the *dhammas*. It is akin to the conception discussed above for it also seeks to explain the nature of the *dhammas* from a synthetic point of view. In this connection either implicitly or explicitly five postulates are recognized as axiomatic. The first is that it is not empirically possible to identify an absolute original cause of the “dhammic” process. Such a metaphysical conception is not in accord with Buddhism’s empirical doctrine of causality, the purpose of which is not to explain how it all began but to describe the uninterrupted continuity of the samsaric process whose absolute beginning is not conceivable. (cf. *Anamataggoyam bhikkhave saṃsāro; pubbā koṭi na paññāyati*).¹⁰¹ In this connection it must also be remembered that as a system of philosophy, the Abhidhamma is descriptive and not speculative. The second is that nothing arises without the appropriate conditions that are necessary for its origination. This rules out the theory of fortuitous origination, which in the earlier Buddhist texts was referred to as *adhiccasamuppānavāda*.¹⁰² The third is that nothing arises from a single cause. This rules out what is called *ekakāranavāda*.¹⁰³ Its rejection is of great significance. For it shows that the Abhidhammic view of existence rejects all monistic theories which seek to explain the origin of the world from a single cause, whether this single cause is conceived as a personel God or impersonel Godhead. It also serves as a critique of those metaphysical theories which attempt to reduce the world of experience to an underlying transempirical principle. The fourth postulate is that nothing arises singly, as a solitary phenomenon (*ekassa dhammassa uppatti paṭisedhito hoti*).¹⁰⁴ Thus on the basis of a single cause or on the basis of a plurality of causes, a single effect (*phala*) does not arise. The invariable situation is that

there is always a plurality of effects. It is on the rejection of the four views referred to above that the foundation of the Abhidhammic doctrine of conditionality is laid. The fifth postulate, the one that is accepted, states that from a plurality of conditions a plurality of effects takes place. Applied to the *dhammavāda*, this means that a multiplicity of *dhammas* brings about a multiplicity of other *dhammas*.¹⁰⁵

One implication that arises from the conditionality of the *dhammas* as discussed so far is that they invariably arise as clusters. This is true of both mental and material *dhammas*. Hence it is that whenever consciousness (*citta*) arises, together with it arise at least seven of its concomitants (*cetasika*), namely contact (*phassa*), sensation (*vedañña*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), psychic life (*arūpa-jīvitindriya*) and attention (*manasikāra*). These seven are called *sabbacitta-sādhāraṇa* because they are invariably present even in the most minimal unit of consciousness. Thus there can never be a psychic instance with less than at least eight constituents, i. e. consciousness and its seven invariable concomitants. Their relation is one of necessary co-nascence (*sahajāta*). Thus even the smallest psychic unit or moment of consciousness turns out to be a correlational system. In the same way, the smallest unit of matter, which is called *suddhatṭhaka* or the basic octad, is in the ultimate analysis a cluster of (eight) material elements, namely the four primaries, “earth” (*paṭhavī*), “water” (*āpo*), “fire” (*tejo*) and “air” (*vāyo*) and four of the secondaries, colour (*vaṇṇa*), odour (*gandha*), savour (*rasa*) and the quality of nutrition (*ojā*). None of these eight material elements arise singly because they are necessarily co-nascent (*niyata-sahajāta*) and positionally inseparable (*padasato avinibhoga*).¹⁰⁶ It will thus be seen that in the sphere of

mind and also in the domain of matter there are no solitary phenomena (*dhammas*).

It is in the light of these observations that the question posed earlier as to whether the *dhammas* exhibit a unity or a plurality has to be discussed. The answer seems to veer towards both alternatives although it appears paradoxical to say so. In so far as the *dhammas* are distinguishable, one from another, to that extent they exhibit a plurality. In so far as they are not actually separable, one from another, to that extent they exhibit a unity. The reason for this characteristic situation is the nature of the methodological apparatus employed by the Ābhidhammikas in explaining the nature of empirical existence. As mentioned earlier, this consists of both analysis (*bheda*) and synthesis (*saṅgaha*). Analysis, when not supplemented by synthesis, leads to pluralism. Synthesis, when not supplemented by analysis, leads to monism. What one finds in the Abhidhamma is a combined use of both methods. This results in a situation which beautifully transcends the dialectical opposition between monism and pluralism.

What emerges from this Abhidhammic doctrine of *dhammas* is a critical realism. How does this doctrine interpret the common-sense view of the world, a kind of naive realism in the sense that it tends to recognize realities corresponding to, more or less, all linguistic terms? In other words, what relation is there between the *dhammas*, the ultimate elements of existence, and the objects of common-sense realism? What degree of reality, if at all, could be bestowed on the latter? It is in explanation of the things that do not answer to the definition of ultimate reality that the Ābhidhammikas have formulated the theory of *paññattis*, together with a distinction drawn between two kinds of truth

as conventional (*sammuti*) and absolute (*paramattha*). This theory assumes significance in another context. In most of the Indian philosophies associated with the *ātma*-tradition and which, therefore, subscribed to a substantialist view of existence, such categories as time and space came to be defined in absolute terms. The problem for the Ābhidhammikas was how to explain such categories without committing themselves to the same metaphysical assumptions. The theory of *paññattis* was the answer to this.

