

IIP - Zadar 29 Aug - 02 Sep 07

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Neither Identity nor Diversity

Contribution to the Early Buddhist Conception of a Person

In his philosophy of knowledge, Kant discussed the conceptions of the *I*, thereby distinguishing the *empirical I* from the *transcendental I*. Quite astonishingly, he hereby did not call the transcendental I „transcendental I“, but transcendental apperception.¹ Perhaps he decided to use this term in describing the manner of this knowledge-establishing I's behaviour being thereby able to reflect itself, i.e. reflecting that highest point of establishing knowledge, thus being able to let the thought „I am“ accompanying every knowledge.

No attribute is applicable to that *transcendental I*: of course, no empirical attribute, but also - quite astonishing - no apriorical attribute; and even the intuitions are not applicable to it, neither the empirical ones, given by our senses, nor the apriorical ones, given by our sense-abilities, i.e. space and time: *Outside* of space and time is this transcendental I in *constituting* this space and time and in *establishing* the inner objects *in* time and the outer objects *in* space and time, functioning thus as the base of time and furtheron of space and of the objects in it, i.e. the appearances.

1 See Kant „KrV“ /xy.

But according to the *empirical I*, Kant's view was quite different: For *this I* is, of course, *within* time; and with regard to its bodily aspects it is furthermore within space; and both its body and its mind are changing all the time. Therefore, not the transcendental thought „I am“ is appropriate to it, but empirical assertions of the kind „I am just now at Zadar“, „I am happy now“, „My physical as well as my mental abilities changed during the last decades“, and so on.

This Kantian *empirical I* was regarded a century earlier by Hobbes² as the *one-and-only-one I*; and for showing that, he reactivated arguments of ancient Greek philosophers concerning the question whether or not that ship called „Ship of Theseos“ was indeed the *ship of Theseos*.³ Probably, this question of *gen-identity* – to use a concept of Lewin⁴ – was discussed among the philosophers of ancient Athens⁵ already during the life-time of Platon. If so, then Platon seemed to have been without any answer to it, at least, when he wrote down the final version of his dialogue „Phaidon“; for within the overlong description of that ship at the introduction of this monograph, he obviously avoided to discuss this problem, in spite of the fact that a solution of it is essential for giving some firm answer to the question of mortality and immortality, being the main subject of this dialogue.

2 See Hobbes /xy.

3 See: Plutarch, p. 49: „The ship on which Theseus sailed with the youths and returns in safety, the thirty-oared galley, was preserved by the Athenians down to the time of Demetrius Phalereus. (Tegent of Athens for Cassander of Macedon, 317-307 B.C. Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, p. 58.) They took away the old timbers from time to time, and put new and sound ones in their places, so that the vessel became a standing illustration for the philosophers in the mooted question of growth, some declaring that it remained the same, others that it was not the same vessel.“

4 See Lewin /xy. This concept of gen-identity was used later on also by Reichenbach /xy, by Carnap /xy, and by Hermes /xy. See also Essler /xy, as well as Essler-Labude-Ucsnay /xy.

5 Cf. Plutarch /xy.

However, in his dialogue „Kratylos“ he argued that something within the *consciousness* has to be unchangeable; for otherwise, he argued, it would not be able to gain any firm and stable knowledge and, in addition, not even an unchangeable knowledge of the changeability of all the empirical things.⁶

Some of the myths which Platon presented from time to time were known in ancient India centuries earlier already; and we should not exclude the possibility that merchants of Milet and Ephesus when travelling to the Eastern frontier of the Persian Empire were bringing back from India not only silk but also philosophies, no matter how disfigured they understood them. In any case, the theory that within each of the otherwise changeable persons there is something existing which is unchangeable, was developed in India centuries before Platon and is probably even older than the philosophy of Yājñavalkya; but, alas, we do not have any reports of such theories preceeding the ideas of that great Indian philosopher Yājñavalkya, who lived around the 9th century BC.⁷

His epistemology and, moreover, his world-view as well as his philosophy of life were that of a non-solipsistic idealism-phenomenalism:

Perceiving as well as thinking, in his sense, consists in actions performed by someone. Of course, thinking may consist in acting mentally already on thinking. Inasmuch as this happens, we find out that the one who – up to that point – was perceiving or thinking escaped at even that moment when he directed his mental organs onto that one: The up to now *subject* of perceiving and thinking now

6 See the introduction of his dialogue „Phaidon“ and the ending of his dialogue „Kratylos“.

7 See the translations of the brāhmaṇa-philosophies as well as those of the elder upaniṣad-philosophies, e.g. in Deussen /xy. Concerning to an interpretation of them, see e.g. Essler-Mamat (WBG) /xy and Essler-Mamat (VFPhil) /xy.

escaped; and *seized* was only its *shadow*, in other words: its *cloth*, i.e.: the *picture* of the former perceiver and thinker being now the *object* of perceiving and thinking.⁸

This *ultimate one* which is perceiving and thinking is therefore *not* to be seized by perceiving or by thinking: „You cannot perceive that one who perceives; and you cannot think that one who thinks. But exactly that one is your self; and everything different from it is suffering!“. In terms of that kind Yājñavalkya sometimes was trying to hint onto that undescribable one.⁹

Each perception and each thought is nothing but the disposal of the self, of the ātman, whereby this disposal is performed by its servant, by its puruṣa, by its man. For this I is the connection of the self being the ultimate one and the mind accompanied by its subtle and gross energies being the servant of that self. Therefore, each perception and each thought is owned by that I – the union of self and servant – and, in fact, is owned by that self. And since there does not exist anything else but this disposal of the self, which is performed by its servant, the perceptions as well as the thoughts are nothing but this I and, in fact, nothing but this self, in using a Kantian terminology: nothing but *that aspect* of the transcendental I *at which can be hinted*.

