
Going Off the Map: ‘Transcendental Dependent Arising’ in the *Nettipakaraṇa*

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The early Buddhist exegetical text, the *Nettipakaraṇa*, apparently uniquely, describes the stages of the path as ‘transcendental dependent arising’ (*lokuttara paṭicca-samuppāda*), in contrast with the twelve *nidānas*, called ‘worldly dependent arising’ (*lokiya paṭicca-samuppāda*). A close reading of the *Nettipakaraṇa* in relation to another, related, exegetical text, the *Peṭakopadesa*, reveals that the latter interprets the same stages of the path in a different way. More broadly, while the *Peṭakopadesa* takes *paṭicca-samuppāda* to refer only to the twelve *nidānas*, the *Nettipakaraṇa*’s exegetical strategy takes *paṭicca-samuppāda* to refer to an over-arching principle of conditionality, both ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’. This exegesis has proved popular with modern western Buddhist exegetes.

Introduction

Several contemporary Buddhist authors, including Sangharakshita, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ayya Khema and Bhikkhu Brahmali, have taken up the theme of ‘transcendental dependent arising’ (*lokuttara paṭicca-samuppāda*) in order to present the Buddhist path to awakening as an experiential sequence of causally-connected stages.¹ This presentation is based on a canonical text, the *Upanisā Sutta* (Discourse on Preconditions), found in the *Samyutta Nikāya*.² This discourse presents twenty-three

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1. Sangharakshita has not used the phrase ‘transcendental dependent arising’ but the exposition of the ‘spiral path’ of progressive conditionality based on the *Upanisā Sutta* is a centrepiece of his presentation of Buddhist doctrine: see especially *A Survey of Buddhism* ch.1 §14 (originally published in 1957) in Sangharakshita 2018, 114–120; Bhikkhu Bodhi, acknowledging Sangharakshita, uses the expression ‘transcendental dependent arising’ in his 1980 exposition of the *Upanisā Sutta*; the account by Ayya Khema 1991 (republished with a different title in 2014), presumably drawing on Bhikkhu Bodhi, is practical, based on retreat teachings; similarly, the exposition by Bhikkhu Brahmali 2013 is based on a *Dhamma* talk.
 2. S 12: 23 PTS II 29. This discourse has a parallel preserved in Chinese translation in the *Madhyama Āgama*: the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, MĀ 55 (T.1.26 490c–91a), trans. Bingenheimer, Anālayo, and Bucknell 2013 pp.346–349. The parallel shows some interesting differences of detail from the Pāli version,

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phenomena, each the ‘precondition’ (*upanisā*) for the next,³ as follows:

[1] ignorance (*avijjā*) [2] formations (*saṅkhārā*) [3] consciousness (*viññāṇa*) [4] name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*) [5] the six sense spheres (*saḷāyatanā*) [6] contact (*phassa*) [7] feeling (*vedanā*) [8] craving (*tanhā*) [9] appropriation (*upādāna*) [10] continued existence (*bhava*) [11] birth (*jāti*) [12] unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) [13] faith (*saddhā*) [14] gladness (*pāmojja*) [15] joy (*pīti*) [16] relaxation (*passaddhi*) [17] happiness (*sukha*) [18] concentration (*samādhi*) [19] knowing and seeing what is actually the case (*yathābhūta-nānadassana*) [20] disenchantment (*nibbidā*) [21] dispassion (*virāga*) [22] liberation (*vimutti*) [23] knowledge about the ending (of the corruptions) (*khāye nāṇa*).

The identity of the first eleven of these preconditions with the links of dependent arising is of course not meant to be missed, though in the *Upanisā Sutta* the usual [12] ageing-and-death (*jarāmaraṇa*) of dependent arising has been generalised to [12] unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), which then becomes the launching-point for a series of eleven ‘positive’ factors, from [13] faith, to [23] knowledge about ending. There is an elegance in this exposition, since elsewhere in the Pāli discourses ignorance (*avijjā*) is said to arise with the corruptions (*āsavas*) as its condition,⁴ such that in the list of twenty-three links, the achievement of the twenty-third necessitates the end of the first, and thereby by implication the initiation of the cessation of those links by which *dukkha* is said to arise.⁵

The *Upanisā Sutta* does not describe its twenty-three links as ‘dependent arising’, and instead of using the standard language of dependent arising (saying, for instance, that ‘with ignorance as condition, there are formations’ (*avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā*)), it uses the language of preconditions (*upanisā*) (for instance, *avijjūpanisā saṅkhārā*, ‘with ignorance as precondition there are formations’). The exact relationship of the *Upanisā Sutta* with dependent arising is therefore implied rather than explicit. However, some of our modern Buddhist authors, starting from Bhikkhu Bodhi (1980), appeal to a Pāli exegetical text called *Nettipakaraṇa* for the distinction between ‘worldly’ (*lokiya*) and ‘transcendental’ (*lokuttara*) dependent arising. While ‘worldly’ dependent arising refers to the links from ignorance to ageing-and-death, ‘transcendental’ dependent arising refers to the positive links leading to liberation. Therefore, or so we may infer, dependent arising may be regarded as the single structural principle of conditionality, which can be applied to the arising and ceasing of unsatisfactoriness (as in the standard twelve links), or which can be

while the close similarities suggest that the basic principle of joining the links of dependent arising with those of the path goes back to an early stage in Buddhist literature.

3. I explain my translation of *upanisā* as ‘precondition’ in Jones 2019; DOP I 458 s.v. *upanisā* has ‘cause, basis; condition, prerequisite’.
4. M 9 PTS I 54.
5. The version of this discourse at MĀ 55 includes the link of ageing-and-death. This is followed by suffering, upon which as condition is said to arise faith, right attention, right mindfulness and right attentiveness, guarding of the sense faculties, keeping of the precepts and being without regrets. Thence follow the links corresponding to [14] to [22] in the Pāli version. The MĀ version concludes, however, with the attaining of *nirvāṇa*. What this exposition lacks in spare elegance, compared to the Pāli discourse, it gains in completeness and coherence.

applied to the causally-conditioned sequence of stages of the path from suffering to liberation (as in the *Upanisā Sutta*).

Much of the following article will be concerned with a close reading of the *Nettipakaraṇa* and the context for the phrase ‘transcendental dependent arising’. At this point it is necessary only to point out, as a first observation, that the *Nettipakaraṇa* does not discuss the positive links of the *Upanisā Sutta* (of which it appears to be unaware), but instead the positive links as they are listed in two discourses now found in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, called the *Kimatthiya Sutta* (What is the Value Discourse) and the *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta* (Is It Necessary to Be Willful Discourse).⁶ These discourses present a series of positive factors, each arising as the necessary condition for the next, differing slightly from the *Upanisā Sutta*, in that they begin not with faith (*saddhā*) but with virtuous conduct (*sīla*), which is said to be the condition for freedom from remorse (*avippaṭisāra*). While the following factors, from gladness (*pāmojja*) to dispassion (*virāga*) are the same, the discourses in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* also differ in ending with knowing and seeing liberation (*vimutti-nāṇadassana*) instead of the two factors of liberation (*vimutti*) and knowledge about ending (of the corruptions) (*khāye nāṇa*) given in the *Upanisā Sutta*.

Despite these differences between the *Upanisā Sutta* and the two discourses of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* which expound what the *Nettipakaraṇa* calls ‘transcendental dependent arising’, it does not seem very controversial for our contemporary Buddhist authors also to call the positive links of the *Upanisā Sutta* ‘transcendental dependent arising’. Indeed, there are other discourses in the Pāli canon which present alternative or partial version of the series of the same positive links.⁷ In this way ‘transcendental dependent arising’ would appear to suggest a basic principle, exemplified in a variety of mutually illuminating formulae.

Nevertheless, the reference in the *Nettipakaraṇa* to ‘transcendental dependent arising’ is in itself a puzzle. As far as I can tell it is the only reference in the whole of Pāli literature to a form of dependent arising that accounts for the path to awakening.⁸ Even within the class of exegetical literature to which it belongs it is unique; indeed, other exegeses (especially, of the *Kimatthiya Sutta*) of the canonical texts in this literature point to a clear *distinction* of dependent arising (the standard twelve links in arising and cessation sequences) from the path (the stages of which are not described in terms of dependent arising). Through a close examination of the context of the *Nettipakaraṇa*’s single reference to transcendental dependent arising, I will suggest that the *Netti*’s exegesis goes ‘off the map’ in relation to how Buddhist teachings had previously been interpreted. I will conclude by suggesting

6. These discourses are surveyed and discussed in depth by Attwood 2013 and in Jones 2019. The two Pāli discourses in question are A 11: 1–2 PTS V 311–4. Another *Upanisā Sutta* at A 11: 3 PTS V 315 is closely related to these two, and not to the *Upanisā Sutta* at S 12: 23. These three discourses at A 11: 1–3 PTS V 311–315 recur with only slight variations at A 10: 1–5 PTS V 1–7 and A 11: 4–5 PTS V 316–317. Parallels in Chinese translation are found in MĀ 42–8, 54 (T 26 485a–86c, 490a–c).