What may be described as the first formal definition of *paññatti* occurs in the *Dhammasaṅgani*. Here the three terms, *paññatti*, *nirutti* and *adhivacana* are used synonymously and each term is defined by lumping together a number of appropriate equivalents:

*Yā tesam tesam dhammānaṃ saṅkhā samaññā paññatti vohāro nāmaṃ nāmakammaṃ nāmadheyyaṃ nirutti vyañjanaṃ abhilāpo.*¹⁰⁷

We quote below Mrs. Rhys Davids' translation:

That which is an enumeration, that which is a designation, an expression, a current term, a name, a denomination, the assigning of a name, an interpretation, a distinctive mark of discourse on this or that *dhamma*.¹⁰⁸ Immediately after this definition, a "predication of equipollent terms",¹⁰⁹ it is observed that all the *dhammas* constitute the repertory of *paññattis* (*sabbē dhammā paññatti-pathā*).¹¹⁰

As shown by this definition designation is the *paññatti*; what is designated thereby is the *paññatti-patha*. Whether the term *paññatti*, as used here, denotes the individual names given to each and every *dhamma* only, or whether it also denotes names assigned to various combinations of the *dhammas* is not explicitly stated here. According to the Abhidhamma, it may be noted

here, every combination of the objectively real *dhammas* represents a nominal, not an objective, reality. The fact that the term *paññatti* includes names of both categories, the objective and the nominal, is suggested not only by what is stated elsewhere in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka,¹¹¹ but also by the later exegesis.¹¹² We may then conclude that according to the *Dhammasaṅgani* definition, *paññatti* denotes all names, terms and symbols which are expressive of the real existents as well as their combinations in different forms. Another important fact that should not be overlooked here is that according to the later exegesis *paññatti* includes not only names (*nāma*) but also ideas corresponding to them (*attha*).¹¹³ Since the assignment of a designation creates an idea corresponding to it, we may interpret the above definition to include both. It is of course true that the existence of the *dhammas* is not dependent on the operation of the mind, on its being designated by a term and conceptualized by mind. Nevertheless the assignment of names to the real existents (*dhammas*) involves a process of conceptualization. Hence *paññatti* includes not only the names of things, whether they are real or nominal, but also all concepts corresponding to them.

This theory of *paññattis*, presented as ancillary to the doctrine of *dhammas*, is not a complete innovation on the part of the Abhidhamma. Only its systematic formulation is so. For such a theory is clearly implied in the early Buddhist analysis of the empiric individuality into *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*. Accordingly the term person becomes a *sammuti* (common designation) given to a congeries of dependently originating psycho-physical factors. “Just as there arises the name chariot when there is a set of appropriate constituents, even so there comes to be this convention, ‘living being’, when the five

aggregates are present.”¹¹⁴ There is, however, this important difference to be noted: the early Buddhist idea of *sammuti* is not based on a formulated doctrine of real existents. Although what is analysed is called *sammuti*, that into which it is analysed is not called *paramattha*. Such a development is found only in the Abhidhamma, as we have already seen. It should also be mentioned here that in the Abhidhamma a clear distinction is made between *sammuti* and *paññatti*. *Paññatti*, as we have seen, refers to terms (*nāma*) expressive of things both real (*paramattha*) and convention-based (*sammuti*) and the ideas corresponding to them (*attha*). On the other hand, *sammuti* is used in a restricted sense to mean only what is convention-based. It is this meaning that finds expression in the compound *sammuti-sacca* (conventional truth). That for the Abhidhamma *sammuti* is not the same as *paññatti* is also seen by the fact that in the *Dhammasaṅgani* definition of *paññatti* quoted above, the term *sammuti* does not occur among the synonymous terms of *paññatti*. Although the theory of *paññattis* is formally introduced in the works of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka it is in the Abhidhammic exegesis that it receives further elaboration. For here we get more specific definitions of the term and many explanations on the nature and scope of *paññattis* and on how they become objects of cognition.

Since *paññatti* refers to that which has no corresponding objective reality, it is also called *asabhāva-dhamma* to distinguish it from the real elements of existence.¹¹⁵ Since *Sabhāva*, the intrinsic nature of a *dhamma*, is itself the *dhamma*, from the point of view of this definition what is qualified as *asabhāva* amounts to an *abhāva*, a non-existent in the final sense. It is in recognition of this fact that the three salient characteristics of empirical reality, namely origination (*uppāda*), subsistence (*ṭhiti*) and evanescence (*bhaṅga*) are

not applied to them. For these three characteristics can be predicated of only those things which answer to the Abhidhammic definition of empirical reality.¹¹⁶ Again, unlike the real existents, they are not brought about by conditions (*paccayatthitika*). For this self-same reason, they are also defined as *aṭṭhānuppanna*, not positively produced. *Parinipphannatā* or positive production is true of only those things which have their own individual essence (*āveṇika-sabhāva*).¹¹⁷ As the *Abhidhamma-mūlatikā* says only a *dhamma* that is an individual essence, with a beginning and an end in time, produced by conditions, and marked by the three salient characteristics of conditioned existence is positively produced.¹¹⁸ Again, a *paññatti* differs from a *dhamma* in that only the latter is delimited by its rise and fall, because it comes into being having been not (*ahutvā sambhonti*) and after having been, ceases to exist (*hutvā paṭiventi*).¹¹⁹ *Paññattis* have no individual essence to be manifested in the three instants of arising, presence and dissolution. Since they have no existence marked by the three instantaneous phases, the nascent, cessant and evanescent, temporal distinctions as past, present and future, do not apply to them. Consequently they have no reference to time (*kāla-vimutta*).¹²⁰ For this self-same reason, they have no place in the traditional analysis of empirical existence into five *khandhas*, for what is included in the *khandhas* should have the characteristic of empirical reality and, therefore, predicability of temporal divisions.¹²¹ Another noteworthy characteristic of *paññattis* is that they cannot be described either as *sāṅkhata* (conditioned) or as *asāṅkhata* (unconditioned), for to be so described they do not possess their own-nature (*sabhāva*).¹²² Since the two categories of *sāṅkhata* and *asāṅkhata* exhaust both the conditioned and unconditioned realities, their description as such is another way of referring to