According to the preceding brāhmaṇa-philosophies, the brahman was unmoving-unmoved. Compareable to it, also that self or ātman to which he was trying to hint was unmoving-unmoved: All its movements were performed by its servant or puruṣa, on which it was resting like a rider on his horse. This servant was indeed acting, was really performing actions; and – according to some non-

8 This is related to a report of „The gospel According to Mark“ 14, 51-52: „Among those following (the policemen having just now captured Jesus there) was a young man with nothing but a linen cloth. They tried to seize him; but he slipped out of the linen cloth and run away naked.“

9 See e.g. Essler-Mamat (VFPhil) /xy.

formulated *actio-reactio-principle* – he therefore had to receive reactions, in short: he therefore had to suffer. To become free from any suffering – in short: to become free –, it is necessary and sufficient to train the subtle part of the physical energies to stop continuing taking actions. This, of course, can happen only after death, after the breaking up of the body into its both parts: into its gross part which then is beginning to dissolve into the four great elements, and into its subtle part which is continuing to accompany the self as its servant. But this subtle body has to be trained in this direction already during this very life by using the body of gross energies, at the latest during the final parts of one's life, as soon as the hair starts turning grey.

Perhaps already at the lifetime of Yājñavalkya, but surely three centuries later during the lifetime of Buddha Śākyamuni, some Indian philosophers maintained also *philosophies of annihilation* of the following kind:

There is nothing unchangeable within a person, neither in his body nor in his mind. For the body grew up out of the four great elements;¹⁰ and the mind grew up purely by chance, i.e.: out of physical causes, being therefore nothing but a physical attribute of the body. Like the body, the mind is therefore changing every moment. It was born together with the birth of the body; and it will die together with the death of the body.

Perhaps Ajita Keśakambalin, a contemporary of Buddha Śākyamuni, held a philosophy of life of such kind.¹¹

¹⁰These four great elements are:

- * the earth, i.e. the earth-like, the solidity within appearances;
- * the water, i.e. the water-like, the liquidity (the connection power) within the appearances;
- * the fire, i.e. the fire-like, the warmth within the appearance;
- * the wind, i.e. The (air-like and) wind-like, the moving power within the appearances.

¹¹See, e.g., DN . Cf. Essler-Mamat (VFPhil) /xy, where it was tried to establish the sketch of a reconstruction of that philosophy.

Buddha Śākyamuni taught an epistemological view, avoiding both of these extreme positions:

There is nothing eternal within the body as well as within the mind. Moreover, body as well as mind consists of nothing but of continuities of physical states and of mental states; such states are the only things that are given to one's consciousness. But developing speculations with regard to something which does neither act with the mind nor receives reactions from the mind but which should nevertheless be somehow connected with the mind: this is violating every reasonable actio-reactio-principle. And, moreover, in a subtle sense, not only such a speculation, but also a counter-speculation to it is senseless; therefore, even the question regarding the validity of one of them is a non-valid question.

Also in the Buddha's view, the permanently changing mind is accompanied by a body of subtle energies which are functioning according to the mind's traces. In this way, they are influenced by the mind; and at the same time they are influencing the mind. But they nevertheless are essentially different from the mind:

The state of the consciousness recognizing, e. g., that this part of the space at that time is blue *is*, of course, *produced* by some subtle field of physical energies and *is* furthermore *maintained* by them, but *is* nevertheless categorically *different* from them: It is completely senseless to identify the content of that recognition with the associated and connected physical field, maybe with a subtle kind of an electromagnetic field. These energies are influencing the respectively momentary mind concerning its *state*, but *not* concerning its *existence*: Each momentary mind is caused completely through its immediately preceding momentary mind; and this cause is thereby exhausted completely in its existence. The attributes of this

momentary mind's state, however, are conditioned mostly by the state of that preceding mind and to some extent also by outer influences, in that manner comparable to the functioning of a Turing-machine.¹² Moreover, the mind – containing the consciousness as its central part – is regarded here to be a *closed* system: No other mind is able to influence one's mind directly, i.e. to influence it without influencing the accompanying subtle energies by influencing the grosser energies connected to them during this life, and vice versa.