7. For presentation and discussion of these variations on a theme see Jones 2011, 75–90, Attwood 2013 (especially pp.3–5), and Jones 2019.

8. I cannot be certain of this claim, and would welcome any corrections to it. But, if there are any further references to *lokuttara paṭicca-samuppāda*, they are certainly not obvious.

that exegesis depends on some prior decisions concerning interpretation, and that the *Nettippakarāṇa* in fact interprets dependent arising as including the positive stages of the path, while the *Peṭakopadesa*, and indeed the Buddhism represented by subsequent Pāli literature, does not.

The history of the *Nettippakarāṇa*

Some background is needed to properly appreciate what the *Nettippakarāṇa* says about transcendental dependent arising. *Netti* means ‘a leading rope’,⁹ and a *pakarāṇa* is a ‘literary work’ or ‘book’,¹⁰ hence *Nettippakarāṇa* means ‘Guide-Book’ or simply ‘The Guide.’¹¹ As this title suggests, the *Nettippakarāṇa* is an exegetical work. In Nāṇamoli’s words, it ‘sets forth a method intended for the guidance of those who already know intellectually the Buddha’s teaching and want to explain his utterances’ (Nāṇamoli 1962, vii). Along with another text called *Peṭakopadesa*,¹² with which it shares a store of concepts, tools, summary stanzas and discourse quotations, *Nettippakarāṇa* belongs to a class of Pāli literature concerned with exegesis, so that it should be distinguished from commentary.¹³ The early commentarial works such as the *Niddesa* mainly provide extensive glosses for technical terms; the later Theravādin commentarial literature associated with Buddhaghosa uses a range of methods to elucidate the meaning of canonical texts. By contrast, the exegetical works are not primarily concerned to explain what the Buddha’s teaching means (although they often do briefly explain terms and phrases), but rather they set out a sophisticated method for explaining how any particular discourse can be reiterated in terms of a range of early Buddhist categories and concepts.

The *Nettippakarāṇa*, along with the *Peṭakopadesa* and the *Milindapañhā*, is sometimes described as ‘paracanonical’, meaning that it is ‘not quite’ canonical (see, for instance, von Hinüber 1996, 76f.). In fact, the Burmese did include the exegetical texts in their Pāli canon, perhaps believing that they were, as the texts themselves claim, the work of the Buddha’s disciple Mahākaccāna (Nāṇamoli 1962, xii; Norman 1983, 110; see also Jackson 2006). Western scholars have never accepted this claim (see Nāṇamoli 1962, xii for details),¹⁴ but neither have the Sri Lankans, who do not include the exegetical works in their canon. Taking the *Nettippakarāṇa*

9. DOP II 639, s.v. *netti*.

10. PED 639, s.v. *pakarāṇa*.

11. Hence the title of Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli’s (1962) translation of *Nettippakarāṇa*.

12. Ed. Hardy 1902, and trans. Nāṇamoli 1964 as *The Piṭaka-Disclosure*. The Pāli text of this work is corrupt, so that Nāṇamoli’s translation is often a work of reconstruction. The *Nettippakarāṇa*, by contrast, is well-preserved.

13. One might say that commentary is normative, telling us how the discourses should be understood (*vedītabba*); while exegesis is descriptive, revealing the structure of the teaching (*sāsanapaṭṭhāna*). But these two approaches are also complementary: commentaries involve exegesis, and the exegetical works do quite a bit of telling the reader how to understand obscure texts.

14. It is also easy to appreciate how early Buddhists might have attributed exegetical works to the disciple of the Buddha who was said to be ‘foremost of those who explain in detail what has been stated in brief’ (A 1: 199 PTS I 23).

to be paracanonical in this way, Ñāṇamoli understood it to be a Theravādin work piously attributed to Mahākaccāna, though he conjectures that it was written in India rather than in Sri Lanka (Ñāṇamoli 1962, xxviii). K. R. Norman also conjectured that the *Nettipakaraṇa* was composed in North India, sometime before the Common Era, a conjecture based on the presence of verses in the Old Āryā metre, which the Theravādins of Sri Lanka were no longer able to recognize (Norman 1983, 110). Oscar von Hinüber went further, however, in supposing that the *Nettipakaraṇa* was not based exclusively on the Theravādin tradition, because of its inclusion of quotations not found in the Pāli canon as we now have it (Von Hinüber 1996, 80).¹⁵

Some more recent discoveries provide strong evidence for von Hinüber's supposition. Stefano Zacchetti has discovered that a text translated by An Shigao into Chinese in the second century CE is a version of a chapter of the *Peṭakopadesa* (Zacchetti 2002a; see also Zacchetti 2002b). This shows that the exegetical work was known in north India, such that it could be translated by an eclectic Sarvāstivādin into Chinese. It also lends weight to the possibility that the *Peṭakopadesa* itself was translated into Pāli from a north Indian language, since there are otherwise very few translations into Chinese from Pāli (Zacchetti 2002a, 92). There is now some strong evidence for that possibility in the work of Stefan Baums on recently-discovered Gāndhārī manuscripts. He shows that the fragments of commentary on canonical verses (preserved on British Library scrolls 7, 9, 13 and 18), and those of a commentary on the *Saṅgīti Sūtra* (Chanting Together Discourse), or rather its Gāndhārī equivalent (preserved on British Library scroll 15), utilise a method of exegesis with direct parallels to those used in the Pāli exegetical works (Baums 2014, especially p. 28f).¹⁶ He describes this method as 'categorical mapping', and I will return to this theme of 'mapping' and maps below. Commenting on the implications, Richard Salomon concludes:

The discovery of Gāndhārī commentaries that employ similar exegetical techniques ... suggests that *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakaraṇa* or their archetypes may have originated in a Gandhāran tradition that specialized in this method of interpretation [i.e., categorical mapping]. (Salomon 2018, 299–300)

The current scholarly view is therefore that *Nettipakaraṇa*, together with *Peṭakopadesa*, is a Pāli exegetical text preserved by the Theravādins, translated into Pāli from archetypes originating in the Gandhāra region of north-west India. Ñāṇamoli had argued that *Nettipakaraṇa* was a re-arranged and re-written version of the *Peṭakopadesa* (Ñāṇamoli 1962, xxv), but the discovery of a north Indian background to the exegetical method that they share should make us cautious. We should perhaps say that our texts represent two elaborations of the shared background exegetical method.

15. He adds that it seems likely that 'Nett and Peṭ intruded from outside into the Theravāda as handbooks to understand and to explain the Suttantas' (p. 82).

16. Baums (p. 35) also explains how the unexpected Pāli compound *peṭakopadesa* may be the result of a 'superficial phonetic transposition' from a regular Gāndhārī formation *peḍagoadeśa*, in the meaning 'the instruction of the Piṭaka-master'.

The exegetical method of the *Nettipakaraṇa*

The exegetical method of the *Nettipakaraṇa*, originating in Gandhāra but now extant only in Gāndhārī fragments and in our Pāli exegetical texts, starts from the assumption that the Buddha's teaching is a coherent system of thought, whose myriad styles of presentation, which vary according to factors such as the audience, their level of understanding, their social standing and readiness to hear the profound *Dhamma*, represent the multifarious expressions of a single deep meaning.¹⁷ The *Nettipakaraṇa* cites the common formula from the discourses, that the Buddha 'expounds a teaching (*Dhamma*) that is lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle and lovely in its conclusion, with its meaning (*attha*) and phrasing (*byañjana*), and he reveals a completely and entirely perfect holy life'.¹⁸ An exegete of a discourse (*sutta*) may distinguish the meaning of the *Dhamma* from the very many ways in which it may be phrased. Just as the Buddha is recorded as saying that he has 'immeasurable (*aparimāṇa*) words, phrases and expositions of the *Dhamma*',¹⁹ so the *Nettipakaraṇa* explains that there are immeasurable terms, words, phrasings, definitions, etymological interpretations and explanations.²⁰

The *Nettipakaraṇa* presents three tools by which exegetes may guide hearers of the discourses, with their manifold phrasing, towards an understanding of their meaning. These tools are the sixteen exegetical modes (*hāras*), the five exegetical methods (*nayas*) and the eighteen root-terms (*mūla-padas*). The root-terms consist of nine terms for what is 'wholesome' (*kusala*) and nine for what is 'unwholesome' (*akusala*).²¹ The five exegetical methods represent five different strategies for guiding persons of various temperaments and abilities towards suitable discourses that will help them understand the meaning of the teaching.²² It is among the sixteen exegetical modes that we find the discussion of worldly and transcendental dependent arising. These modes represent various ways in which an exegete may re-word the phrasing of a particular discourse, so that his or her audience may bet-

17. On this topic, see Bond 1979, 30; Bond 1980, 19; Bond 1982, 41–42.

18. At D 2 PTS I 62 and elsewhere; quoted at Netti 5.

19. A 4: 188 PTS II 182.

20. Netti 9.

21. Netti 2: 'Here, what are the eighteen root-terms? There are nine terms which are wholesome (*kusala*), nine terms which are unwholesome (*akusala*). Here, what are the nine unwholesome terms? Craving (*taṇhā*), ignorance (*avijjā*), greed (*lobha*), hostility (*dosa*), confusion (*moha*), perception of the attractive (*subha-saññā*), perception of the pleasant (*sukha-saññā*), perception of the permanent (*nicca-saññā*), perception of a self (*atta-saññā*) — these are the nine unwholesome terms, in which all that belongs to the unwholesome are collected and classified. Here, what are the nine wholesome terms? Meditative calm (*samatha*), meditative insight (*vipassanā*), non-greed (*alobha*), non-hostility (*adosa*), non-confusion (*amoha*), perception of the unattractive (*asubha-saññā*), perception of the painful (*dukkha-saññā*), perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*), perception of non-self (*anattā-saññā*) — these are the nine wholesome terms, in which all that belongs to the wholesome are collected and classified'.