their unreality.

What the foregoing observations amount to is that while a *dhamma* is a thing *per se* (*sabhāva-siddha*), a *paññatti* is a thing merely conceptualized (*parikkappa-siddha*).¹²³ The former is an existent verifiable separately by its own intrinsic characteristic (*aññamaññabyatirekena paramatthato upalabbhati*).¹²⁴ The latter, being a product of the mind's synthetic function, exists by virtue of mind. It is a mental construct superimposed on things *per se* and hence possesses no objective counterpart. It is the imposition of oneness on what actually is a complex (*samūhekaḅḅhaṇa*) that gives rise to *paññattis*.¹²⁵ With the dissolution of what appears to be one (*ghaṇa-vinibbhoga*),¹²⁶ the oneness disappears and the complex nature becomes apparent. "Thus as when the component parts such as axels, wheels, frame, poles, etc. are arranged in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage 'chariot', yet in the ultimate sense when each part is examined, there is no chariot, and just as when the component parts of a house such as wattles, etc. are placed so that they enclose a space in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage 'house', yet in the ultimate sense there is no house, and just as when trunk, branches, foliage, etc. are placed in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage 'tree', yet in the ultimate sense, when each component is examined, there is no tree, so too, when there are the five aggregates (as objects) of clinging, there comes to be the mere term of common usage 'a being', 'a person', yet in the ultimate sense, when each component is examined, there is no being as a basis for the assumption 'I am' or 'I'.¹²⁷ In similar wise should be understood the imposition of oneness on what is complex.

Two kinds of *paññatti* are distinguished. One is called *nāma-paññatti* and the other *attha-paññatti*. The first refers to names, words, signs or symbols through which things, real or unreal, are designated. “It is the mere mode of recognizing (*saññākāra-matta*) by way of this or that word whose significance is determined by worldly convention.”¹²⁸ It is created by worldly consent (*loka-saṅketa-nimmitā*) and established by worldly usage (*loka-vohārena siddhā*).¹²⁹ The other, called *attha-paññatti* refers to ideas, notions or concepts corresponding to the names, words, signs or symbols. It is produced by the interpretative function of the mind (*kappanā*) and is based on the various forms or appearances presented by the real elements when they are in particular situations or positions (*avatthā-vīsesa*).¹³⁰ Both *nāma-paññatti* and *attha-paññatti* have thus a psychological origin and as such both are devoid of objective reality.

Nāma-paññatti is often defined as that which makes known (*paññāpanato paññatti*) and *attha-paññatti* as that which is made known (*paññāpiyattā paññatti*).¹³¹ The former definition is based on subject denotation (*kattusādhana*) and the latter on object-denotation (*kamma-sādhana*). What both attempt to show is that *nāma-paññatti* which makes *attha-paññatti* known and *attha-paññatti* which is made known by *nāma-paññatti* are mutually interdependent and therefore logically inseparable. This explains the significance of another definition which states that *nāma-paññatti* is the term’s relationship with the ideas (*saddassa atthehi sambandho*) and that *attha-paññatti* is idea’s relationship with the terms (*atthassa saddehi sambandho*)¹³². These two pairs of definition show that the two processes of conceptualization and verbalization through the symbolic medium of language are but two separate aspects of the

same phenomenon. It is for the convenience of definition that what really amounts to a single phenomenon is dichotomized as two different but inter-dependent aspects. They represent two ways of looking at the same phenomenon. The difference is established by defining the same word (*paññatti*) in two different ways. When it is defined as subject it is *nāma-paññatti*. When it is defined as object it is *attha-paññatti*. If the former is *vācaka*, that which expresses, the latter is *vacanīya*, that which is expressible¹³³. In this same sense, if the former is *abhidhāna*, the latter is *abhidheya*¹³⁴. Since *attha-paññatti* stands for the process of conceptualization it represents more the subjective and dynamic aspect, and since *nāma-paññatti* stands for the process of verbalization it represents more the objective and static aspect. For the assignment of a term to what is constructed in thought, in other words, its expression through the symbolic medium of language, invests it with some kind of relative permanence and objectivity. It is, so to say, crystallized into an entity.

