

Nibbana and Abhidhamma

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NIBBANA AND ABHIDHAMMA

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The nature of nibbana in the teaching of the Buddha was already a subject in ancient times. More recently it has been much debated both in modern Western scholarship and also in more traditional Buddhist circles¹. One issue which has recently been a focus for discussion is the ontological status of nibbana. Is it some kind of metaphysical absolute? Or is better seen as the mere cessation of suffering or even as a total ending of existence?

In the nikayas

A definitive answer to this question cannot easily be found on the basis of the nikayas material. Some passages would seem to suggest that nibbana refers initially to the destruction of defilements at the attainment of enlightenment but ultimately more particularly to the consequent extinction of the aggregates making up the mind and body complex at the time of death. Other passages can be used in support of the belief that nibbana is some kind of absolute reality. Nevertheless it is evident that most relevant contexts in the Sutta-pitaka are so worded as to avoid any commitment on this issue. This is clearly intentional.

Such a manner of proceeding has many parallels in early Buddhist thought. The most well-known example is probably the ten unanswered questions of Malunkya-putta, but some

other questions are treated in the same way in the suttas². The accompanying passages make it quite clear that the main reason for not answering these kinds of question is because they 'are not connected with the spirit, not connected with the letter, not belonging to beginning the holy life, (they) conduce neither to turning away, nor to passionlessness, nor to cessation nor to peace nor to higher knowledge nor to full awakening nor to nibbana'. This of course is illustrated with the parable of the arrow which strongly suggests that answering such questions would only give rise to endless further questions. The attempt to answer them would take up too much time and distract from the urgent need to follow the path towards the goal.

Some scholars, notable K.N.Jayatilleke, have suggested that this was partly because no meaningful answer was possible. There may be something in this, but the texts do not seem to go quite so far. More emphasis is laid on the need to avoid one-sided views, particularly externalism and annihilation. Acceptance of such ways of seeing things would become fertile soil for various kinds of craving which would themselves lead to further or more fixed views, thus creating or rather furthering the vicious circle of unhealthy mentality. Clearly this would defeat the very purpose of the Buddha's teaching. The Buddhist tradition is very emphatic that Buddhas only teach what is conducive to the goal.

This is perhaps worth spelling out in a little more detail. If body and soul (*jiva*) are one and the same, then physical death entails annihilation of the individual. If however they are distinct (and unrelated?), then death does not necessarily entail individual extinction and personal immortality might be

inferred. These views are not necessarily wrong. They are however partial and misleading: exclusive adherence to them will lead to trouble. The Buddha's simile of the blind men and the elephant (SN-a 529) illustrates this perfectly. Each blind man correctly recounted his experience of some part of the elephant. Unfortunately each one wrongly generalized his experience and insisted on its unique validity. In the end they came to blows! In fact the elephant was much more than partial experience led each blind man to suppose.

Similarly in the brahmajalasutta the majority of wrong views are based upon genuine meditation experience and knowledge, but this has been incorrectly interpreted and dogmatically asserted: 'this is truth, all else is foolishness'. Only a minority of views are the products of reasoning. Without a basis in experience this too can only lead to obsession. If the existence or non-existence of the Tathagata were declared to exist after death, then the Buddhist goal is some kind of immortality. Such a view would lead to some form of craving for renewed existence – the very thing to be abandoned. If on the other hand the Tathagata were stated to be non-existent after death, then either craving for non-existence – yet another obstacle – would arise or the motivation to follow the path would be eroded.

The Buddha's silence makes very good sense in this light provided that is that the immense strength of these two types of viewpoint and their associated craving is recognised. For the Buddhist they are understood as pervading and distorting in one direction or the other all our normal modes of thought. Provided also that the path set forth by the Buddha is seen not so much as an alternative way of salvation comparable to

others but more as a deliberate attempt to reduce the spiritual life to its bare essentials and to trim away everything redundant. The Buddha therefore teaches only what is necessary without making any attempt to satisfy intellectual curiosity where this would not be profitable. So it is emphasised that the Tathagata does not teach things which are true but serve no useful purpose or may even create obstacles for the hearer.

The account of nibbana given in the nikayas is clear and cogent. Much can be said in praise of nibbana to encourage the seeker, especially if it is in the form of simile or metaphor. Such we find frequently. But there must be nothing so concrete as to encourage attachment or dogmatic convictions. Beyond this the Buddha did not wish to go. The nikayas never depart wholly from this position. Passages which can be used to support a 'metaphysical' interpretation do not do so unambiguously. Nor is nibbana ever unequivocally depicted as total annihilation. What we find are hints and suggestions, but never enough to undermine the fundamental aim.