22. These methods have playfully figurative names in line with the intuitive strategies that they represent: Netti 2: 'Here, what are the five exegetical methods? Conversion of delight (*nandiyāvatta*), trefoil (*tipukkhalā*), lion's play (*siha-vikkhīlita*), looking at the directions (*disā-locana*), the hook (*aṅkusa*)'. These methods deserve a fuller treatment than I can give them here; see Bond 1988 and especially Caudron 2000.

ter appreciate its meaning.²³ This account of root-terms, exegetical methods and exegetical modes suggests already the complexity of the overall method employed in the exegetical works. Just as one must learn how to read a complex map, it takes some time and effort to understand these exegetical works.²⁴

The exegetical mode of ‘access’

The discussion of ‘transcendental dependent arising’ occurs in the full explanation (*paṭiniddesa*) of the sixteen exegetical modes, specifically in the course of the explanation of the exegetical mode of ‘access’ (*otaraṇa*).²⁵ The explanation begins with a summary explanation in verse:

Dependent rising,²⁶ faculties, categories, domains and spheres: the exegetical mode that accesses [meaning] through these is *access*.²⁷

This exegetical mode is concerned with the reinterpretation of any given discourse in terms of five basic sets of Buddhist technical terminology: (i) dependent arising;²⁸ (ii) the faculties (*indriyas*);²⁹ (iii) the constituents (*khandhas*);³⁰ (iv) the domains (*dhātus*);³¹ and (v) the spheres (*āyatanas*).³²

The *Nettipakaraṇa* explains the sixteen exegetical modes one by one through the exegesis of short discourses or extracts from longer ones, these discourses generally

23. Netti 2: ‘Here, what are the sixteen exegetical modes? Exposition (*desanā*), investigation (*vicaya*), fitting in (*yutti*), footing (*padatṭhāna*), characteristic (*lakkhana*), fourfold array (*catubhya*), conversion (*āvāṭṭa*), analysis (*vibhatti*), reversal (*parivattana*), synonym (*vevacana*), description (*paññatti*), access (*otaraṇa*), cleaning up (*sodhana*), expression (*adhīṭṭhāna*), requisite (*parikkhāra*), joint attribution (*samāropana*)’.
24. In fact, they are relatively little-studied among modern English-speaking Buddhist scholars: apart from Nāṇamoli’s introduction to *The Guide*, the only studies seem to be those by Bond (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988) and Caudron (2000).
25. Nāṇamoli translates the *otaraṇa-hāra* as ‘the mode of conveying ways of entry’, while Caudron (2000) translates it as ‘access’.
26. I deliberately use this formulation rather than ‘dependent arising’, to echo the Pāli *paṭiccuppādo*, abbreviated from the synonymous *paṭiccasamuppādo* for the sake of the Āryā metre.
27. Verse summary presented at Netti 4, then repeated at Netti 63, at the beginning of the full explanation of the mode: *yo ca paṭiccuppādo | indriyakhandhā ca dhātu āyatanā | etehi otarati yo | otaraṇa nāma so hāro*. These *gāthās* are in Āryā metre (12, 18, 12, 15 *morae* per *pāda*).
28. These are the twelve links in both natural (*anuloma*) and contrary (*paṭiloma*) order; and, uniquely in this context, in terms of ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’ dependent arising.
29. There are various lists of faculties: one is faith (*saddhā*), energy (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), understanding (*paññā*); another is the five kinds of feeling (*vedanā*): the ‘faculty of bodily pleasure’ (*sukhindriya*), the ‘faculty of bodily pain’ (*dukkhindriya*), the ‘faculty of mental pleasure’ (*somanassindriya*), the ‘faculty of mental pain’ (*domanassindriya*), and the ‘faculty of equanimity’ (*upekkhindriya*).
30. The three *khandhas*, ‘constituents’ or ‘groups of good qualities’, consist in the constituent of virtuous conduct (*sīla-kkhandha*), the constituent of concentration (*samādhi-kkhandha*) and the constituent of understanding (*paññā-kkhandha*); this list is distinct from the five *khandhas* or ‘constituents’ of experience (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā* and *viññāna*).
31. These include the eighteen domains (the six senses, their objects and their consciousnesses) and the three domains: the domain of sense-desire (*kāma-dhātu*), the domain of [meditative] form (*rūpa-dhātu*) and the formless domain (*arūpa-dhātu*).
32. These include the six senses and their objects (hence overlapping with the domains).

being relatively obscure, and often in verse. The idea would seem to be that these discourse extracts might pose a problem for the Buddhist exegete, such that the *Nettipakarāṇa* offers ideas for explaining them correctly, in accordance with the *Dhamma*. The discussion of transcendental dependent arising occurs in the exegesis of the following extract from *Udāna* 8: 4,:

There is agitation for one who is dependent; there is no agitation for one who is independent. When there is no agitation, there is relaxation. When there is relaxation, inclination does not exist. When inclination does not exist, there exists no coming or going. When there is no coming or going, there exist no death or rebirth. When there is no death or rebirth, neither here nor there nor in between exist. Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness.³³

This saying of the Buddha is found in the *Udāna* among a series of four discourses,³⁴ each entitled ‘connected with *nibbāna*’ (*nibbāna-ṭṭisaṃyutta*), and each featuring an utterance (*udāna*) as enigmatic as this one. The *Nettipakarāṇa*’s exegesis of this extract begins as follows:

In ‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’, what is called dependence is two-fold: dependence by craving and dependence by views. In this context, the intention of one who is passionate is dependence on craving, and the intention of one who is bewildered is dependence on views.³⁵ And intentions (*cetanā*) are formations, from formations as condition there is consciousness, from consciousness as condition there is name-and-form. In this way there is the whole of dependent arising ... This is access by means of dependent arisings.³⁶

The exegesis of ‘dependence’ (*nissaya*) in terms of ‘craving’ (*taṇhā*) and ‘views’ (*diṭṭhi*) is an example of a re-phrasing of one term (dependence) as two of the root-terms (*mūla-padas*) (craving and views).³⁷ But exegesis in the mode of access is here

33. From Ud 8: 4 PTS 81, also at M 144, PTS III 266 and S 35: 87, PTS IV 59; cited at Netti 65: *nissitassa calitaṃ anissitassa calitaṃ natthi. calite asati passaddhi. passadhiyā sati nati na hoti. natiyā asati āgatigati na hoti. āgatigatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti. cutūpapāte asati n’ev’idha na hurāṃ na ubhayamantarena na ubhayamantare sabbattha. es’ev’anto dukkhassa*. There is a parallel preserved in Sanskrit at *Udānavarga* 26: 20: *aniḥśritasyācalitaṃ prasrabdhīś ceha vidyate | na gatir na cyutiś caiva duḥkhasyānto nirucyate ||*: ‘There is no agitation for one who has no dependence, and here one finds relaxation. There is neither going nor passing away, called the end of unsatisfactoriness’ (see Ānandajyoti 2003). The conclusion of this *udāna*, ‘neither here nor there nor in between exist. Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’, also occurs at Ud 1: 10 and at S 35: 95 PTS IV 72.

34. Ud 8: 1–4 PTS 80–81.

35. ‘Passionate’ (*ratta*) is cognate with ‘passion’ (*rāga*); ‘bewildered’ (*sammūḷha*) is cognate with ‘confusion’ (*moha*). The commentary to Netti adds that ‘it is just the tendency to what is equivocal that is the strength of confusion’.

36. Netti 65: *nissitassa calitaṃ n’ati nissayo nāma duvidho taṇhānissayo ca diṭṭhinissayo ca. tattha yā rattassa cetanā ayaṃ taṇhānissayo. yā mūḷhassa cetanā ayaṃ diṭṭhinissayo. cetanā pana saṅkhārā. saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ. viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. evaṃ sabbo paṭiccasamuppādo. ayaṃ paṭiccasamuppādehi otaṇāṇā*.