Now the definition of *attha-paññatti* as that which is made known by *nāma-paññatti* gives rise to the question as to what its position is in relation to the real existents (*dhammas*). For if the real existents, too, can be made known (= *attha-paññatti*), on what basis are the two categories, the real and the conceptual, to be distinguished? What should not be overlooked here is that according to its very definition *attha-paññatti* exists by virtue of its being conceived (*parikappiyamāna*) and expressed (*paññāpiyamāna*). Hence it is incorrect to explain it as that which is conceptualizable and expressible. It is the very fact of being conceptualized and expressed. This rules out the possibility of its existing without being conceptualized and expressed. In the

case of the real existents the situation is quite different. It is of course true that they can be made known by *nāma-paññatti*. But their existence as irreducible data is not dependent on their being known or conceptualized. Where such a real existent is made known by a *nāma-paññatti*, the latter is called *vijjamāna-paññatti*¹³⁵, because it represents something that exists in the real and ultimate sense (*paramatthato*). And the notion or concept (= *attha-paññatti*) corresponding to it is called *tajjā-paññatti*, the verisimilar or appropriate concept¹³⁶. This does not mean that the real existent has transformed itself into a concept. It only means that a concept corresponding to it has been established.

If the doctrine of *dhammas* led to its ancillary theory of *paññatti* as discussed above, both in turn led to another development, i. e. the distinction drawn between two kinds of truth as *sammuti* (conventional) and *paramattha* (absolute). Although it is an Abhidhammic innovation it is not completely dissociated from the early Buddhist teachings. For the antecedent trends that led to its formulation can be traced to the early Buddhist scriptures themselves. One such instance is the distinction drawn in the *Anguttaranikāya* between *nītattha* and *neyyattha*¹³⁷. The former refers to those statements which have their meaning “drawn out” (*nīta-attha*), i. e. to be taken as they stand, as explicit and definitive statements. The latter refers to those statements which require their meaning “to be drawn out” (*neyya-attha*). The distinction alluded to here may be understood in a broad way to mean the difference between the direct and the indirect meaning. The distinction is so important that to overlook it is to misrepresent the teachings of the Buddha: “Whoso declares a discourse with a meaning already drawn out as a discourse with a meaning to be drawn out and

(conversely) whoso declares a discourse with a meaning to be drawn out as a discourse with a meaning already drawn out, such a one makes a false statement with regard to the Blessed One."¹³⁸ It seems very likely that this distinction between *nītattha* and *neyyattha* has provided a basis for the emergence of the subsequent doctrine of double truth. In point of fact, the commentary to the *Aṅguttaranikāya* seeks to establish a correspondence between the original Sutta-passage and the Theravāda version of the two kinds of truth (*sammuti* and *paramattha*).¹³⁹

One interesting feature in the Theravāda version of the theory is the use of the term *sammuti* for relative truth. For in all other schools of Buddhist thought the term used is *samvṛti*. The difference is not between Pali and Sanskrit, for the two terms differ both in etymology and meaning. The term *sammuti* is derived from the root *man*, to think and when prefixed with *sam*, it means consent, convention, general agreement. On the other hand, the term *samvṛti* is derived from the root *vṛ*, to cover and when prefixed with *sam*, it means covering, concealment. This difference is not confined to the vocabulary of the theory of double truth alone. That elsewhere, too, Sanskrit *samvṛti* corresponds to Pali *sammuti* is confirmed by other textual instances.¹⁴⁰ Since *sammuti* refers to convention or general agreement, *sammuti-sacca* means truth based on convention or general agreement. On the other hand, the idea behind *samvṛti-satya* is that it covers up the true nature of things and makes them appear otherwise.¹⁴¹

The validity of the two kinds of statement corresponding to *sammuti* and *paramattha* is set out as follows:

Saṅketavacanam saccam lokasammutikāraṇā

*Paramatthavacanam saccam dhammanam bhūtalakkhaṇā.*¹⁴²

Translated, this reads: Statements referring to convention-based things are valid (*sammuti-sacca*) because they are based on common agreement; statements referring to ultimate categories are valid (*paramattha-sacca*) because they are based on the true nature of the real existents. As shown here the distinction between the two truths depends on the distinction between *saṅketa* and *paramattha*. Now, *saṅketa* includes things which have their being dependent on mental interpretations superimposed on the category of the real.¹⁴³ For instance, the validity of the term table is based, not on an objective existent corresponding to the term, but on mental interpretation superimposed on a congeries of material *dhammas* organized in a particular manner. Although it is not something distinct from, and as real as, the material *dhammas* that enter into its composition, nevertheless it is said to exist because in the common parlance of the generality of people it is accepted as a separate reality. On the other hand, the term *paramattha* denotes the category of real existents (*dhammas*) which have their own objective nature (*sabhāva*). Their difference may be set out as follows: When a particular situation is explained on the basis of terms indicative of the real elements of existence, that explanation is *paramattha-sacca*. When the self-same situation is explained on the basis of terms indicative of things which have their being dependent on the mind's synthetic function, that explanation is *sammuti-sacca*. The validity of the former is based on its correspondence to the ultimate data of empirical reality. The validity of the latter is based on its correspondence to things based on conventions.