That is the way, in which I understand the relevant early reports of the Buddha's teaching, esp. the following one:¹³

„[Thus I have heard: On one occasion the Bhagavan¹⁴ was dwelling] at Śrāvastī. On one of these days, the Venerable Katyāyanagotra approached the Bhagavan, paid homage to him, sat down by his side, and said to him: „Venerable sir, it is said: „right view“! In what way is there a right view?“

„For the plenty of the beings,¹⁵ Katyāyana,“ [the Bhagavan explained,] „this world depends on a twofold conception: either on the conception of existence, or upon the conception of non-existence. But someone who sees the origin of the world, as it really is, with correct wisdom, has no conception of non-existence with regard to the world. And someone who sees the cessation of the world, as it really is, with correct wisdom, has no conception of existence with regard to the world.

For the plenties, Katyāyana, this world is shackled by

12 Descriptors of Turing-machines may be found e.g. in Hermes /xy.

13 See SN 12.15; cf. SN 12.47 and SN 12.48.

14 In using this expression „bhagavan“ in its *original* sense, I am trying to give back to it its honour which it partially lost in modern times by misusing it by some kinds of Hinduistic missionaries in the Western world.

15 The expression „the plenty of the beings“ – in short: „the plenties“ – designates the not well instructed people in general and the not well instructed ones among the philosophers in particular.

engagement, clinging, adherence. But someone [with the right view] does not become engaged, does not become clingy, does not become adhered to any mental standpoints and its underlying tendencies; and esp. he does not take a stand on [the concept] „my self“. [For] he has no perplexity or doubt that the only thing that arises is suffering, and the only thing that ceases is suffering. His knowledge about this is independent of others. In this way, there is a right view.

Katyāyana! „Everything is existent“: this is the one extreme; and „Everything is non-existent“: this is the other extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the connections [- the dharma -] the middle position:¹⁶

„Through the previous ignorance: formations [of mind-speech-body];
through the previous formations [of mind-speech-body]:
consciousness;
through the previous consciousness: form-concept;
through the previous form-concept: the six [inner and outer sense] bases;
through the previous six [inner and outer sense] bases:
contact;
through the previous contact: feeling;
through the previous feeling: thirsting;
through the previous thirsting: clinging;
through the previous clinging: [subject to] becoming;
through the previous [subject to] becoming: [subject to being] born;
through the previous [subject to being] born: [subject to]

¹⁶The *main* purpose of quoting *this* time the 12 members of *becoming-through-previous* is obviously to indicate the origination and cessation of suffering, which is nothing but the world; see SN 12.43 and SN 12.44. /xy

Cf. Also FN /xy.

deadful aging¹⁷ [with its manifestations as:] sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, despair.“

Such is the origin of the whole mass of suffering. Therefore, Katyāyana, this is called „origination through the previous“!

„But through the previous remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance: cessation of the formation [of mind-speech-body by ignorance, ... and so on, up to]: cessation of [being subject to] deadful aging (...).“

Such is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. [Therefore, Katyāyana, this is called „cessation through the previous“!]“.

The *world* is – in Buddha Śākyamuni's as well as in Yājñavalkya's sense – is the *mind-established* world, i.e. the epistemic world born out of perceiving and thinking, born out of data and theories.¹⁸ But *within* this world, everything is *determined* by causes and circumstances. Therefore, everything *within* this world is *suffering*.¹⁹

Body as well as mind are changing all the time; they therefore are nothing but a continuity of momentary physical states and momentary mental states; and there is no owner of those states beyond them:²⁰

„[Thus I have heard: At one occasion the Bhagavan was

17 It is surely inappropriate to translate P: „jarāmaraṇa“ by „aging and death“ in its common sense, as this is done mostly; for very often men have to die without aging, being *there* defined by „receiving grey hairs ...“. Since „death“ is the translation of P: „māra“, we use „deathfulness“ as a translation of P: „maraṇa“, shortening thereby „aging in deathfulness“ to „deathful aging“ and understanding thereby „aging“ not in its gross sense, defined by „becoming grey hairs ...“, but in its subtle sense, defined by „becoming older from one moment to the next one“.

18 See e.g. SN 12.44.

19 See e.g. SN 12.43. – The expression „suffer“ was mainly used in this sense in ancient Indian philosophy, from Yājñavalkya onward at the latest.

20 See SN 12.18; cf. Also SN 1.46. – According to Yājñavalkya, however, the ātman is the owner of its world, since *this world* is nothing but the *disposal of the self, performed by its servant*; thereby, according to such a view, it may be stated: „This is mine; this is me; this is my self!“.

dwelling] at Śrāvastī. At one of these days, the Śramaṇa Timbaruka approached the Bhagavan, exchanged greetings and cordial talks with him, sat down at one side, and asked him: „How is it, Master Gautama: Are pleasure and pain created by oneself?“

„[I do] not [speak] so, Timbaruka!“, answered the Bhagavan.