37. This kind of re-phrasing is an interpretive method typical of early Buddhist commentary; Baums (2014, 23–26) calls the method ‘categorical reduction’, in relation to the commentary preserved in Gāndhārī fragments, and the Netti is likely to be drawing on a tradition evident in Gāndhārī as well in the Pāli *Niddesa*, where this distinction of two kinds of ‘dependence’ (*nissaya*) occurs several times.

illustrated by glossing dependence as a sort of intention (*cetanā*), and identifying intention as a kind of formation (*saṅkhāra*). This allows the Buddhist exegete to run through the links of dependent arising in natural (*anuloma*) order, and this is the exegesis of ‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’ in terms of the better-known Buddhist doctrine of dependent arising: it means that there is ‘agitation’ in the sense of unsatisfactoriness due to the workings of dependent arising. The text of the *Nettipakaraṇa* on the mode of access continues:

In this context, the feeling (*vedanā*) of one who is passionate is pleasant feeling, and the feeling of one who is bewildered is neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. This feeling is the constituent of feeling. This is the access by means of constituents (*khandhas*). In this context, pleasant experience belongs to two faculties: the faculty of bodily pleasure and the faculty of mental pleasure. Neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling belongs to the faculty of equanimity. This is the access by means of faculties. These faculties also belong to formations. Those formations which are corrupt and are factors of existence are included in the domain of phenomena.³⁸ This is the access by means of domains. The domain of phenomena belongs to the sphere of phenomena. This sphere is corrupt and is a factor of existence. This is the access by means of spheres.³⁹

In this way, an exegete may bring in reference to constituents, faculties, domains and spheres. While this is evidently a somewhat artificial enterprise in this case, the text illustrates the method.

The *Nettipakaraṇa* then explains ‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’ in terms of meditative calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) and in terms of the contrary sequence of dependent arising, beginning from the cessation of formations. This allows further access in terms of the constituent of understanding (*paññā-kkhandha*), the faculty of understanding (*paññindriya*), the non-corrupted domain of phenomena (*dhamma-dhātu*), and the non-corrupted sphere of phenomena (*dhammāyatana*). But it is the next section of our discourse that is of more direct interest:

‘When there is relaxation: relaxation is of two kinds – bodily and mental.⁴⁰ A bodily pleasure is bodily relaxation. A mental pleasure is mental relaxation. One whose body is relaxed experiences happiness. A happy mind becomes concentrated.⁴¹ One who is concentrated understands what is actually the case. One who understands

38. The ‘domain of phenomena’ (*dhamma-dhātu*) refers to the domain of the ‘objects’ (*dhammas*) of the *manas* or mind-sense, among the eighteen domains.

39. *Netti* 65: *tattha yā rattassa vedanā ayaṃ sukhā vedanā, yā sammūlhasa vedanā ayaṃ adukkhamasukhā vedanā, imā dve vedanā vedanākkhandho. ayaṃ khandhehi otaṇā, tattha sukhā vedanā dve indriyāni sukhindriyaṃ somanassindriyaṃ adukkhamasukhā vedanā upekkhindriyaṃ. ayaṃ indriyehi otaṇā. tāniyeva indriyāni saṅkhārapariyāpannāni ye saṅkhārā sāsava bhavaṅgā te saṅkhārā dhammadhātusaṅgahitā. ayaṃ dhātūhi otaṇā. sā dhammadhātu dhammāyatanaṃ pariyaṇṇā yam āyatanaṃ sāsavaṃ bhavaṅgam, ayaṃ āyatanehi otaṇā.*

40. This distinction of two kinds of ‘relaxation’ (*passaddhi*) is already found in the discourses, e.g. S 46: 52, S 54: 13.

41. The previous sentences occur several times in the discourses, e.g. D 2, 9, 10, 33, in a formula comprising five factors from gladness (*pāmojja*) to concentration (*samādhi*) which I propose to call the ‘integration series’ of links of transcendental dependent arising.

what is actually the case becomes disenchanting. One who is disenchanting becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion one is liberated. As regards liberation, one knows that one is liberated.⁴² One understands that birth is destroyed, the spiritual life has been lived, what was to be done has been done, and that there is nothing beyond this state.⁴³

Although the *Nettipakaraṇa* does not spell it out here, this explanation of 'when there is relaxation' in terms of a causal process culminating in liberation is a partial summary of the *Kimatthiya Sutta* and the *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta* from the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*,⁴⁴ which elsewhere it cites in full.⁴⁵

The exegesis of *Udāna* 8: 4 to illustrate the exegetical mode of access continues with an extraordinary passage explaining what might be meant by the absence of 'inclination' (*nati*):

One does not incline towards visual forms, nor towards sounds, nor towards smells, nor towards tastes, nor towards tangibles, nor towards phenomena, due to the ending of passion, due to the ending of hostility, due to the ending of confusion.⁴⁶ One is liberated in respect of being reckoned as having physical form [feeling, perception, formations and consciousness] through the ending, dispassion, cessation, giving up and letting go of that physical form through which physical form [feeling, perception, formations and consciousness] one who is making known a Perfect One as standing or walking makes him known. 'The Perfect One exists' does not apply, 'does not exist' does not apply, 'both exists and does not exist' does not apply, 'neither exists nor does not exist' does not apply. Therefore one is reckoned to be indeed profound, immeasurable, incalculable, quenched, due to the ending of passion, due to the ending of hostility, due to the ending of confusion.⁴⁷

This passage does not illustrate the exegetical mode of access by means of artificial invocations of dependent arising, categories, faculties, domains or spheres, but rather does so in terms of some elegant variations of accounts of insight.

42. The formulation of links from happiness to liberation here resemble those in D 34.

43. *Netti* 66: *passaddhiyā satīti duvidhā passaddhi kāyikā ca cetasikā ca. yaṃ kāyikaṃ sukhaṃ ayam kāyapassaddhi. yaṃ cetasikaṃ sukhaṃ ayam cetasikā passaddhi. passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vediyati sukhiṇo cittaṃ samādhīyati samāhito yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. yathābhūtaṃ pajānanto nibbindati. nibbindanto virājjati. virāgā vimuccati vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamiti nānaṃ hoti. khīṇā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyā ti.* The final sentence is a common formula in the discourses signifying the attainment of the goal.

44. See note 6 above for references.

45. *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta* is cited in full at *Netti* 144, as an example of a 'discourse concerned with penetration' (*nibhedha-bhāgiya*); *Netti* 29 runs through the eleven positive links of both these discourses, each link being the 'footing' (immediate cause) of the next, in the context of illustrating the exegetical mode of 'footing' (*padaṭṭhāna*).

46. The ending (*khaya*) of the three root afflictions (*mūla-kilesā*), 'passion' (*rāga*), 'hostility' (*dosa*) and 'confusion' (*moha*).

47. *Netti* 66–7: *so na namati rūpesu na saddesu na gandhesu na rasesu na phoṭṭhabbesu. na dhammesu khayā rāgassa khayā dosassa khayā mohassa. yena rūpena tathāgataṃ tiṭṭhantaṃ carantaṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya tassa rūpassa khayā virāgā nirodhā cāgā paṇinissaggā rūpasāṅkhaye vimutto. tathāgato atthīti na upeti natthīti na upeti atthi natthīti na upeti nevatthi no natthīti na upeti. atha kho gambhīro appameyyo asaṅkheyyo nibbutotiyeva saṅkhaṃ gacchati khayā rāgassa, khayā dosassa, khayā mohassa. yāya vedanāya ... pe ... yāya saññāya. yehi saṅkhārehi. yena viññānena ...* The whole formulation contains close echoes of a passage repeated in M 72 PTS I 486 and S 44: 1 PTS IV 383.

Worldly and transcendental dependent arising

The *Nettipakarāṇa* concludes its illustrative exegesis of the enigmatic *udāna* by invoking the distinction of worldly and transcendental dependent arising:

‘Coming’ means arriving in this world. ‘Going’ means the state of the departed. Both coming and going do not exist.⁴⁸ ‘Neither here’ means among the six subjective sense-spheres. ‘Nor there’ means among the six objective sense-spheres.⁴⁹ ‘Nor in between’ means one does not see a self among the phenomena that have arisen through contact. ‘Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’ refers to dependent arising. It is twofold: worldly (*lokiya*) and transcendental (*lokuttara*). In this context, worldly is, from ignorance as condition there are formations, up to, ageing-and-death. Transcendental is, for one who is virtuous, freedom from remorse is born, up to, one understands that there is nothing beyond this state. In this way the Blessed One said, ‘There is agitation for one who is dependent; there is no agitation for one who is independent ... just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’.⁵⁰

This exegesis consists of brief, commentary-style explanations of ‘coming’, ‘going’, ‘neither here’, ‘nor there’ and ‘nor in between’, followed by the exegesis of ‘just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’ in terms of two kinds of dependent arising, ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’.