The apparent ambiguity is not carelessness or inconsistency. It is not that 'the ancient Buddhist tradition was not clear on the nature of Nirvana'.³ Rather it was quite clear that it did not wish us to be too clear! Nor is it that 'Nirvana had several meanings, and...was variously interpreted'.⁴ Such a view does not see the interconnectedness and internal consistency of the Buddhist dhamma. The apparent ambivalence here arises centrally by the force of the dialectic of early Buddhism. If that dialectic is understood, the ambigui-

ties and silences appear profoundly integral to Buddha's message of salvation.

Nibbana in the Abhidhamma-pitaka

Whereas the sutta material on the subject of nibbana is often cited and has been the source of much controversy, it does not appear that abhidhamma material is so well-known. There may then be some value in drawing attention to certain aspects. The abhidhamma position is already clearly formulated in the Dhammasangani (Dhs), the first and no doubt oldest work in the Abhidhamma-pitaka.⁵ The term nibbana is not used in the main body of Dhs which prefers the expression *asankhata dhatu*. This is usually translated as 'unconditioned element'. i.e. that which is not produced by any cause or condition. Presumably this would mean 'that which is independent of relatedness'.

This interpretation of the term is supported by the *Nikkhepkanda*, in which the Matika couplet – *sankhata/asankhata* – is explained as equivalent to the previous couplet – *sappaccaya/appaccaya*, i.e. conditioned/unconditioned.⁶ The first term in each case is explained as referring to the five aggregates. So for Dhs the unconditioned element is different to the five aggregates. From this point of view something *sankhata* exists in relation to other things as part of a complex of mutually dependent phenomena.

The use of the term *asankhata dhatu* probably derives from the Bahudhatukasutta⁷, where it is one of a series of explanations as to how a monk is *dhatukusala*. Dhatu usually translated by 'element' seems always to refer to a distinct sphere of experience: visible object is experientially distinct from auditory object, from organ of sight, from consciousness of sight, etc.; earth is distinct from water, etc.; pleasant bodily feeling from unpleasant bodily feeling, etc.; sense-desire from aversion, etc.; sense-objects from form or the formless. Likewise the unconditioned and the conditioned are quite distinct as objects of experience. Usually the analysis into *dhatu* is intended to facilitate insight into non-self. Presumably the purpose here is to distinguish conceptually the unconditioned element of enlightened experience in order to clarify retrospective understanding of the fruit attainment (*phala-samapatti*).

Asankhata occurs occasionally on its own in the nikayas. The most conspicuous occasion is in the *Asankhata-samyutta* (S,IV, 359-68), where it is defined as the destruction of passion, hatred and delusion. In this context it is clearly applied to the Third Noble Truth. In the Anguttara-nikaya (I, 152) the three unconditioned characteristics of the unconditioned are that 'arising is not known, ceasing is not known, alteration of what is present is not known'. These are opposed to equivalent characteristics of the conditioned. In the Culavedallasutta of the Majjhima-nikaya (i, 300) the Noble Eightfold Path is declared to be conditioned. In the Anguttara-nikaya (II, 34) the path is called the highest of conditioned dhammas, but nibbana plus synonyms) is declared to be the high-

est when conditioned and unconditioned things are taken together.

It is, however, the verbal form corresponding to the much more frequent *sankhara*. A *sankhara* is an activity which enables something to come into existence or to maintain its existence – it fashions or forms things. So something which is *sankhara* has been fashioned or formed by such an activity, especially by volition. The reference is of course to the second link in the chain of Conditioned Co-origination. The succeeding links refer to that which is *sankhara*, i.e. fashioned by volitional activity (from this or a previous life). Since this amounts to the five aggregates, the whole mind-body complex, it is virtually equivalent to the meanings given above.

The Nikkhepa-kanda (Dhs 180-234) gives a surprising amount of information about nibbana in its explanation of the Matika. Before setting this out, it may be helpful to point out that the twenty two triplets which commence the Matika embody a definite conceptual order. The first five clearly concern the process of rebirth and the law of *kamma*. Then follow two connected with *jhana*, after which are nine triplets concerning the path (*magga*). The final six seem to relate especially to nibbana. This is not accidental. The intention is certainly to indicate an ascending order. This is perhaps more clear if set out in full, but in the present context I will confine myself to tabulating the information given concerning the unconditioned element only in the Nikkhepa-kanda expansion of the triplets. Listed in numerical order.