„Then, Master Gautama: Are pleasure and pain created by someone other?“²¹

„[I do] not [speak] so, Timbaruka!“

„How is it then, Master Gautama: Are pleasure and pain created both by oneself and by another?“

„[I do] not [speak] so, Timbaruka!“

„Then, Master Gautama: Have pleasure and pain arisen fortuitously, being created neither by oneself nor by another?“

„[I do] not [speak] so, Timbaruka!“

„How is it then, Master Gautama: Is there neither pleasure nor pain?“

„This is not the case Timbaruka: There is pleasure, and there is pain!“

„Then is it that Master Gautama does not know and see pleasure and pain?“

„This is not the case, Timbaruka: I do know and see pleasure and pain!“

„(...) After all these answers to my questions, may I ask you now: Venerable sir, let the Bhagavan explain pleasure and pain to me (...)!“

„Timbaruka! The thought „Feeling, that is the same as: the one who feels“ [arises] with reference to someone existing from the beginning, [leading therefore to the

²¹The expression „someone other“ is, of course, not to be understood according to „another contemporary“, but according to „someone in the past, of whom oneself is the mental continuity“.

judgement]: „Pleasure and pain [being the result of former actions] are created by oneself“. I do not speak thus. But the thought „Feeling, that is the one; and the one who feels, that is someone other“ [arises] with reference to one stricken by the judgment: „Pleasure and pain [being the result of former actions] are created by another“. Neither do I speak thus. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the connections [- the dharma -] by the middle: [... by] the origin of suffering, [... and by] the cessation of suffering.“

When this was said, the naked Śramin Timbaruka asserted: „Magnificent, Master Gautama, indeed magnificent! The connections have been made clear in many ways by Master Gautama, as though he were turning upright what had been turned upside down, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. Therefore I go to refuge to Master Gautama, to the [wheel of] connections, and to the [highest] community of bhikṣus. From today let Master Gautama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life!“.

In the sense of Buddha Śākyamuni, a valid answer presupposes a valid question. But questions regarding to some unestablished establisher of the person - the person being hereby of the physical and mental states whose continuity is then regarded as a person - is indeed non-valid, as was shown repeatedly to some bhikṣu in the course of a teaching:²²

„[Thus I have heard: On one occasion the Bhagavan was dwelling] at Śrāvastī. At one of these days, the Bhagavan [taught the kinds of nutrients to the bhikṣus which were sitting at his side; and he concluded:] „Bhikṣus! These are the four kinds of nutrients for the maintainance of beings

²² See SN 12.12.

that have already come to be as well as for the support of those about to come to be, namely: the nutrient edible food, gross or subtle, [as the first]; contact, as the second; formation [of mind-speech-body], as the third; consciousness, as the fourth.”

When this was said, the Venerable Moliyphagga asked the Bhagavan: „Venerable sir! Who consumes the nutrient consciousness?”

„[This is] not a valid question!“, the Bhagavan replied. „For I do not say: „One consumes“. If I should say: „One consumes“, that question would be valid. Since I do not speak²³ thus, if someone should ask me: „Venerable sir: What arises through the previous nutrient consciousness?“, this would be a valid question, to which the answer is: „Through the previous nutrient consciousness: the production of being renewed [subdue to] becoming in the future. When in that way being renewed [subdue to] becoming: the six [inner and outer sense] bases. Through the previous six [inner and outer sense] bases [together with consciousness]: contact.“!

„Venerable sir! Who contacts?”

„[This is] not a valid question!“, the Bhagavan replied. „For I do not say: „One contacts“. If I should say: „One contacts“, that question would be valid. Since I do not speak thus, if someone should ask me: „Venerable sir: What arises through the previous contact?“, this would be a valid question, to which the answer is: „Through the previous contact: feeling.“!

„Venerable sir! Who feels?”

„[This is] not a valid question!“, the Bhagavan replied. „For I do not say: „One feels“. If I should say: „One feels“, that question would be valid. Since I do not speak thus, if

²³Speaking may be outer speaking as well as inner speaking, i.e. thinking; see MN 44.

someone should ask me: „Venerable sir: What arises through the previous feeling?“, this would be a valid question, to which the answer is: „Through the previous feeling: thirsting.“!“

„Venerable sir! Who thirsts?“

„[This is] not a valid question!“, the Bhagavan replied. „For I do not say: „One thirsts“. If I should say: „One thirsts“, that question would be valid. Since I do not speak thus, if someone should ask me: „Venerable sir: What arises through the previous thirsting?“, this would be a valid question, to which the answer is: „Through the previous thirsting: clinging; through the previous clinging: [being subject to] becoming; through the previous [being subject to] becoming: [being subject to] birth; through the preceding [being subject to] birth: [being subject to] deadful aging (...): Such is the origin of the whole mass of suffering. But through the previous remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance: cessation of the six [inner and outer] bases [conditioned by ignorance]: the cessation of contact, [... and so on, up to]: cessation of [being subject to] deadful aging (...): Such is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering.“!“.