While the terms ‘worldly’ (*lokiya*) and ‘transcendental’ (*lokuttara*) are used in the later *Abhidhamma* literature in reference to kinds of consciousness (*cittas*) and states (*dhammas*), the terms are used in the *Nettipakarāṇa* in a non-technical sense, as the first pair of eighteen ‘root-terms’ (*mūla-padas*) for categorising kinds of discourse.⁵¹ We could just as well translate *lokiya* as meaning ‘about ordinary experience’. *Netti* gives the following as one of its examples of a discourse about ordinary experience:

Monks, there are these eight worldly states. What eight? Gain and loss, fame and infamy, praise and blame, bliss and pain. These, monks, are the eight worldly states.⁵²

48. That is, in the discourse being discussed, ‘there exists no coming nor going’ is here rephrased as ‘coming and going do not exist’.

49. See Jones 2016 for a discussion of the significance of ‘neither here nor there’ (*nev’idha na huram*) in terms of the practitioner’s non-identification with subjective and objective sense-experience.

50. *Netti* 67: *āgati’ti idhāgati. gati’ti peccabhavo. āgatiḡatiḡi na bhavanti, nevidhā’ti chasu ajjhattikesu āyatanesu. na huran’ti chasu bāhiresu āyatanesu. na ubhayamantarenā’ti phassasamuditesu dhammesu attānaḡ na passati. esevanto dukkhassā’ti paṭiccasamuppādo. so duvidho lokiyo ca lokuttaro ca. tattha lokiyo avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā yāva jarāmaraṇā. lokuttaro silavato avippatiṣāro jāyati yāva nāparaḡ itthattāyāti pajānāti. tenāha bhagavā nissitassa calitaḡ anissitassa calitaḡ natthi ... pe ... esevanto dukkhassā’ti.*

51. *Netti* 161. These ‘root-terms’ for categorising discourses should be differentiated from the eighteen root-terms of the meaning of the *Dhamma*, listed at *Netti* 2. But there is also another list of eighteen root-terms for categorising discourses given at *Netti* 128, so there are a lot of roots. The early *Abhidhamma*-like work, *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, employs *lokiya* and *lokuttara* as a pair of root-terms in reference to development (*bhāvanā*), concentration (*samādhi*), and freedom (*vimokkha*), and includes an attractive discussion of the meaning of ‘transcendental’ (*lokuttara*) at *Paṭi* II 166–7, in relation to the 37 *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammā*. This formulation comes close to that of *lokuttara paṭicca-samuppāda*.

52. A 8: 5 PTS IV 156–157: *aṭṭhime bhikkhave lokadhammā lokam... katame aṭṭha? lābho ca alābho ca yaso ca ayaso ca nindā ca paṣaṃsā ca sukhaṅca dukkhaṅca. ime kho bhikkhave aṭṭha lokadhammā*; cited at *Netti* 162. ‘Worldly states’ translates *lokadhammas*.

And as an example of a *lokuttara* discourse, which we could just as well translate as meaning ‘about what is beyond ordinary experience’:

The gods themselves envy that authentic one
 who has given up conceit, without corruptions,
 whose senses have become still and calm
 like a horse well-tamed by a trainer.⁵³

It would seem reasonable to understand the *Nettipakaraṇa*’s distinction of *lokiya* and *lokuttara* dependent arising in the same non-technical way as its distinction of *lokiya* and *lokuttara* discourses:

1. ‘Worldly’ (*lokiya*) dependent arising is the ‘usual’ or ‘ordinary’ form of dependent arising;⁵⁴ hence it is ‘about ordinary experience’. This form of dependent arising is said here in the *Nettipakaraṇa* to be epitomised in the standard formula, common to many discourses, of twelve dependently-arisen links, from ignorance to ageing-and-death.
2. ‘Transcendental’ (*lokuttara*) dependent arising is the ‘unusual’, ‘extraordinary’ form of dependent arising which is ‘above the world’ or ‘excels the world’ (including the worlds of pure ‘form’ and the ‘formless’). Hence it is ‘about what is beyond ordinary experience’.⁵⁵ This form of dependent arising is epitomised in the words ‘for one who is virtuous, freedom from remorse is born, up to, one understands that there is nothing beyond this state’. These exact words are not found in any particular discourse, but the stages of ‘virtuous conduct’ and ‘freedom from remorse’ are familiar from the *Aṅguttara* discourses, *Kimatthiya Sutta* and *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta*, while ‘one understands that there is nothing beyond this state’ are the concluding words of a standard description in the discourses for the attainment of awakening.⁵⁶

The distinction of worldly and transcendental dependent arising allows the *Nettipakaraṇa* to interpret the discourse extract from *Udāna* 8: 4 as a combination of these two kinds of dependent arising. ‘There is agitation for one who is dependent’ can be rephrased in terms of worldly dependent arising, that is, in terms of the links of dependent arising from ignorance to ageing-and-death. On the other hand, ‘There is no agitation for one who is independent’ can be rephrased in terms

53. Dhṛ 94: *yass’indriyāni samathaṃ gatāni | assā yathā sārathinā sudantā | pahīnamānassa anāsavassa | devāpi tassa pihayanti tādino*; cf. Thā 205–206; cited at Netti 162, and cf. Peṭ 47.

54. See PED 588, s.v. *lokiya*; cf. MW 907, s.v. *lokya*; 909 s.v. *laukya*, *laukika*.

55. See PED 588, s.v. *lokuttara*; MW 907, s.v. *lokottara*.

56. ‘Birth is destroyed; the holy life has been lived; what had to be done has been done; and one understands that there is nothing beyond this state’: *khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā’ti pajānāti*; at e.g. M 7 PTS I 38. In citing this formula, it is possible that Netti is quoting a discourse which has not been preserved in the Pāli canon in which it features as the final stage of causally connected stages of the path, although it is perhaps more likely that Netti is simply alluding to the principle that the stages of the path to awakening arise in a causally connected sequence, a principle indirectly exemplified in the many discourses describing the ‘gradual training’ (*anupubbī-sikkhā*), and paradigmatically at D 2 PTS I 62–84.

of the cessation sequence of these same links, while the arising of ‘relaxation’ in the midst of the sequence of factors that are ceasing refers to transcendental dependent arising, in which ‘relaxation’ is the factor that arises on condition of joy (*pīti*) and which is itself the condition for happiness (*sukha*), a series of factors culminating in liberation.

‘Categorical mapping’ as an exegetical method

Yet calling the causally connected series of factors from virtuous conduct to awakening ‘dependent arising’ appears to be unique to this context; nowhere else in the exegetical literature, and perhaps in Pāli literature generally, am I aware of another reference to ‘transcendental dependent arising’. A consideration of the *Nettipakaraṇa*’s method in terms of ‘categorical mapping’ will show what kind of category ‘transcendental dependent arising’ represents, and how it differs from the standard map of canonical exegesis.

Stefan Baums characterizes the exegetical method of some Gandhāran commentarial works preserved on birch-bark fragments as ‘categorical mapping’, which involves the systematic mapping of discourses, especially verses, onto basic sets of Buddhist categories.⁵⁷ The vast and varied landscape of early Buddhist discourses are the ‘terrain’, which in this metaphor is ‘mapped’ through the use of terms and categories like the contours, roads, features and buildings on a map. Baums goes on to argue that the Pāli exegetical works, *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa*, share a method and a terminology with the Gandhāran commentaries he has studied (Baums 2014, 28–34). In Appendix 1, I include tables that indicate how the *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* map *Udāna* 8: 4 in terms of root-terms and of categories.

Both the Gandhāran commentaries and the Pāli exegetical works use the category of the four noble truths – unsatisfactoriness, origination, cessation and path – as a ‘map of maps’: a top-level expression of the *Dhamma* in which terms other expressions of the *Dhamma* can themselves be organised.⁵⁸ The *Peṭakopadesa* demonstrates at length how the four truths can be used as a top-level mapping,⁵⁹ by interpreting a number of discourses, including *Udāna* 8: 4:

In this context, what is [an example of a discourse concerning] origination, cessation and the path? ‘There is agitation for one who is supported ... Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’.⁶⁰ Here, the two dependencies [craving and views] – this is origination. Independence and non-inclination – this is the path. There is no coming nor going, no death nor rebirth, ‘just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’ – this is cessation. These are three truths.⁶¹

57. In Baums 2014, which is drawn from his PhD thesis (Baums 2009). In fact, what I am calling ‘categorical mapping’, Baums mainly calls ‘categorical reduction’. I would prefer to reserve the phrase ‘categorical reduction’ for *Niddesa*-style glosses of words in terms of better-known doctrinal terms, and use the phrase ‘categorical mapping’ for the larger-scale interpretation of discourses.