ASANKHATA DHATU and the ABHIDHAMMA TRIPLETS

- 1.** is indeterminate;
i.e. not classifiable as skillful or unskillful action. Here it is taken with purely resultant mental activity, with *kiriya* action particularly that of the arahant who does what the situation requires and with all matter.
- 2.** is not classified as linked (*sampayutta*) with feeling; i.e. not in the intimate connection with feeling which applies to mind. Here it is taken with feeling itself and with matter.
- 3.** is neither resultant nor giving results;
Here it is taken with *kiriya* action and matter.
- 4.** has not been taken possession of and is not susceptible of being taken possession of;
i.e. it is not due to upadana in the past nor can it be the object of upadana in the present – the reference is of course to Dependent Origination. Here it is taken with the Paths and Fruits.
- 5.** is not tormented and not connected with torment;
i.e. not associated with sankileasa nor able to lead to such association in the future. Here again it is taken with the Paths and Fruits.
- 6.** is not with vitakka and vicara;
i.e. not in the close association with these activities which applies to mind. Here it is taken with matter, the mentality of the higher jhanas and pure sense consciousness.

7. is not classified as associated with joy, happiness or equipoise;

i.e. not in the close connection with one or other of these which applies to the mind of the jhanas, paths or fruits. Here it is taken with matter, some feeling, painful tactile consciousness and aversion consciousness.

8. is not to be abandoned either by seeing or by practice;

i.e. not eliminated by one of the four paths. Here it is taken with everything which is not unskilful including matter.

9. is not connected with roots to be abandoned by seeing or by practice;

i.e. similar to the preceding triplet.

10. leads neither to accumulation nor dispersal;

i.e. does not take part in any kind of kamma activity whether skilful or unskilful not even the dispersive activity of the four paths. Here it is taken with resultant mental activity, kiriya action and matter.

11. is neither under training nor trained;

i.e. distinct from supermundane consciousness. Here it is taken with matter and all mentality in the three levels.

12. is immeasurable

i.e. superior both to the very limited mind and matter of the sense spheres and to the less restricted mind of the form and formless levels. Here it is taken with supermundane consciousness.

13. is not classified as having a small object, one which has become great or one which is immeasurable;

i.e. the unconditioned element does not require any object (arammana) in contrast to mentality which requires an object in order to come into being. Here it is taken with matter.

14. is refined;

i.e. superior both to the inferior mentality associated with unskilfulness and to the medium quality of the remaining aggregates in the three levels. Here it is taken with supermundane consciousness.

15. is without fixed destiny;

i.e. does not involve a definite kamma result. Here it is taken with everything except the four paths and certain kinds of unskilfulness.

16. is not classified as having the path as object, as connected with path roots or as having the path as overlord;

i.e. does not have an object. Here it is taken especially with matter.

17. is not classified as arisen, not arisen, going to arise;

i.e. classification in these terms is inappropriate for the unconditioned element which cannot be viewed in such terms – it is non-spatial. Here it is classified on its own.

18. is not classified as past, future or present;

i.e. it is non-temporal. Here again it is classified on its own.

19. is not classified as having past, future or present objects;

i.e. it does not have an object. Here it is taken with matter.

20. is not classified as within, without or both;

i.e. it is not kamma-born. However the Atthakatha-kanda of the DHS, which gives further comment on the Matika, traditionally attributed to Sariputta, adds here that nibbana and inanimate matter (*anindriya baddharupa*) are without whereas all other dhammas may be within or without or both. Probably it is following Vibh. 115 which classifies the Third Truth as without. The difference is perhaps due to ambiguity in the terminology. Without can be taken in two ways: (a) without – the within of other people; (b) without – everything which is not within. Nibbana cannot be ‘within’ as it is not kamma-born.

21. is not classified as having an object which is within or without or both;

i.e. it does not have an object. Here it is taken with matter.

22. cannot be pointed out and does not offer resistance;

i.e. it is quite different to most matter and by implication can only be known by mind. Here it is taken with mentality and some very subtle matter.

In general the Matika couplets do not add much to our understanding of nibbana. One point however is worth noting. The first three couplets of the Mahatara-duka are merely a different arrangement of the four fundamentals of the later abhidhamma: *citta*, *cetasika*, *rupa* and *nibbana*, Taking this

in conjunction with the explanation of the triplets summarized above, we can say that the Dhammasangani makes very clear that the unconditioned element is quite different to the five aggregates – at least as different from the aggregates as their constituents are from one another.