Now, of course, it is to ask what may be meant with „through the previous“. In fact this is understood mostly in a very gross sense, even by the early Buddhist commentaries, and also by the majority of the today's Buddhist teachers, i.e. sometimes in the sense of „years ago“ or in the sense of „in the youth of this life“ or even in the sense of „in the previous life“. Interpretations of such gross kinds are indeed possible; but it is not easy to believe that they are intended by Buddha Śākyamuni in contexts of this kind: Especially in cases when the sequence of mind-moments is discussed it is completely improbable that other meanings than the most subtle one might be

involved; but the most subtle one is nothing but the mind-moment, i.e. the length of time of a state of the mind. In this way I take the meaning of the following report of a teaching of Buddha Śākyamuni:²⁴

„*Thus I have heard*: On one occasion the Bhagavan was dwelling at Śrāvastī in the victor's grove in Anāthapiṇḍada's park. At one of these days, he addressed to the Bhikṣus thus: „Bhikṣus!“; and they replied: „Venerable sir!“. Then the Bhagavan continued:

„Bhikṣus! The not well instructed one among the plenties²⁵ is able to experience averting towards the [gross] body composed of the four great elements; he might become dispassionate towards it and even be liberated from it. For what reason? Because growth and decline is seen in it; because being taken up and being laid aside is seen in it. (...) But as to what is called „mind“ and „mentality“ and „consciousness“²⁶ he is not able to experience averting towards it, to become dispassionate towards it, to become liberated from it. For what reason? Because for a long time this has been held to by him, appropriated, and grasped thus: „This is mine; this is me; this is my self!“²⁷. (...)

It would be better for this not well instructed one to take as [his] self the [gross] body composed of the four great elements rather than the mind.²⁸ For what reason? Because this [gross] body is seen standing for years, or for decades, or for a century, or even longer.²⁹ But that which is called

24 See SN 12.61; cf. Also SN 12.62.

25 The *plenties* are, as was already said, *those ones who are dwelling outside of the path which is leading to liberation*, i.e. *to liberation of the person*.

26 These we take as the translations of S: „citta“ and „manas“ and „vijñāna“.

27 Therefore, the buddha's position is exactly contrary to Yājñavalkya's position, in spite of a lot of similarities – but not identities! – of their epistemologies.

28 This seems to be realized by people of the English-speaking world by using terms like „everybody“, „somebody“, and „nobody“.

29 The expression „is seen“ must not be overlooked here!

„mind“ and „mentality“ and „consciousness“ arises and ceases as one thing and the next by day and by night.³⁰ Just as a monkey roaming through a forest grabs hold of one branch, lets it go and grabs the next, lets it go and grabs still another, so too that which is called „mind“ and „mentality“ and „consciousness“ arises and ceases as one thing and the next by day and by night.

Bhikṣus! The well instructed noble disciple attends closely and carefully the origination through some previous one itself by realizing: „When this is the case, that comes to be; with the [previous] arising of this, that arises. When this is not the case, that does not come to be; with the [previous] cessation of this, that ceases.“. That is [in particular]:³¹

„Through the previous ignorance: formations [of mind-speech-body];
through the previous formations [of mind-speech-body]:
consciousness;
through the previous consciousness: form-concept;
through the previous form-concept: the six [inner and outer sense] bases;
through the previous six [inner and outer sense] bases:
contact;
through the previous contact: feeling;
through the previous feeling: thirsting;
through the previous thirsting: clinging;
through the previous clinging: [subject to] becoming;
through the previous [subject to] becoming: [subject to being] born;

30 In this manner it is tried here to reconstruct the P-Text which is somehow perished at this point.

31 The *main* purpose of quoting *this* time the 12 members of *becoming-through-previous* is obviously to indicate the *duration* of origination and cessation of suffering, which is nothing but the world.

Cf. Fn 16.

by the previous [subject to being] born: [subject to] deadful aging [with its manifestations as:] sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, despair.“

Such is the origin of the whole mass of suffering. [But the cessation is in particular:]

„Through the previous remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance: cessation of the formation [of mind-speech-body by ignorance, ... and soon, up to]: cessation of [being subject to] deadful aging (...).“

Such is the cessation of the whole mass of suffering.

Seeing thus, bhikṣus, the well instructed noble disciple experiences averting [towards what is to be regarded as his body and in addition as his mind, i.e.] towards form, averting towards feeling, averting towards distinguishing³² aversion towards mind-formations³³, averting towards consciousness. Experiencing averting, he becomes dispassionate; through dispassion: liberated. When liberated, the knowledge [and seeing] arises: „Liberated!“; and it then is understood: „Destroyed is the [becoming] born; for the life of purity is lived now: „No longer this state of [being subdue to] becoming³⁴!“:This is realized now!“.

Then, of course, the question arises, how to determine the length of such a mind-moment. According to the reports of his teachings, Buddha Śākyamuni did not present a definite answer. But this is, in using solely the epistemological way of speaking, hard to do:³⁵

32 Since the concept „perception“ is directed mainly to the *outer* appearances, S: „saṃjñā“ is translated here more literally by „distinguishing“.

Of course, S: „jñā“ is etymologically related to L: „co-gnoscere“ and therefore also to E: „know“.

33 Among the mental *powers* which are *forming* the mind are by far not only the volitional ones; and the same holds for the *results* of these powers when working, those results - the *formations* - being seen then with one's *inner* eye.