58. See Baums 2014, 26 for the equivalent emphasis in the Gāndhārī commentaries.

59. At *Peṭ* 5–22.

60. See above, p.174, for full text and note 33 for full references.

61. *Peṭ* 18: *tattha katamo samudayo ca nirodho ca maggo ca? nisitassa calitaṃ ... es’ ev’ anto dukkhassā’ti. tattha dve nissayā ayaṃ samudayo. yo ca anissayo yā ca anati* [reading *anati* with Be in preference to PTs

In this exegesis, ‘independence and non-inclination’ may be taken as referring to the stages of the path that includes ‘relaxation’, interpreted elsewhere in terms of the *Kimatthiya Sutta*, from virtuous conduct to knowing and seeing liberation, and described as ‘liberation’.⁶²

The *Nettipakaraṇa* similarly uses the four truths as a top-level map,⁶³ so that although it does not include an illustrative exegesis of *Udāna* 8.4 in terms of the truths, we may reasonably hypothesise the following map of its exegesis of this discourse onto three of the truths, consistent with the *Peṭakopadesa*:

Four truths	Origination	Cessation	Path
<i>Udāna</i> 8: 4	‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’	‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’	‘when there is relaxation’
<i>Nettipakaraṇa</i> on access	dependent arising in natural order	dependent arising in contrary order	
	worldly dependent arising		transcendental dependent arising

This mapping seems ready-made to make sense of something like the *Upanisā Sutta*, in which the links of dependent arising in natural order are juxtaposed with the stages of the path, here called transcendental dependent arising, in a category of dependent arising divisible into worldly and transcendental sections. But the mapping also presents another category of dependent arising in natural and contrary orders which overlaps with, yet is not identical to, the category of dependent arising as worldly and transcendental. There appears to be a partial distinction between different categories of dependent arising. A comparison at this point of the *Nettipakaraṇa*’s interpretation of *Udāna* 8: 4 with that of the *Peṭakopadesa* allows a useful perspective on what is at stake here, since the *Peṭakopadesa*’s exegesis of dependent arising is more straightforward.

Peṭakopadesa on *Udāna* 8: 4

The *Peṭakopadesa* interprets ‘when there is relaxation’ in *Udāna* 8: 4 not in terms of worldly and transcendental dependent arising but by jointly attributing to it two expressions of the *Dhamma*’s single meaning, that of dependent arising and that

arati] ayam maggo. yā āgatigati na hoti cutūpapatāto ca yo es’ ev’ anto dukkhassāti ayam nirodho. imāni tīṇi saccāni. The text continues to interpret Ud 8: 4, but is very corrupt. Nāṇamolī reconstructs it in terms of A 11: 3 PTS V 313, one of the canonical discourses dealing with the stages of the path, but I believe this is incorrect. The text of Peṭ, though corrupt, reads *anupaṭṭhita-kāyasati*, ‘with mindfulness of body not established’, a reference to M 38 PTS I 266, which continues with a full account of the links of dependent arising as ‘origination’; Peṭ also refers to *upaṭṭhita-kāyasati*, ‘with mindfulness of body established’, and hence to M 38 PTS I 270, a full account of what the discourse calls ‘cessation’. In between origination and cessation at M 38 PTS I 269–70 is the ‘gradual training’, which of course is ‘the path’, which appears to be mentioned in Peṭ with the words *sīla-saṃvaro*, ‘restraint through virtuous conduct’, and *vimutti*, ‘liberation’.

62. At Peṭ 110, translated below.

63. It does so in a less obvious way than Peṭ, but the same principles apply: see *Netti* 8 and 104–9.

of liberation. The *Peṭakopadesa* uses the same eighteen root-terms, five exegetical methods and sixteen exegetical modes as the *Nettipakaraṇa*, but it is otherwise arranged differently.⁶⁴ It takes up many of the same discourses for discussion (see Nāṇamoli 1962, lvi–lviii), including *Udāna* 8: 4. Rather than citing *Udāna* 8: 4 to illustrate the exegetical mode of ‘access’ (*otāraṇa*), it does so to illustrate the mode of ‘joint attribution’ (*samāropana*).⁶⁵ This exegetical mode involves the joint ascription to a given discourse of various ways of rephrasing with the same meaning.⁶⁶ The *Peṭakopadesa*’s discussion begins:

‘There is agitation for one who is dependent’. What is dependence? Craving and view. In this context, view is ignorance and craving is formations. In this context, from view as condition there is craving, from ignorance as condition, these formations.⁶⁷ In this context, what is dependent is consciousness; this means with formations as condition there is consciousness, up to, ageing-and-death. When this is explained in brief, the remainder follows. ‘There is no agitation for one who is independent’: of that the giving up of view and craving in this way.⁶⁸

The rephrasing of ‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’ in terms of the natural (*anuloma*) sequence of dependent arising and of ‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’ in terms of the contrary (*paṭiloma*) is the same as in the *Nettipakaraṇa* on access. But what follows differs:

In this context, this is the joint attribution: one whose body is relaxed experiences happiness; the mind of one who is happy is concentrated; up to, there is the knowledge and vision, ‘I am liberated’.⁶⁹ That liberation due to the ending of the corruptions [means] one does not re-arise. When there is no coming or going for that person who has no re-arising, ‘neither here nor there nor in between exist. Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness’. This is the domain of *nibbāna* without any appropriation left. This is jointly ascribed to the middle of this discourse, a joint reference to dependent

64. The differences are studied in Nāṇamoli 1962, xiii–xxvi.

65. Nāṇamoli translates *samāropana* ‘coordination’ in both *Peṭ* and *Netti*. Caudron (2000, 158) translates *samāropana* ‘putting forth’. The Sanskrit word *āropaṇa* has the sense of ‘attribution’ (MW 151, s.v. *āropaṇa*; cf. Apte, s.v. *samāropah*); Cone likewise gives the Pāli *āropanā* the meaning of ‘ascribing’ (DOP I 330, s.v. *āropanā*). The word *samāropana* therefore suggests the sense of ‘jointly ascribing’ or ‘joint attribution’, which is relevant to the idea of an exegetical mode of jointly ascribing (or coordinating, or putting forth) more than one rephrasing to the meaning of a given discourse.

66. This is to simplify the meaning of the mode for the sake of this discussion; see Bond (1982, 94–95) and Caudron (2000, 158–160) for fuller accounts of the *samāropana-hāra* in *Netti*.

67. The unexpected English phrasing of ‘from ignorance as condition, these formations’ echoes the Pāli *ime avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*.

68. *Peṭ* 110: *nissitacittassa ca mattiko ca nissayo taṅhā ca diṭṭhi ca. tattha diṭṭhi avijjā taṅhā saṅkhārā. tattha diṭṭhipaccayā taṅhā ime avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā. tattha nissitaṃ viññānaṃ idaṃ saṅkhārapaccayā viññānaṃ yāva jarāmarāṇaṃ. idaṃ saṅkhittena bhāsīte avasiṭṭhaṃ paropayati. anissitassa calitaṃ [reading with Be rather than PTS *calattaṃ*] natthīti tassa evaṃ diṭṭhiyā taṅhāya ca pahānaṃ ...* Unfortunately, the text of *Peṭ* is rather corrupt beyond this point, though Nāṇamoli’s translation (1962, 152–153) suggests a continuing resemblance to *Netti* on the mode of access.

69. Nāṇamoli (1962, 153) refers to M 7 PTS I 37, although that discourse does not preserve these words exactly. It is possible that *Peṭ* is quoting a discourse which has not been preserved in the Pāli canon: see note 56 above.

arising and to liberation;⁷⁰ but this does not analyse in detail the meaning of what has been stated in brief. This is called the exegetical mode of joint attribution.⁷¹

While the *Peṭakopadesa* clearly maps ‘when there is relaxation’ onto the category of the sequence of stages up to liberation, it does not describe this sequence as ‘transcendental dependent arising’. Instead, having rephrased this part of *Udāna* 8: 4 in terms of the stages to liberation, it goes on to jointly ascribe ‘when there is relaxation’ both to dependent arising and to these stages of liberation. This is to say that the two ways of rephrasing this part of *Udāna* 8: 4, in terms of the cessation mode of dependent arising, and in terms of the various stages of the path to liberation, differ in phrasing but have one meaning or aim (*attha*), that is, *nibbāna*.⁷²

We can represent the *Peṭakopadesa*’s exegesis of *Udāna* 8.4 in a table, comparing it to that in the *Nettipakaraṇa*:

Four truths	Origination	Cessation	Path
<i>Udāna</i> 8: 4	‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’	‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’	‘when there is relaxation’
<i>Peṭakopadesa</i> on joint attribution	dependent arising in natural order	dependent arising in contrary order	and [stages of the path to] liberation
<i>Nettipakaraṇa</i> on access	dependent arising in natural order	dependent arising in contrary order	
	worldly dependent arising		transcendental dependent arising

The difference that this table shows up is that the joint attribution in the *Peṭakopadesa* allows a mapping of ‘when there is relaxation’ onto both cessation and the path jointly. Joint attribution like this preserves the over-arching categorial boundaries of cessation and the path, while recognising in the discourse itself that ‘when there is relaxation’ is ambiguous, presenting stages of the path within and as part of the cessation sequence of dependent arising.

The exegeses of *Udāna* 8: 4 in *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakaraṇa* evidently differ in how they categorise the series of stages, from virtuous conduct to liberation, found in the *Kimatthīya Sutta* and the *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta*. Whereas *Netti* describes them as ‘transcendental dependent arising’, the *Peṭakopadesa* elsewhere simply calls them

70. ‘Joint reference’ translates *yoga*; Nāṇamoli (1964, 153) has ‘construing’.