The unconditioned is not matter, although like matter it is inactive from a *kammic* point of view and does not depend upon an object as a reference point. It is not any kind of mental event or activity nor is it the consciousness which is aware of mind and matter, although it can be compared in certain respects with the mentality of the paths and fruits. The Dhammasangani often classifies paths, fruits and the unconditioned together as ‘the unincluded (*apariyapanna*)’, i.e. not included in the three levels. Later tradition refers to this as the nine supramundane dhammas. The unincluded consciousness, unincluded mental activities and unconditioned element are alike in that they are not able to associate with *upadana* or with any kind of torment (*kilesa*), they are all ‘immeasurable’ and they are all ‘refined’. The unconditioned element is unique in that it is not classifiable in terms of arising or as past, present or future. Suggestively, however, it may be reckoned as *nama* rather than *rupa*.⁸ This does seem to suggest some element of underlying idealism of the kind which emerges later in the Vijñānavāda.

In other Abhidhamma works

The description given in the Dhammasangani is followed very closely in later canonical abhidhamma texts. The Vibhanga, for example, gives the identical account in its treatment of the truths, taking the third truth as equivalent to the unconditioned element.⁹ The Dhatukatha does likewise.¹⁰ Some of this material can also be found in the Patthana which sometimes deals with nibbana as an object condition. The patisambhida-magga, which contains much abhidhammic material although not formally in the Abhidhammapitaka, also treats the third truth as unconditioned. Equally, however, it emphasises the unity of the truths: 'In four ways the four truths require one penetration: in the sense of being thus, in the sense of being not self, in the sense of being truth, in the sense of penetration. In these four ways the four truths are grouped as one. What is grouped as one is unity. A unity is penetrated by one knowledge – in this way the four truths require one penetration'.¹¹

The four ways are each expanded. One example may suffice: 'How do the four truths require one penetration? What is impermanent is suffering. What is impermanent and suffering is not self. What is impermanent and suffering and not self and thus is truth. What is impermanent and suffering and not self and thus and truth is grouped as one. What is grouped as one is a unity. A unity is penetrated by one knowledge – in this way the four truths require one penetration.'

This of course is the characteristic teaching of the Theravada school that the penetration of the truths in the path

moments occurs as a single breakthrough to knowledge (ekabhisamaya) and not by separate intuitions of each truth¹², but the fullest account occurs in the Petakopadesa¹³ which gives similes to illustrate simultaneous knowledge of the four truths. One of these is the simile of the rising sun: 'Or just as the sun when rising accomplishes four tasks at one time without (any of them being) before or after – it dispels darkness, it makes light appear, it makes visible material objects and it overcomes cold, in exactly the same way calm and insight when occurring coupled together perform four tasks at one time in one moment in one consciousness – they break through to knowledge of suffering with a breakthrough by comprehending (the aggregates), they break through to knowledge of arising with a breakthrough by abandoning (the defilements), they break through to knowledge of cessation with a breakthrough by realizing (direct experience of nibbana), they break through to knowledge of path with a breakthrough by developing.'

At first sight this runs counter to the characteristic Theravadin emphasis on the distinctiveness and uniqueness of nibbana as the only *asankhata* dhamma. This is most clear in the kathavatthu although obviously present elsewhere.¹⁴ Here a series of possible candidates for additional unconditioned dhammas are presented and rejected. What is interesting is the argument used. Essentially the point is made that this would infringe upon the unity of nibbana. The idea of a plurality of nibbanas is then rejected because it would involve either a distinction of quality between them or some kind of boundary or dividing line between them. Andre Bareau finds some difficulty in understanding this as it in-

volves conceiving nibbana as a place and he rightly finds this surprising.¹⁵ However, the argument is more subtle than he allows. What is being put forward is reduction and absurdum. The argument may be expressed as follows: the unconditioned is by definition not in any temporal or spatial relation to anything. Qualitatively it is superior to everything. If then two unconditions are posited, two refutations are possible. Firstly, either only one of them is superior to everything and the other inferior to that one or both are identical in quality. Obviously if one is superior then only that one is unconditioned. Secondly, for there to be two unconditions, there must be some dividing line or distinguished feature. If there is, then neither would be unconditioned since such a decision or dividing line would automatically bring both into the relative realm of the conditioned. Of course if there is no distinguishing feature and they are identical in quality, it is ridiculous to talk of two unconditions.