34 We understand S: „bhāva“ in the *passive* sense of *suffering*, and furthermore in a *non-static* sense.

35 See AN I.9.

„[At some occasion the Bhagavan said:] „Bhikṣus! I do not know anything else that changes so quickly as the mind; and it seems hard to find a simile for this extremely fast changing of the mind!“.

Short sequences of such mind-moments - i.e. of such momentary states of the mind - are comparable with the period of snapping one's fingers:³⁶

„[At some occasion the Bhagavan said:] „Bhikṣus! If a Bhikṣu cultivates states of goodness of heart, even if this is only for the short time span it takes to snap one's fingers, if he expands this goodness and thinks about it, then he can claim to be someone who does not practice immersion in vain, because he follows his master's directions and acts according to his instructions; and he therefore does not consume the alms of the country in an unworthy way. Hence, what should be said about those who cultivate this state often?!“.

The commentaries determine the length of such a momentary state of the mind as being about the 65th part of the duration of snapping the fingers by a strong adult man. In trying to measure this length, I received values mainly between about 15 and 17 millionth seconds.³⁷ In fact, I have no idea how such a short value was found in those ancient ages ; but obviously, it was determined by some empirical methods.³⁸

The *person* - the *pudgala* - is regarded as the coincidence and co-operation of its continuity of the mental states and its continuity of the subtler as well as the grosser physical energies, whereby the continuity of the grosser

36 See AN I.12.

37 See Essler-Mamat (VFPhil) 2007 /xy.

38 See Essler-Mamat (VFPhil) 2007 /xy.

Because of „about 65“, this value was obviously obtained by *empirical* means unknown to us, but *not* by *mystical* means, where then we would have to read, e.g. „exactly 60“.

body - of the grosser physical energies - are observable by our sense organs as form. The mind, on the other side, is distinguished according to its functioning into its consciousness - being regarded as the mind's central part - and into the accompanying powers of the mind. Among these powers the power of feeling in connection with the five outer senses and the inner sense as well as the power of distinguishing among those six kinds of what is felt are distinguished, both in co-operation with the powers of volition, of contacting, and of attention. The rest of these powers is regarded as powers of formations of the mind, esp. of its formation to unwholesome or to neutral or to wholesome states.³⁹

The continuity of *mental* states is thereby - being reformulated in terms of modern systems theory - regarded as a *closed* system of states, where the resp. present state is causally established by its immediately preceding one. The continuity of *physical* states, however, is surely regarded as an *open* system, being in permanent interaction with its surroundings. Hereby, the subtler physical energies are working together with the mental states, and the grosser physical energies are working together with theses subtler ones, as long as this present life remains. For as soon as these two bodies of energies are breaking up after death, the end of the person has happened.

In order to identify a person - i.e. to distinguish that person from the rest of the appearance - a *concept* is needed, a *nāma*, i.e.: a *name associated with an object-constituting idea*. This name may be a proper name, like „Willy Essler“, or a pronoun, like „I“; this name may be an expression of outer speech, like French, or of inner speech,

³⁹In keeping in mind the explanations of (Rabten) and (Gonsar), traces of this sight may already be found within the Śrāvākayāna-texts.

being then the language of the own thoughts. Inasmuch as the user of an inner or outer language possesses concepts for individuals he is able to identify them and to establish them in that way as members of his world:⁴⁰

„Thus I have heard: On one occasion the Bhagavan was dwelling at Śrāvastī in the victor's grove in Anāthapiṇḍada's park. At one of these days, the Venerable Śāriputra addressed to the Bhikṣus thus: „Brethren Bhikṣus!"; and they replied: „Brother!". Then he continued:

„Brethren! (...) What are the five groups affected by thirsting? They are: the form-group affected by thirsting, the feeling-group affected by thirsting, the distinguishing-group affected by thirsting, the formations-group affected by thirsting, the consciousness-group affected by thirsting.

And what is the form-group affected by thirsting? It consists of the four great elements and the form [accompanied with] these four great elements, which are: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the air element. (...)

Brethren! Just as when a space is enclosed by timber and creepers, grass and clay, it then comes to be termed „house“, so too when a space is enclosed by bones and sinews, flesh and skin, it then comes to be termed „form“.

If internally the eye is intact but no external forms come into its range, [be thereby or] be thereby no corresponding turning-towards⁴¹, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness; and the same holds internally for ear and external sounds, internally for

40 See MN 28.

41 P: „tājjo samannāhāro“ is translated here by „turning towards“, regarding thereby *turning towards* as consisting of *volition-contact-attention*, which – together with *feeling* and *distinguishing* – constitute the *epistemological* content of „nāma“, understood within this – *not merely semantical*, but furthermore – *epistemological* context as: *the ability to apply concepts*, i.e. to apply the idea associated with the resp. name.

nose and external smells, internally for tongue and external flavours, internally for mentality and external given facts⁴². If internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range, where thereby is no corresponding turning-towards, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness; and the same holds internally for ear and external sounds, internally for nose and external smells, internally for tongue and external flavours, internally for mentality and external given facts. But when internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range, where thereby is a corresponding turning-towards, then there is a manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness; and the same holds internally for ear and external sounds, internally for nose and external smells, internally for tongue and external flavours, internally for mentality and external given facts.