71. Peṭ 111: *tattha yaṃ samāropanā passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati, yāva vimutto’mhīti* [Be *vimuttitāmīti*] *ñāṇadassanaṃ bhavati. so āsavānaṃ khayā ca vimutti no upapajjati. tassa upapattissā āgatigatiyā asantiyā nevidha* [with Be rather than PTS *āgatigatiyaṃ asantikaṃ na cetanā*] *na huraṃ na ubhayaṃ antarena. es’ ev’ anto dukkhassāti* [Be instead of PTS *ev’attho* ‘*nuyāti*] *anupādisesā nibbānadhātu. idaṃ assa suttassa majjhe samāropitaṃ paṭiccasamuppāde ca vimuttiyaṃ ca yogo na ca etaṃ tassa saṃkhittena bhāsītassa vitthārena atthaṃ vibhajjati. ayaṃ vuccate samāropano hāro.*

72. *Netti* 81–4 presents the exegetical mode of joint attribution in an apparently similar way. Caudron summarizes its exegetical function as follows: ‘teachers can put forth [i.e. jointly ascribe] a teaching by emphasizing one dhamma with a single aim through the use [of] varied expressions’ (2000, 159).

'eleven states rooted in virtue' (*ekādaśa-sīla-mūlakā dhammā*).⁷³ Since both exegetical texts discuss these discourses several times, the *Nettipakaraṇa*'s unique description of the stages from virtue to liberation as 'transcendental dependent arising' is not related to any neglect of these stages in the *Peṭakopadesa*,⁷⁴ but rather due to a different exegetical strategy. This exegetical strategy is connected to a different interpretation of dependent arising, though this is never exactly made clear. Hence the exegesis of dependent arising in *Nettipakaraṇa* differs from that in the *Peṭakopadesa*, and indeed from that in the whole subsequent tradition of commentary.

Conclusion: Ambiguous terrain

I have showed how the category of 'transcendental dependent arising', uniquely employed by the *Nettipakaraṇa* in its exegesis of *Udāna* 8: 4, is at odds with the exegesis of that same discourse in the *Peṭakopadesa*. I will conclude by explaining this difference in terms of two distinct interpretations of the discourses about dependent arising and the stages of the path, discourses which resemble ambiguous terrain.

In the period after the Buddha's teachings had been collected and the discourses composed, the question would have naturally arisen among the Buddhists of how to interpret the amazingly diverse collection they had inherited. Exegetical works like the *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* tried to make sense of the discourses by interpreting them according to rules and principles, explaining unfamiliar teachings in more familiar terms, and obscure ones in terms of teachings that were clearly understood. This meant deciding which familiar and clear teachings and terms could be the basis for interpreting the rest. But this is not easy to do. If the meaning of the *Dhamma* can be expressed in very many ways, then the exegesis of any particular discourse depends on certain choices about how to understand its meaning, and those choices cannot be objectively justified. This is a Buddhist version of the well-known 'hermeneutic circle', by which the process of interpretation takes place in the interplay of an individual's understanding, some particular text, and the whole body of the (Buddhist) discourses and teachings.

The Buddha himself is reported as initiating the process of interpretation of his teachings, and warning about the danger of misinterpretation:

Monks, these two misrepresent the Perfected One. Which two? One who interprets a discourse of implicit meaning as a discourse explicit of meaning, and one who interprets a discourse of explicit meaning as a discourse of implicit meaning.⁷⁵

73. Peṭ 129. This account is also preserved in An Shigao's translation (Zacchetti 2002a, 85).

74. The *Kimatthiya Sutta* is subjected to a full exegesis via all the exegetical modes at Peṭ 182–90. This full interpretation does not mention dependent arising, although it is suffused with various considerations of conditionality. The discourse is also mentioned at Peṭ 24 as a discourse 'concerning penetration' (*nibbedhabhāgiya*), as at Netti 144.

75. A 2: 25 PTS i.60–61: *dveme bhikkhave tathāgataṃ abbhācikkhanti. katame dve? yo ca neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ nītattha suttanta'ti dīpeti yo ca nītatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattha suttanta'ti dīpeti. ime kho bhikkhave dve tathāgataṃ abbhācikkhanti.*

A discourse of ‘implicit meaning’ (*neyyattha*) is one whose meaning (*attha*) needs to be drawn out (*neyya*) or interpreted, while a discourse of ‘explicit meaning’ (*nītattha*) is one whose meaning has been drawn out (*nīta*) – it needs no interpretation. In order for an exegete not to misrepresent the Buddha, they would first need to identify discourses of explicit meaning and then interpret discourses of implicit meaning in terms of those that are explicit.

Turning to the specific teaching of dependent arising, there are discourses of quite explicit meaning:

And what, monks, is dependent arising? Monks, from ignorance as condition there are formations. From formations as condition there is consciousness ... Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of unsatisfactoriness. This, monks, is called arising. From the fading away and cessation without remainder of just this ignorance there is the cessation of formations ... Thus there is the cessation of this whole mass of unsatisfactoriness.⁷⁶

There can be no doubt in regard to discourses like this that the term ‘dependent arising’ refers to the sequences of twelve links in natural and contrary order. But what about discourses of more implicit meaning, such as the *Upasā Sutta*, or our discourses on stages of the path? Should they be interpreted in terms of dependent arising, or not?

These are questions of interpretation, since the discourses are ambiguous; the *Upasā Sutta*, for instance, connects the well-known links of dependent arising with the stages of the path, but does not call the latter ‘dependent arising’. The discourse could be interpreted in terms of a single causal series, with ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’ sections; or it could be interpreted as two distinct series, to be understood in different ways, the joining up of which in this one context is a figurative or rhetorical device.

Our exegetical works in fact suggest that their exegeses of dependent arising rest on two different interpretations along just these lines. The *Nettipakaraṇa* interprets dependent arising more broadly. This is implied in its discussion of the exegetical mode of ‘fitting in’ (*yutti hāra*), which is concerned with how the exegete might rephrase discourses so that they ‘fit in’ with (i) the noble truths, (ii) the removing of passion, hostility and confusion, and (iii) dependent arising:⁷⁷ ‘To which nature of things (*dhammatā*) must [the terms and expressions of the discourses] be compared? To dependent arising’.⁷⁸ For the *Nettipakaraṇa*, ‘dependent arising’ refers not just to the familiar formula of the twelve links, but also to conditionality considered as

76. S 12: 1 PTS II 1: *katamo ca bhikkhave paṭiccasamuppādo? avijjāpaccayā bhikkhave saṅkhārā. saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ... evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave samuppādo. avijjāya tveva asesavirāganirodhā saṅkhāranirodho ... evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.* The formulation is repeated many times in the *nidāna-samyutta* and elsewhere.

77. Discussed in Caudron (2000, 54–55), where she translates *yutti* as ‘verification’. Ñāṇamoli (1962, 116) translates *yutti* as ‘construing’.

78. *Netti 22: katamissaṃ dhammatāyaṃ upanikkhipitabbāni? paṭiccasamuppāde.* See DOP II 456, s.v. *upanikkhipati*, ‘places beside (for comparison)’.

dhammatā, ‘the real nature of things, how things are’.⁷⁹ This would appear to be a reasonable interpretation, since in another important canonical discourse the term ‘dependent arising’ is said to refer to ‘the stability of things, the natural lawfulness of things, specific conditionality’,⁸⁰ and this implies that ‘dependent arising’ refers to a more general principle of conditionality, of which the standard formulation of twelve links in natural and contrary order is the most important application. Having interpreted dependent arising in this way, it follows that discourses on the stages of the path should be interpreted in terms of dependent arising, since the *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta* states: ‘it is the nature of things (*dhammatā*) that freedom from remorse arises for one who is ethical and blessed with virtuous conduct’.⁸¹ And it is therefore reasonable for the *Nettipakaraṇa* to describe the stages of the path as ‘transcendental dependent arising’, in order to distinguish this application of dependent arising from its better-known formulation in terms of the twelve links.⁸²

The *Peṭakopadesa*, on the other hand, interprets dependent arising more narrowly in terms of the twelve links. This is, of course, what some discourses of explicit meaning say that ‘dependent arising’ means. A more general principle of conditionality is implied in the discourses in a variety of ways, but the term ‘dependent arising’ is reserved for what it explicitly refers to. The *Peṭakopadesa* also interprets the factors of the path as unfolding according to causes and conditions. This is clear in its own discussion of the exegetical mode of ‘fitting in’,⁸³ which is rather different to that in the *Nettipakaraṇa*.⁸⁴ The *Peṭakopadesa* illustrates ‘fitting in’ by taking the example of a discourse which states: ‘Living beings are purified through causes and conditions; there is a cause and a condition for the purification of living beings’.⁸⁵ It asks, what is the way to this purification? In answer, *Peṭakopadesa* quotes from the *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta*,⁸⁶ concerning the stages of the path, drawing out in various ways how to articulate the causes and conditions for the path of purification. But this is not called dependent arising.