As pointed out by K. N. Jayatilleke in his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, one misconception about the Theravāda version of double truth is

that *paramattha-sacca* is superior to *sammuti-sacca* and that “what is true in the one sense is false in the other.”¹⁴⁴ This observation that the distinction in question is not based on a theory of degrees of truth will become clear from the following free translation of the relevant passages contained in three commentaries:

“Herein references to living beings, gods, Brahma, etc. are *sammuti-kathā*, whereas references to impermanence, suffering, egolessness, the aggregates of the empiric individuality, the spheres and elements of sense-perception and mind-cognition, bases of mindfulness, right effort, etc. are *paramattha-kathā*. One who is capable of understanding and penetrating to the truth and hoisting the flag of sainthood when the teaching is set out in terms of generally accepted conventions, to him the Buddha preaches the doctrine based on *sammutikathā*. One who is capable of understanding and penetrating to the truth and hoisting the flag of sainthood when the teaching is set out in terms of ultimate categories, to him the Buddha preaches the doctrine based on *paramattha-kathā*. To one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *sammuti-kathā*, the teaching is not presented on the basis of *paramattha-kathā* and, conversely, to one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *paramattha-kathā*, the teaching is not presented on the basis of *sammuti-kathā*. There is this simile on this matter. Just as a teacher of the three Vedas who is capable of explaining their significance in different dialects were to teach his pupils, adopting the particular dialect which each pupil understands, even so the Buddha preaches the doctrine adopting, according to the suitability of the occasion, either the *sammuti-* or the *paramattha-kathā*. It is by taking into consideration the ability of each individual to understand the Four Noble Truths that the Buddha presents

his teaching either by way of *sammuti* or by way of *paramattha* or by way of both- whatever the method adopted the purpose is the same, to show the way to Immortality through the analysis of mental and physical phenomena.”¹⁴⁵

As shown from the above quotation the penetration of the truth is possible by either teaching, the conventional or the absolute, or by the combination of both. One method is not singled out as superior or inferior to the other. It is like using the dialect that a person readily understands, and there is no implication that one dialect is either superior or inferior to another. What is more, as the commentary to the *Aṅguttaranikāya* states specifically, whether the Buddhas preach the doctrine according to *sammuti* or *paramattha*, they teach only what is true, only what accords with actuality, without involving themselves in what is not true (*amusa’va*).¹⁴⁶ The statement: “The person exists” (= *sammuti-sacca*) is not erroneous, provided one does not imagine by the person a substance enduring in time. Convention requires the use of such terms, but as long as one does not imagine ontological entities corresponding to such linguistic usages, such statements are valid.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, as the commentators observe just for the sake of conforming to the absolute truth if it were said: “The five aggregates eat” (*Khandhā bhūñjanti*), “The five aggregates walk” (*Khandhā gacchanti*) instead of saying: “A person eats”, “A person walks”, such a situation will result in what is called *voḥārabheda*, i. e. breach of accepted conventions resulting in a breakdown in meaningful communication.¹⁴⁸ Hence in presenting the teaching the Buddha does not exceed linguistic conventions (*Na hi Bhagavā samaññam atidhāvati*),¹⁴⁹ but uses such terms as ‘*puggala*’ without, however, being led astray by their superficial implications (*aṇarāmasam voḥarati*).¹⁵⁰ Because of this ability, on

the part of the Buddha, to employ such linguistic designations as 'person', 'individual' without assuming corresponding ontological entities, the Buddha is called *vohāra-kusala*.¹⁵¹ The use of such terms does not in any way involve the possibility of any falsehood (*musāvādo na jāyati*).¹⁵² *Vohāra-kusalatā* or the skilfulness in the use of words is the ability to conform to conventions (*sammuti*), usages (*vohāra*), designations (*paññatti*) and turns of speech (*nirutti*) in common use in the world without being led astray by them.¹⁵³ Hence in understanding the teaching of the Buddha one is advised not to adhere dogmatically to the mere superficial meaning of the words (*Na vacanabhedamatam ālambitabbam*).¹⁵⁴

The foregoing observations should show that according to the Theravāda version of double truth, one kind of truth is not held out as superior to the other. Another interesting conclusion to which the foregoing observations lead is that as far as the Theravāda is concerned, the distinction between *sammuti-sacca* and *paramattha-sacca* does not refer to two kinds of truth as such, but to two ways of presenting the truth. Although they are formally introduced as two kinds of truth, they are explained as two modes of expressing what is true. They do not represent two degrees of truth of which one is superior or inferior to the other. This explains why the two terms, *kathā* (speech) and *desanā* (discourse) are often used in respect of the two kinds of truth.¹⁵⁵ As far as this aspect is concerned, the distinction between *sammuti* and *paramattha* corresponds to the distinction made in the earlier scriptures between *nītattha* and *neyyattha*. For, as we saw earlier, no preferential value-judgement is made between *nītattha* and *neyyattha*. All that is emphasized is that the two kinds of statement should not be confused. The great advantage in presenting *sammuti*

and *paramattha* in this wise is that it does not raise the problem of reconciling the concept of a plurality of truths with the well-known *Suttanipāta*-statement: *Ekam hi saccaṃ na dutṭiyam atthi*.¹⁵⁶

NOTES

¹The term *dhamma* denotes not only the ultimate data of empirical existence but also the unconditioned state of Nibbana. In this study, however, only the former aspect is taken into consideration.

²The reference here is to its general sense. In its special sense *nāma-rūpa* means the following psycho-physical aspects: 'Sensation, ideation, will, contact, attention- this is called *nāma*. The four material elements and the form depending on them- this is called *rūpa*'. *Samyuttanikāya* (= *S.*), PTS. Vol. I, p. 3. In the oft-recurrent statement, *viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*, the reference is to the special sense.

³See e. g. *S.* Vol. III, pp. 47, 86; *Majjhimanikāya* (= *M.*), PTS. Vol. III, p. 16.