One thing is clear, both in their interpretation of the nature of the unconditioned and in their understanding of the nature of knowledge of the four truths the Theravadin abhidhamma opts for a far more unitive view than the Sarvastivadin. This is certainly due to what bareau calls 'la tendance mystique des Theravadin'.¹⁶ We may say that the Theravadin abhidhammas retained a closer relationship to their original foundation of meditative experience.

A unitary view of the truths has been interpreted in term of 'sudded enlightenment', but it has not often been noticed that it involves a rather different view of the relationship between nibbana and the world. This is significant. The view of nibbana set forth in the Dhammasangani appears to be in

other respects common to the ancient schools of abhidhamma. The Sarvastivadin prakaranapada, for example, has much of the same material;¹⁷ It seems clear that although lists of unconditioned dharmas varied among the schools to some extent, they were all agreed that there were unconditioned dharmas and that the unconditioned dharma(s) were not the mere absence of the conditioned. Only the Sautrantikas and allied groups disputed this last point. It seems clear that their position is a later development based upon a fresh look at the Sutra literature among groups which did not accord the status of authentic word of the Buddha to the abhidharma literature.

The Dhammasangani account is perhaps the earliest surviving abhidhammic description of nibbana. It is certainly representative of the earlier stages of the abhidhamma phase of Buddhist literature. Of course some of the nikaya passages cited above appear to suggest a very similar position. Very likely some of these were utilized in the composition of the Dhammasangani, but this is not certain. At all events both are products of a single direction of development giving rise to the abhidhamma. We may suggest that this represents a slightly more monist conception of nibbana as against the silence of most of the suttas. Nevertheless such a position was at least implicit from the beginning.

J.R.Carter has drawn attention to the frequent commentarial identification of the word dhamma as *catusaccadhamma* (dhamma of the four truths) and *navavidha lokuttara dhamma* (ninefold supramundane dhamma).¹⁸ Here again a close relationship between nibbana and the five aggregates or between nibbana and supramundane mentality is implicit.

What emerges from this is a different kind of model to those often given in Western accounts of Buddhism which seem to suggest that one has to somehow leave *samsara* in order to come to nibbana. Such language is peculiar in relation to a reality which is neither spatial nor temporal. No place or time can nearer to or further from the unconditioned.

It can perhaps be said that the supramundane mentality is somehow more like nibbana than anything else. Compare, for example, the simile of Sakka in the Maha-Govinda-suttanta: 'Just as the water of the Ganges flows together and comes together with the water of the Yamuna, even so because the path has been well laid down for disciples by the Lord, it is a path which goes to nibbana, both nibbana and path flow together.'¹⁹ Nevertheless nibbana is not somewhere else. It is 'to be known within by the wise'.²⁰ 'In this fathom-long sentient body is the world, its arising, its ceasing and the way leading thereto.'²¹

Bareau has shown²² that the Theravadin abhidhamma retains an earlier usage of the term *asankhata* as uniquely referring to nibbana. The other abhidhamma schools are in this respect more developed and multiply the number of unconditioned dharmas. Inevitably this tended to devalue the term, so much so that the Mahayana tends to reject its application to the ultimate truth. Bareau is surely right to suggest that there is a certain similarity between the original unconditioned and the emptiness of the Madhyamika. To a certain extent the Mahayana reaction is a return to the original position if not completely so.

A similar situation occurs with the peculiarly Theravadin position of a single breakthrough to knowledge.²³ So far as I know, it has not been pointed out how much nearer this is to the position of the early Mahayana than to the Vaibhasika viewpoint. The Theravadin does not reify dhammas to anything like the extent found in the Sarvastivadin abhidharma. Nor does it separate *samsara* and nibbana as dualistic opposites: knowledge of *dukkha* i.e. *samsara* and knowledge of its cessation i.e. nibbana are one knowledge at the time of the breakthrough to knowing dhamma.

To summarize the kind of evolution suggested here: we may say that the main force of the nikayas is to discount speculation about nibbana. It is the *summum bonum*. To seek to know more is to manufacture obstacles. Beyond this only a few passages go. No certain account of ontological status of nibbana can be derived from the nikayas. It cannot even be shown with certainty that a single view was held. By the time of the early abhidhamma the situation is much clearer. The whole Buddhist tradition is agreed that nibbana is the unconditioned dhamma, neither temporal nor spatial, neither mind (in its usual form) nor matter, but certainly not the mere absence or cessation of other dhammas. The uniformity of this position into the nikayas and even for suggesting that it represents the true underlying position of the sutas.