The form in what has thus come to be is included in the form-group affected by clinging. The feeling in what has thus come to be is included in the feeling-group affected by clinging. The distinguishing in what has thus come to be is included in the distinguishing-group affected by clinging. The formations in what has thus come to be is included in the formations-group affected by clinging. The consciousness in what has thus come to be is included in the consciousness-group affected by clinging.

[Regarding this, the bhikṣu] understands thus: „This, indeed, is how there comes to be the inclusion-gathering-amassing of things into these five groups affected by clinging. But it has been said by the Bhagavan: „A man who sees the origination through previous ones sees the connections⁴³; and a man who sees the connections sees

42 The expression S: „dharma“ is translated in such contexts of enumerations of the six outer bases not by „connections [of facts given to the mind]“ but by „facts [given to the mind]“.

43 In this way S: „dharma“ is translated here.

the origination through previous ones.”; and these five groups affected by clinging are arisen through previous ones. Now, the desire, indulgence, inclination, and holding based on these five groups affected by clinging, this is the origin of suffering. However, the removal and abandonment of desire and lust for these five groups affected by clinging is the cessation of suffering!”

At that point, brethren, much has been done by that bhikṣu!”

That's what the Venerable Śāriputra said; and the bhikṣus were satisfied and delighted by his words.”

In the sense of Buddha Śākyamuni, the central part of a person is his mind. Therefore, the connected continuity of mind and body is causally determined by the continuity of its mind. This continuity is thereby seen in Lewin's sense of *gene-identity*, i.e. *without firm existence*, and *without definite non-existence*, in epistemological terms: *without identity*, and *without diversity*. But if the person – this connected continuity – were determined by its body, then problems of identifying this person might arise, especially in cases of organ transplantations; and such problems may turn out to be similar to that which was discussed by the philosophers in ancient Athens concerning the ship of Theseos.

With respect to *semantical* aspects, the *nāma* consists of *expression and connected object-constituting idea*. But with respect to *epistemological* aspects, the *nāma* consists of *feeling-distinguishing-volition-contacting-attention*, as was said earlier already. To direct this *nāma* onto a person – be it *oneself* or be it *somebody* else – means therefore, to direct its volition primarily *not* to its *body* but to its *mind*.

Concerning *oneself*, one's own body may become an object of the outer senses, being then recognized by the consciousness as a form; and one's mind may become an

object of the inner sense, namely by reflecting, by looking back with one's inner eye, by obtaining thereby an epistemic meta-level, by applying *pratyavekṣaṇa*. Concerning *another person*, oneself is able to observe his body only but not his mind. Nevertheless, such an *other person* is distinguished from a *non-personal object* by firmly supporting a person to have mind but a non-personal object to have no mind. This distinction, made by the consciousness assisted by the *nāma*, establishes the *objects* of one's world and constitutes thereby and further on one's own *world*:⁴⁴

„[In that sense the Bhagavan answers to a related question:]

„Nāma has weighted down everything;
Nothing is more extensive than *nāma*.
Nāma is the one thing that has
All under its control.““

„[The Bhagavan answers to a related question:]

„The world is lead around by mind;
By mind it's dragged here and there.
Mind is the one thing that has
All under its control.““

„[The Bhagavan answers to a related question:]

„The world is lead around by thirsting;
By thirsting it's dragged here and there.
Thirsting is the one thing that has
All under its control.““

The firm underlying supposition that the world *is* as well as that oneself *is* – so that it were right to speak „I am“ – , this is a *false* knowledge, an *unknowledge*, an *ignorance*, an *avidyā*; and this false knowledge arises by thirsting and therefore by clinging to what the six outer and inner sense organs obtain as the six kinds of appearances and what is

⁴⁴ See SN 1.61, SN 1.62, SN 1.63.

brought by them afterwards to the six kinds of consciousness, who recognises them as six kinds of feelings:⁴⁵

„[In this sense, the Bhagavan answers to a related question:]

„In six has the world arisen;
In six it forms intimacy;
By clinging to six the world
Is harassed with regards to six.““

Hereby, four kinds of clingings are to be distinguished: clinging to sensual pleasure, clinging to views, clinging to rules and observations, clinging to a doctrine of self.⁴⁶ In fact, clinging is born by previous thirsting which arises by previous feeling.

This clinging to the doctrine of self is dominating a person's mind as long as he is maintaining the misconception „I am“:⁴⁷

„[*Thus I have heard*: On an occasion the Bhagavan was dwelling] at Śrāvastī. On one of these days he taught the kinds of wrong views: „Bhikṣus! Those śramins and brāhmins who regard [anything as] self in various ways all regard [as self] all of the five groups subject to clinging or a certain one of them. What five groups?

Here the uninstructed one among the plenties (...) regards form as self, or self as possessing form, or form as in self, or self as in form. He regards feeling as self, or self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling. He regards distinguishing as self, or self as possessing distinguishing, or distinguishing as in self, or self as in distinguishing. He regards formations as self, or self as possessing formations, or formations as in self, or self as in

45 See SN 1.70.

46 See MN 9 and SN 12.2.

47 See SN 22.47.

formations. He regards consciousness as self, or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness.