79. DOP II 471 s.v. *dhamma*.

80. S 12: 20 PTS II 25: *dhamma-tthitatā dhamma-niyāmatā idappaccayatā*.

81. A 11: 2 PTS V 312–313: *dhammatā esā ... yaṃ sīlavato sīlasampannassa avipphaṭṭhāro uppajjati*.

82. It might be added that the *Netti*’s interpretation of the path in terms of transcendental dependent arising is in line with the fact that, at A 4: 34 (PTS II 34), the Noble Eightfold Path is described as the foremost of all conditioned phenomena: *yāvataṃ bhikkhave dhammā saṅkhatā ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo tesam aggam akkhāyati*, while at D 34 (PTS III 275) we read that ‘whatever is become, conditioned (*saṅkhatam*), dependently arisen (*paṭicca-samuppanam*), the leaving behind of that is cessation (*nirodha*)’, implying that the Noble Eightfold Path is indeed dependently arisen. Many thanks to Peter Harvey for drawing my attention to these discourses.

83. Peṭ 88–89; the summary stanza is the same as in *Netti*, but the explanation that follows is entirely different.

84. It is this kind of comparison that suggests that *Netti* and *Peṭ* are two separate workings-out of the same basic exegetical method.

85. From M 60 PTS I 407, quoted in Peṭ 88: *atthi hetu atthi paccayo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā. sahetu sapaccayā sattā visujjhanti*.

86. A 11: 2 PTS V 312–313; although the text of *Peṭ* here is corrupt and this attribution is a guess: see Nāṇamoli 1964, 116.

In Appendix 2, I present two diagrams illustrating these different interpretations of dependent arising in *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa*. The difference is partly semantic: the *Peṭakopadesa* limits the scope of the term ‘dependent arising’ to the twelve links, while the *Netti* applies it more broadly. But the difference is also hermeneutic, concerning differing ways of interpreting the ambiguities of the discourses. The *Upanisā Sutta*, for instance, presents the familiar links of dependent arising, but connects unsatisfactoriness with faith, and faith with the stages of the path, culminating in liberation and knowledge and vision of the ending of the corruptions, which is the experience of awakening. Following the *Peṭakopadesa* we might jointly ascribe this discourse to the categories of dependent arising and the path to liberation. Or, following the *Nettipakaraṇa*, we could interpret this discourse in terms of dependent arising, as being both ‘about ordinary experience’ and ‘about what is beyond ordinary experience’. To do this is to draw out an implicit meaning of the discourse; to formulate the exegetical map in accordance with a particular way of interpreting the discourses.

While this interpretation did not seem to be taken up by the mainstream of Buddhist exegesis and commentary, it has caught the imagination of some modern Buddhist authors. The reason is not hard to discern. In the context of the modern worldview, permeated by a naturalistic conception of causation, everything that happens, from the earthquakes to enlightenment, does so through causes and conditions. An interpretation of the early Buddhist discourses that highlights the naturalism implicit in them means an articulation of the *Dhamma* which is at home in the modern world. Therefore, the *Nettipakaraṇa*, with its unique reference to transcendental dependent arising, has provided a useful precedent for a modernist expression of the *Dhamma*.

Appendix 1: Two examples of categorial mapping

The method of categorial mapping employed in our Pāli exegetical works, and found also in Gandhāran fragments, may be illustrated by their exegeses of *Udāna* 8: 4 (quoted above, p. 174). The following table represents the mapping of *Udāna* 8: 4 in the *Nettipakaraṇa* reduced to its essentials:

discourse extract (Ud 8: 4):	rephrasing as root-terms (<i>mūla-pādas</i>)		gives access to:
‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’	dependent is: craving (<i>taṇhā</i>) views (<i>diṭṭhi</i>)	intention (<i>cetanā</i>) is: passion (<i>rāga</i>) confusion (<i>moha</i>)	<i>paṭicca-samuppāda</i> (<i>anuloma/lokiya</i>) <i>khandhas</i> <i>indriyas</i> <i>dhātus</i> <i>āyatanas</i>
‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’	independent: calm (<i>samatha</i>) insight (<i>vipassanā</i>)	knowledge (<i>vijjā</i>)	<i>paṭicca-samuppāda</i> (<i>paṭiloma</i>) <i>khandhas</i> <i>indriyas</i> <i>dhātus</i> <i>āyatanas</i>

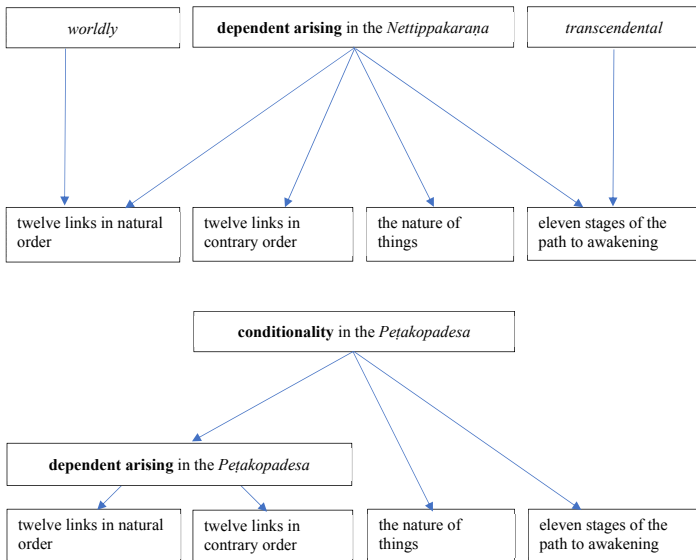
'when there is relaxation'	ending of: passion (<i>rāga</i>) hostility (<i>dosa</i>) confusion (<i>moha</i>)	<i>paṭicca-samuppāda</i> (<i>lokuttara</i>) <i>khandhas</i> <i>āyatanas</i>
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The discourse extracts on the left are first 'reduced' to a recognizable set of terms, and then, in the mode of access (*otaraṇa hāra*), those terms are mapped onto various basic Buddhist categories. The following table represents the equivalent mapping in the *Peṭakopadesa*, in the exegetical mode of joint attribution (*samāropana hāra*):

discourse extract (Ud 8.4):	rephrasing as root-terms (<i>mūla-pādas</i>)		joint attribution:
'there is agitation for one who is dependent'	dependent is: craving (<i>taṇhā</i>) views (<i>diṭṭhi</i>)	formations (<i>saṅkhārā</i>) ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>)	<i>anuloma paṭicca-samuppāda</i>
'there is no agitation for one who is independent'	giving up: craving (<i>taṇhā</i>) views (<i>diṭṭhi</i>)	cessation of: formations (<i>saṅkhārā</i>) ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>)	<i>paṭiloma paṭicca-samuppāda</i>
'when there is relaxation'	[stages of the path]	leading to: <i>nibbāna</i>	<i>paṭicca-samuppāda</i> and liberation (<i>vimutti</i>)

Again, the discourse extracts on the left are reduced to root-terms, but those terms are mapped onto basic Buddhist categories in the mode of joint attribution (*samāropana hāra*), ascribing the stages of the path jointly to dependent arising and to liberation.

Appendix 2: Interpretations of dependent arising



Abbreviations

- A *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, PTS eds. vols.I–V (Morris and Hardy 1885–1900); translated as *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha* (Bodhi 2012).
- D *Dīgha-nikāya*, PTS eds. vol. I (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890), vol. II (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1903), vol.3 (Carpenter 1911); translated as *Long Discourses of the Buddha* (Walshe 1987).
- Dhp *Dhammapada*, PTS (O. von Hinüber and Norman 1994).
- DOP *Dictionary of Pāli* vol.1 (Cone 2001) vol.2 (Cone 2010).
- M *Majjhima-nikāya*, PTS eds. vol.I (Trenckner 1888), vol.II (Trenckner and Chalmers 1898), vol.III (Chalmers 1899); translated as *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995).
- MĀ *Madhyama Āgama*, Taishō 1.26
- MW Monier Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Monier-Williams 1899).
- Netti *Nettipakarana*, PTS (Hardy 1902); translated as *The Guide* (Ñāṇamoli 1962).
- Nidd *Niddesa*, PTS vol.I *Mahāniddesa* (de la Vallée Poussin and Thomas 1916); *Niddesa*, PTS vol.II *Cullaniddesa* (Stede 1918).
- PED *Pāli Text Society Pāli-English Dictionary* (Rhys Davids and Stede 1921).
- Peṭ *Peṭakopadesa* PTS (Barua 1982); translated as *Pitaka Disclosure* (Ñāṇamoli 1964).
- PTS Pali Text Society edition of a Pāli text
- S *Samyutta-nikāya*, PTS eds. vols.I–V (Féer 1884–1898); translated as *Connected Discourses of the Buddha* (Bodhi 2000).
- Thā *Theragāthā* PTS (Oldenberg et al. 1966); translated as *Elders' Verses I* (Norman 2007).
- Ud *Udāna* (Steinthal 1885); translated *The Udāna* (Ireland 1990).

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