⁴See e. g. *S.* Vol. II, p. 248; Vol. III, p. 231.

⁵See e. g. *Dīghanikāya* (= *D.*), PTS. Vol. II, p. 302; Vol. III, pp. 102, 243; *Ānguttaranikāya* (= *A.*), PTS. Vol. III, p. 400; Vol. V. p. 52.

⁶See e. g. *S.* Vol. II, p. 140; *D.* Vol. I, p. 79; Vol. III. p. 38; *A.* Vol. I, p. 255; Vol. III. p. 17.

⁷*S.* Vol. III, p. 49.

⁸Cf. *Aññatra paccayā natthi viññāṇassa sambhavo* (*M.* Vol. III, p. 281).

⁹See *Dhammasaṅgani* (= *Dhs.*), PTS. pp. 5 ff.

¹⁰Nyanaponika Thera, *Abhidhamma Studies*, Kandy, 1976, p. 21.

¹¹Cf. *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, London, 1923; *Buddhist Logic*, New York, 1962 (republication), Vol. I, Introduction.

¹²Nyanaponika Thera, *op. cit.* p. 41.

¹³*Visuddhimagga-ṭīkā (Paramatthamañjūsā)* (= *VsmT*), ed. M. Dhammananda, Colombo, 1928, p. 137,

¹⁴*S.* Vol. II, pp. 17, 77.

¹⁵*Ibid. loc. cit.*

¹⁶*S.* Vol. II. p. 77.

¹⁷*Ibid. loc. cit.*

¹⁸For a short but lucid description, see Narada Thera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, Colombo, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 87 ff.

¹⁹See L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha, tr. P. Demievi elle *Melanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, Vol. I, 1932, pp. 57 ff.; J. Masuda, 'Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools', (Translation of Vasumitra's Treatise), *Asia Major*, Vol. II, 1925, pp. 53–7; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, pp. 122 ff.; A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, 1970, pp. 289 ff.

²⁰*Kathāvatthu* (= *Kvu.*), PTS. Vol. I. pp. 1 ff. and the relevant sections in its commentary.

²¹*Ibid. loc. cit.*

²²Cf. *Ahutvā sambhūtaṃ hutvā na bhavissati (Paṭisambhidāmagga = Psm.* PTS., p. 76); *Evam sabbe pi rūpārūpino dhammā ahutvā sambhonti hutvā paṭiventi (Visuddhimagga = Vsm., PTS. Vol. I, p. 512).*

²³See Y. Karunadasa, 'Vibhajyavāda versus Sarvāstivāda: The Buddhist Controversy on Time', *Kalyani, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*,

Colombo, 1983, Vol. II, pp. 16 ff.

²⁴Cf. e. g. *Mahāniddesa Atthakathā* (= *MhNdA.*), PTS. p. 261; *Dhammasaṅgani Atthakathā* (= *DhsA.*), PTS. p. 126; *Vi'suddhimārgasannaya* (= *VsmS.*), ed. M. Dharmaratna, Colombo, 1890–1917, Sol. V, p. 6.

²⁵See *Abhidhammatthasāṅgaha-Vibhāvini-Ṭīkā* (= *ADSVT.*), ed. D. Paññānanda, Colombo, 1889, p. 4. Cf. *Cintetī ti cittaṃ. Ārammaṇaṃ vijānātī ti attho. Yathāha: Visayavijānanalakkhaṇaṃ cittaṃ ti. Sati hi pi nissayasamanantarādiṭṭhacaye na vinā ārammaṇena cittaṃ uppajjati ti tassa tā lakkhaṇatā vuttā. Etena nirālambanavādīmataṃ paṭikkhittaṃ hoti.* (*Ibid. loc. cit.*).

²⁶*Ibid. loc. cit.*

²⁷*Ibid. loc. cit.*

²⁸*Ibid. loc. cit.*; cf. *Svāyaṃ kattuniddeso pariyāyaladdho, dhammato aññassa kattunivattanattho.* *VsmT.* p. 141.

²⁹Cf. *Paramatthato ekasabhāvopi sabhāvadharmo pariyāyavacanehi viya samāropitarūpehi bahūhi pakārehi pakāsiyati. Evaṃ hi so sutthū pakāsito hotī ti* (*Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* = *Abhvok.*, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta, Colombo, 1961, p. 117. *Sakasaka-kiccesu hi dhammānam attappadhanatā samāropanena kattubhāvo, tadanukūlabhāvena tamsampayutte dhammasamūhe kattubhāvasamāropanena (paṭipādetabbassa) dhammassa karaṇatthañ ca pariyāyato labbhati* (*ibid.* p. 16).

³⁰*VsmT.* p. 484.

³¹*Ibid.* p. 491.

³²*Dīghanikāya-Ṭīkā* (= *DT.*), Colombo, 1974, p. 28.

³³*Abhvok.* p. 16; *ADSVT.* p. 4.

³⁴*Abhidhamma-Mūlatīkā* (= *AMT.*), ed. D. Paññāsāra and P. Vimaladhamma, Colombo, 1939, p. 21.