Thus this way of regarding things and [the conception] „I am“ have not vanished in him. As [the conception] „I am“ has not vanished, there takes place a descent of the five faculties [born of ignorance], i.e. the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, the body faculty.]And in addition,] there is the mind and what is given to the mind⁴⁸ at the [level] of ignorance.

When the uninstructed one among the plenties is contacted by a feeling born of ignorance-contact⁴⁹, [the conception] „I am“ occurs to him; [and, as a consequence,] „I am this“, „I will be“, „I will not be“, „I will consist of form“, „I will consist formless“, „I will be distinguishing“, „I will be nondistinguishing“, „I will be neither distinguishing nor nondistinguishing“, [conceptions of] that kind occur to him.

These five faculties remain right there; but in regard of them the instructed noble disciple abandons ignorance and arouses [perfect insight]. With the fading away of ignorance and the arising of [perfect insight, the conception] „I am“ does no [longer] occur to him; [and, as a consequence,] „I am this“, „I will be“, „I will not be“, „I will consist of form“, „I will consist formless“, „I will be distinguishing“, „I will be nondistinguishing“, „I will be neither distinguishing nor nondistinguishing“, [conceptions of] that kind do no [longer] occur to him!“.

But, of course, *someone* who became completely and definitely free from being knotted to this sixfold triple, for *him* it is no more possible to be fettered again when using the expression „I“ in the world's parlance. For views like

48 We translate here S: „dharma“ by „[something] given to the mind“.

49 Contact is born by *coming-together* of (1) sense faculty, (2) sense object, (3) related consciousness. See e.g. MN /xy.

Yājñavalkya's doctrine concerning „ātman“ or Kant's doctrine concerning „I am“ will than no longer arise in his consciousness:⁵⁰

[In this sense, the Bhagavan answers to a related question:]

„No knots exist for one with conceit abandoned;

For him all knots of conceit are consumed.

Though the wise one has transcended the conceived,

He still might say: „I speak“;

He might say too: „They speak to me“.

Skillfull, knowing the plenties' parlance,

He uses such terms as mere expressions.“.“

Using the expressions of his language in the plenties' parlance - i.e. in the conventional manner -, they then may be used to find and to communicate connections - not between different entities but - between states, especially causal connections concerning the continuity of beings, being thus connections - not concerning their identity which does not exist but - between gene-identical states of what is called in the plenties' parlance „[sentient] being“; there is neither a strict identity nor a strict diversity:⁵¹

„[At some occasion the Bhagavan said:] „Owners and heirs of their actions are the beings!“ . (...)“

For that one who performed an action - be it an internal action, i.e. an action of mind or an action of inner speech, or be it an outer action, i.e. an action of outer speech or an action of body - is at *this* time of acting, according to that strict sense, *different* from that one who lateron will reap the results of such an acting: Some later states of the continuity of the acting one is the heir of the reactions of the former actions: There is no firm substance maintaining

⁵⁰See SN 1.25.

⁵¹See MN /xy.

such a strict identity; but there is the gen-identity maintaining the rememberances of former actions of that gene-identical one and reaping the results of those actions.

According to some actio-reactio-principle, a certain kind of reaction to the performance of an action always happens immediately, comparable to the recoil when shooting a bullet with a gun:⁵² Every single inner as well as outer action causes - of course: non-consciously - at the immediately following mind-moment an imprint on the most subtle level of the consciousness; and such a memory-like imprint is causally reprinted from mind-moment to mind-moment, whereby no entropy works and whereby therefore no half-life happens to that temporal sequence of imprints.

In addition, the long-run effect of an inner action consists in its inviting to repeat actions of this kind; and repeating such actions sufficiently often, causes traces at the grosser levels of the consciousness. The long-run effect of an outer action consists in corresponding counter-actions of one's surrounding; and also in this case, repeating leads to learning. In this way, someone may learn something which is unhealthy, like hurting other beings; or he may learn something which is ethically neutral, like learning one of the languages of the American Indigenas; or he may learn something which is healthy, like protecting beings from being hurted by somebody.

Whatever kind of action someone is performing, there is no god who will punish him, or who will disregard him, or who will reward him; but some state of the continuity of him - i.e. of that continuity called by me then „he“ - will

⁵² Comprehensive teachings concerning mind, mind-moment, and imprint at the most subtle level of the consciousness, and related topics of the Bodhisattvayāna philosophy of mind may be found esp. In: Rabten /xy, and Gonsar (VFPhil) (forthcoming) /xy. See also Essler-Mamat (WBG) 2006 /xy.

Within the Śrāvakayāna-texts, only traces of Bodhisattvayāna-views concerning the mind are to be found.

sometime later on reap the results of the actions of the former state of this continuity, whether or not that later state of it is similar to the former one: Owners and heirs of their actions are the beings!

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Bhikṣu

Śramaṇa

Brāhmaṇa

Śrāvastī

Anāthapiṇḍada