In North India where the Sarvastivadin abhidharma eventually established a commanding position, the term dharma came to be interpreted as a 'reality' and given some kind of ontological status as part of a process of reification of Buddhist terms. Nirvana then tends to become a metaphysical

'other', one among a number of realities. In the South, at least among the Theravadins, dhamma retains its older meaning of a less reified, more experiential kind. It is a fact of experience as an aspect of the saving truth taught by the Buddha, but not a separately existing reality 'somewhere else'.

So the four truths are dhamma. Broken up into many separate pieces they are still dhamma. As separate pieces they exist only as parts of a complex net of relations apart from which they cannot occur at all. This is samsara. Nibbana alone does not exist as a part of a network. Not being of temporal or spatial nature it cannot be related to that which is temporal or spatial – not even by the relation of negation! Nevertheless it is not somewhere else. Samsara is much more like a house built on cards than a solid construction. Only ignorance prevents the collapse of its appearance of solidity. With knowledge nibbana is as it were seen where before only an illusory reality could be seen.

¹ I am indebted to Ven.Ananda Maitreya for a fascinating verbal account of some controversies on this topic in Ceylon. Refernces in E.Lamotte *Histoire du bouddhism indien*, Louvain 1958, p43, n57. A survey of some earlier Western scholarship in G.R.Welbon *The Buddhist Nirvana and its Western Interpreters*, Chicago 1968 (reviewed by J.W.de Jong in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* I, Dordrecht 1972, pp396-403)

For other views see: K.N.Jayatilleke *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London 1963, pp475-6; D.J.Kalupahana *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Honolulu 1975, e.g. p179; *Buddhist Philosophy: A HISTORICAL Analysis*, Honolulu 1976. P87ff; A.D.P.Kalansuriya 'Two Modern Sinhalese views of nibbana' *Religion* IX,I,London 1979; K.Wewrner *Yoga and Indian Philosophy*, Delhi 1977, p77-81; E.Lamotte *The Teaching et du qotra*, paris 1969 (for the developed

Mahayana); J.W.de Jong, Berkely 1979); Andre Bareau L'Absolu en philosophic bouddhique (Paris 1951) covers some of the same ground as this article in his earlier ections, but my interpretation differs somewhat.

² The ten unanswered questions are put by Malunkyaputta at M I 426ff., by Uttia at A,V 193FF., by Potthapada at D,I187ff. And by Vacchagotta at S, IV 395ff., Four of them are discussed by Sariputta and by unnamed bhikkhu at S, II 222ff. And A, IV 68ff, A much larger ist is treated in the same way at D III 135ff., while a whole section of Samyutta-nikaya (IV 374-403) is devoted to these question. Of course, this kind of expansion and variation is exactly what is to be expected with the mnemonic formulae of an oral tradition. The issue is being looked at from various slightly different angles.

³ Louis de la Vallee Poussin The way to Nirvana, Cambridge 1917 (repr.Delhi 1982), p134

⁴ Edward Washburn Hpkins, cited by Welbon, op.cit., p.238.

⁵ Not only does Dhs have canonical commentary append to it. It is also quite evident that it is presupposed by the other works of the Abhidhamma-pitaka (except Puggala-pannatti). Of course, the material which has been incorporated into the Vibhanga may be older the Dhs. But in its present form its younger.

⁶ Dhs 192-3.

⁷ M III 63 from here it has been included in the lists of the Dasuttarasutta (D III 274)

⁸ Bareau is wrong to suggest that the Vibhanga contradicts this, since the Vibhanga definition of nama is in the context of paticcasamuppada, which automaticall excludes the unconditioned element.

⁹ E.g. Vibh 112-5 404ff.

¹⁰ Dhatuk 9 and passim

¹¹ Patis II 105

¹² Kv chapt. II 9, III 3-4

¹³ Pat 134-5

¹⁴ Kv chap. VI 1-6, XIX 3-5

¹⁵ Berau, op.cit., p31

¹⁶ Ibid., p253

¹⁷ Ibid pp47-61

¹⁸ John Ross Carter Dhamma. Western academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations. A study of a religious concept Tokyo 1978

¹⁹ D II 223

²⁰ D II 93: PTC gives twent-four nikaya references sv akalika

²¹ DS I 62; A II 48-50

²² Op.cit

²³ Closely related schools of Vibhajyavadin group probable adopted the same position, but it was completely rejected by the Pudgalavadin and Sarvastivadin groups. The Mahasamghikas appear to have adopted a compromise (see Berau Les sects bouddhiques du Petit Vehivle, Saigon 1955, p62).