- 35 *Ibid.* p. 70.
- 36 *Abhv.* p. 210.
- 37 *AMT.* p. 121.
- 38 *DT.* p. 76.
- 39 *Ibid.* p. 673; cf. *Dhammato aññassa kattunivattanattham dhammam eva kattāram niddisati* (*AMT.* p. 66); see also *VsmS.* Vol. V, p. 184, *VsmT.* p. 484.
- 40 *Vsm.* p. 513.
- 41 *Ibid. loc. cit.*
- 42 *VsmT.* p. 482.
- 43 *Abhv.* p. 393.
- 44 *VsmT.* p. 482.
- 45 *Abhv.* p. 123.
- 46 *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (= *Psm.*), PTS. vol. II, p. 211.
- 47 *Abhv.* p. 414; *DhsA.* p. 63; *PsmA.* p. 12; *Mohavicchedani* (= *Mvn.*), p. 6.
- 48 *AMT.* p. 21; cf. *Na hi ruppanādihi aññe rūpādayo kakkhaḷādihi ca aññe pathavī-ādayo dhammā vijjantī ti. Aññathā pana avabodhetuṃ na sakkā ti... sabhāvadhamme aññe viya katvā attano sabhāvaṃ dhārentī ti vuttaṃ* (*ibid.* p. 22).
- 49 *VsmT.* p. 462; see also *Abhv.* p. 116, *VsmS.* Vol. V, p. 132.
- 50 *PsmA.* Vol. III. p. 634.
- 51 *Vibhaṅga Atthakathā* (= *VbhA.*), PTS. p. 45; see also *VsmS.* Vol. V, p. 273, *VsmT.* p. 359.
- 52 *PsmA.* Vol. I, p. 16, *VsmT.* p. 24.
- 53 *SA.* Vol. II. p. 213, *Vsm.* p. 520.
- 54 *Abhv.* p. 156.
- 55 *VsmT.* p. 362.

⁵⁶ADSVT. p. 32, ADSS. p. 52.

⁵⁷Vsm. p. 321.

⁵⁸Cf. *Nanu ca kakkhaḷattam eva paṭhavīdhātū ti? Saccam etam. Tathā pi... abhinne pi dhamme kappanāsiddhena bhedenā evaṃ niddeso kato. Evaṃ hi atthavisesā-vabodho hotī ti* (VsmT. p. 362).

⁵⁹DT. p. 105; cf. *Rūpakkhandhasseva hi etam (ruppanalakkhaṇam), na vedanādīnam. Tasmā paccattalakkhaṇan ti vuccati. Aniccadukkhanattalakkhaṇam pana vedanādīnam pi hoti. Tasmā taṃ sāmāññalakkhaṇan ti vuccati* (SA. Vol. II, p. 291).

⁶⁰See ADSVT. p. 32.

⁶¹These are the three phases of a momentary *dhamma*, according to the Theravāda version of the theory of moments.

⁶²See *Abhvok*. p. 288, *Mvn*. p. 67.

⁶³*Na hi jāti jāyati jarā jīrati maraṇam mīyatī ti voharituṃ yuttam, anavaṭṭhānato* (*Mvn*. pp. 67-8).

⁶⁴DT. p. 105.

⁶⁵ADSVT. p. 4.

⁶⁶ADSS. p. 3.

⁶⁷*Mvn*. p. 258.

⁶⁸*Ibid. loc. cit; Abhvok*, p. 123.

⁶⁹*Mvn*. p. 258; *KvuA*. p. 8.

⁷⁰*Mvn*. p. 259.

⁷¹Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Colombo, 1956, p. 421.

⁷²Vsm. II, p. 159.

⁷³See *VsmT*. p. 227, *Mvn*. p. 258, *ItiA*. p. 142.

⁷⁴*Abhvok.* p. 445.

⁷⁵*Cf.* ... *Saṅkhatasaṅkhatapaññattidhammesu na ko ci dhammo ārammanapaccayo na hotī ti dasseti. Teneva hi 'yaṃ yaṃ dhammaṃ ārabbhā ti aniyamo kato ti. Nanu ca 'yaṃ yaṃ dhammaṃ' ti vuttatā paññattiyā gahaṇaṃ na hotī ti? Nāyam doṣo. Dhammasaddassa ñeyyavācakkatā* (*Abhvok.* p. 445).

⁷⁶*Abhvok.* p. 346; *cf.* *Na hi abhāvassa koci sabhāvo atthi* (*VsmT.* p. 539)

⁷⁷*Abhvok.* p. 4; *VsmT.* p. 225: *salakkhaṇa-saṅkhāto aviparīta-sabhāvo.*

⁷⁸*ADSVT.* p. 62.

⁷⁹*Mvn.* p. 69.

⁸⁰*VsmT.* p. 197, *ADSVT.* p. 123.

⁸¹*Vsm.* p. 376, 381; *AMT.* p. 43; *Tikaṭṭhāna* (with commentary), (= *Tkp.*), *PTS.* p. 59.

⁸²*Tkp.* pp. 62 ff.

⁸³*M.* Vol. I. p. 480.

⁸⁴*Milindapañha* (= *Mil.*), ed. Ananda Metteyya Mahathera, Colombo, 1962, pp. 58-9.

⁸⁵*The Questions of King Milinda*, tr. T. W. Rhys Davids, New York, 1963 (Dover Edition), p. 97.

⁸⁶For other illustrations, see *DhsA.* 273, *MA.* Vol. II, p. 287, *Abhvok.* p. 293.

⁸⁷*Op. cit.* p. 270.

