Going Off the Map: ‘Transcendental Dependent Arising’ in the \textit{Nettipakarana}

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\textbf{Abstract}

The early Buddhist exegetical text, the \textit{Nettipakarana}, apparently uniquely, describes the stages of the path as ‘transcendental dependent arising’ (\textit{lokuttara p\textipa{t}icca-samupp\textipa{d}a}), in contrast with the twelve \textit{nid\textipa{d}anas}, called ‘worldly dependent arising’ (\textit{lokiya p\textipa{t}icca-samupp\textipa{d}a}). A close reading of the \textit{Nettipakarana} in relation to another, related, exegetical text, the \textit{Pe\textipa{t}akopadesa}, reveals that the latter interprets the same stages of the path in a different way. More broadly, while the \textit{Pe\textipa{t}akopadesa} takes \textit{p\textipa{t}icca-samupp\textipa{d}a} to refer only to the twelve \textit{nid\textipa{d}anas}, the \textit{Nettipakarana}’s exegetical strategy takes \textit{p\textipa{t}icca-samupp\textipa{d}a} to refer to an over-arching principle of conditionality, both ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’. This exegesis has proved popular with modern western Buddhist exegetes.

\textbf{Introduction}

Several contemporary Buddhist authors, including Sangharakshita, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ayya Khema and Bhikkhu Brahmali, have taken up the theme of ‘transcendental dependent arising’ (\textit{lokuttara p\textipa{t}icca-samupp\textipa{d}a}) in order to present the Buddhist path to awakening as an experiential sequence of causally-connected stages.\footnote{Sangharakshita has not used the phrase ‘transcendental dependent arising’ but the exposition of the ‘spiral path’ of progressive conditionality based on the \textit{Upanis\textipa{s}\textipa{a} Sutta} is a centrepiece of his presentation of Buddhist doctrine: see especially \textit{A Survey of Buddhism} ch.1 §14 (originally published in 1957) in Sangharakshita 2018, 114–20; Bhikkhu Bodhi 1980, acknowledging Sangharakshita, uses the expression ‘transcendental dependent arising’ in his exposition of the \textit{Upanis\textipa{s}\textipa{a} 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 \textit{dhamma} talk.} This presentation is based on a canonical text, the \textit{Upanis\textipa{s}\textipa{a} Sutta}.
(Discourse on Preconditions), found in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya.* This discourse presents twenty-three phenomena, each the ‘precondition’ (*upanisā*) for the next, as follows:


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] age-and-death (*jarāmarāṇa*) 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, 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.

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, appeal to a Pāli exegetical text called *Nettippakaraṇa* 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

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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.346–9. The parallel shows some interesting differences of detail from the Pāli version, 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.
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 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 *Nettippakaraṇa* 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 *Nettippakaraṇa* 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 *Cetanākaraṇiya Sutta* (Is It Necessary to Be Willful Discourse). 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 (*avipattisāra*). 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 (*vimuttīnāṇḍassana*) instead of the two factors of liberation (*vimutti*) and knowledge about ending (of the pollutants) (*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 *Nettippakaraṇa* 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. 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 *Nettippakaraṇa* 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. 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 *Nettippakaraṇa*’s single reference to transcendental dependent arising, I will suggest that the

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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 311–5 recur with only slight variations at A 10: 1–5 PTS V 1–7 and A 11: 4–5 PTS V 316–7. Parallels in Chinese translation are found in MA 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 pāṭicca-samuppāda*, they are certainly not obvious. Furthermore, as I will argue, the very idea of transcendental dependent arising is at odds with the scholastic tendency so evident in *Abhidhamma* and commentary.
Netti’s exegesis goes ‘off the map’ in relation to how Buddhist teachings had previously been interpreted. I will conclude by suggesting that exegesis depends on some prior decisions concerning interpretation, and that the Nettippakarana in fact interprets dependent arising as including the positive stages of the path, while the Pëtakopadesa, and indeed the Buddhism represented by subsequent Pali literature, does not.