⁸⁸See *ADS.* p. 28, *VsmS.* p. 389.

⁸⁹See *VsmT.* p. 451, *Abhvok.* p. 273.

⁹⁰See *Tkp.* pp. 3, 14, 16, *ADS.* p. 28.

⁹¹*VsmT.* p. 451, *Abhvok.* p. 273.

⁹²See Y. Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Colombo, 1967, p. 26.

- 93 *Op. cit.* p. 387.
- 94 *VsmT.* p. 364; see also *Abhvok.* p. 248.
- 95 *Vsm.* pp. 444-5.
- 96 See e. g. *ADSVT.* p. 5; *VsmT.* p. 21; *abhvk.* p. 22.
- 97 *Abhvok.* p. 22; *VsmT.* p. 470.
- 98 *Mil.* pp. 58-9.
- 99 *MA.* Vol. II, p. 287.
- 100 *The Questions of King Milinda*, tr. T. W. Rhys Davids, New York, 1963 (Dover Edition), p. 142.
- 101 *S.* II, p. 178.
- 102 *D.* I, p. 28; *Ud.* p. 69.
- 103 *DhsA.* p. 78.
- 104 *Ibid.* p. 79.
- 105 *Ibid.* pp. 78 ff.
- 106 See *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (tr. of ADS), tr. Narada Thera, Colombo, 1956, pp. 79 ff.; Y. Karunadasa, *op. cit.* pp. 155 ff.
- 107 *Op. cit.* p. 110.
- 108 *Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, London, 1923, p. 340.
- 109 *Ibid. loc. cit.*
- 110 *Dhs.* p. 110.
- 111 Cf. *Kvu.* controversy on the concept of person (*puggala*).
- 112 See below, pp. 23 ff.
- 113 See below, p. 23.
- 114 *S.* I, p. 135.
- 115 *Abhvok.* p. 346.

- 116 See *KvuA.* pp. 198-9.
- 117 *AMT.* pp. 114 ff.
- 118 *Ibid.* p. 116.
- 119 *VsmT.* p. 210.
- 120 *Cf. Vināsbhāvato atītādikālavasena na vattabbattā nibbanam paññatti ca kālavinuttā nāma (ADSVT.* p. 36).
- 121 *MA.* II, p. 299.
- 122 *Cf. Saṅkhatāsaṅkhatalakkaṇānaṃ pana abhāvena na vattabbā saṅkhatā ti vā asaṅkhatā ti tā (KvuA.* p. 92).
- 123 *ADSVT.* p. 52-3.
- 124 *VsmT.* p. 198
- 125 *Ibid.* p. 137.
- 126 *DT.* p. 123.
- 127 Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Colombo, 1956, p. 458.
- 128 *VsmT.* p. 225.
- 129 *ADSVT.* p. 53.
- 130 *Abhvok.* p. 317; *MiT.* p. 376.
- 131 *ADSVT.* p. 35; *SS.* verse 373; *PV.* verse 1066.
- 132 *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-Saṅkhepavaṇṇanā*, ed. W. Paññānanda Thera, Colombo, 1899, p. 53.
- 133 *ADSS.* p. 159.
- 134 *ADSSV.* p. 54.
- 135 *SS.* p. 68; *MA.* I, p. 55.
- 136 *Ibid. loc. cit.*
- 137 *Op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 60.

138 *Dve me bhikkhave Tathāgataṃ abbhācikkhanti. Katame dve? Yo ca neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ nūtattha suttantaṃ ti dīpeti, yo ca nītatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattha suttantaṃ ti dīpeti* (A. Vol. II, p. 60).

139 AA. Vol. II, p. 118.

140 See e. g. *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, ed. U. Wogihara, Tokyo, 1930-36, p. 48. Perhaps the only single Theravāda text where *samvṛti* is used instead of the usual *sammuti* is the Sinhala *sannē* to *ADS*; see *ADSS*. p. 159.

141 See *Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā*, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1904-14, p. 170. For a detailed account of the theories of truth as presented by various Buddhist schools, see L. De La Vallee Poussin, 'Les Deux, Les Quatre, Les Trois Verités', *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, Vol. V, pp. 159 ff.

142 AA. Vol. I, p. 54; *KvuA*. p. 34; *DA*. Vol. I, p. 251.

143 See *SS*. verses 367 ff.; *NRP*, *JPTS*, 1913, verses 847 ff.

144 K. N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

145 See AA. Vol. I, pp. 54-5; *DA*. Vol. I, pp. 251-2; *SA*. Vol. II, p. 77.

146 *DA*. Vol. I, p. 251.

147 See K. N. Jayatilleke, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

148 *SA*. Vol. I. p. 51.

149 *KvuA*. p. 103.

150 Cf. *KvuA*. p. 103: *Atthi puggalo ti vacana-mattato abhiniveso na kātabbo.*

151 *SA*. Vol. I, p. 51.

152 Cf. *MA*. Vol. I, p. 125: *Tasmā vohāra-kusalassa lokanāthassa sathhuno
Sammutiṃ voharantassa musāvado na jāyati.*

153 *DA*. Vol. I, p. 251.

154 *Abhv.* p. 88.

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¹⁵⁵AA. Vol. I, p. 54; *Abhv.* p. 324.

¹⁵⁶*Suttanipāta*, PTS, *gāthā* 884.