**The history of the Nettippakarana**

Some background is needed to properly appreciate what the Nettippakarana says about transcendental dependent arising. Netti means ‘a leading rope’,\(^9\) and a pakaraṇa is a ‘literary work’ or ‘book’,\(^10\) hence Nettippakarana means ‘Guide-Book’ or simply ‘The Guide’.\(^11\) As this title suggests, the Nettippakarana 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.’\(^12\) Along with another text called Pëtakopadesa,\(^13\) with which it shares a store of concepts, tools, summary stanzas and discourse quotations, Nettippakarana belongs to a class of Pali literature concerned with exegesis, so that it should be distinguished from commentary.\(^14\) 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 Nettippakarana, along with the Pëtakopadesa and the Milindapañhā, is sometimes described as ‘paracanonical’, meaning that it is ‘not quite’ canonical.\(^15\) In fact, the Burmese did include the exegetical texts in their Pali canon, perhaps believing that they were, as the texts themselves claim, the work of the Buddha’s disciple Mahākaccāna.\(^16\) Western scholars have never accepted this claim,\(^17\) but neither have the Sri Lankans, who do not include the exegetical works in their canon. Taking the Nettippakarana to be paracanonical in this way, Nāṇamoli understood it to

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\(^9\) DOP II 639, s.v. netti.
\(^10\) PED 639, s.v. pakaraṇa.
\(^11\) Hence the title of Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli’s (1962) translation of Nettippakarana.
\(^12\) Nāṇamoli 1962, vii.
\(^13\) 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 Nettippakarana, by contrast, is well-preserved.
\(^14\) One might say that commentary is normative, telling us how the discourses should be understood (*veditabba*); 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.
\(^15\) See, for instance, von Hinüber 1996, 76f.
\(^16\) Nāṇamoli 1962, xii; Norman 1983, 110; see also Jackson 2006.
\(^17\) See Nāṇamoli 1962, xii for details. 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).
be a Theravādin work piously attributed to Mahākaccāna, though he conjectures that it was written in India rather than in Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{18} K.R. Norman also conjectured that the \textit{Nettipakarana} 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 recognise.\textsuperscript{19} Oscar von Hinüber went further, however, in supposing that the \textit{Nettipakarana} 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.\textsuperscript{20}

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 \textit{Peṭakopadesa}.\textsuperscript{21} 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 \textit{Peṭakopadesa} itself was translated into Pāli from a north Indian language, since there are otherwise very few translations into Chinese from Pāli.\textsuperscript{22} 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 the those of a commentary on the \textit{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.\textsuperscript{23} He describes this method as ‘categorial mapping’, and I will return to this theme of ‘mapping’ and maps below. Commenting on the implications, Richard Salomon concludes: ‘The discovery of Gāndhāri commentaries that employ similar exegetical techniques... suggests that \textit{Peṭakopadesa} and \textit{Nettipakaraṇa} or their archetypes may have originated in a Gandhāran tradition that specialized in this method of interpretation [i.e., categorial mapping].’\textsuperscript{24}

The current scholarly view is therefore that \textit{Nettipakarana}, together with \textit{Peṭakopadesa}, is a Pāli exegetical text preserved by the Theravādins, translated into Pāli from archetypes originating in the Gandhāra region of north-west India. Ṉānamoli had argued that \textit{Nettipakarana} was a re-arranged and re-written version of the \textit{Peṭakopadesa},\textsuperscript{25} 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.

The exegetical method of the \textit{Nettipakaraṇa}

\textsuperscript{18} Ṉānamoli 1962, xxviii.
\textsuperscript{19} Norman 1983, 110.
\textsuperscript{20} Von Hinüber 1996, 80. 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).
\textsuperscript{21} Zacchetti 2002a. See also Zacchetti 2002b.
\textsuperscript{22} Zacchetti 2002a, 92.
\textsuperscript{23} Baums 2014 (especially p.28f). Baums (p.35) also explains how the unexpected Pāli compound \textit{petakopadesa} may be the result of a ‘superficial phonetic transposition’ from a regular Gāndhāri formation \textit{pedagoadesā}, in the meaning ‘the instruction of the Piṭaka-master.’
\textsuperscript{24} Salomon 2018, 299–300.
\textsuperscript{25} Ṉānamoli 1962, xxv.
The exegetical method of the *Nettipakaraṇa*, originating in Gandhāra but now extant only in Gāndhāri 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.26 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.’27 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 (aparimāna) words, phrases and expositions of the dhamma’,28 so the *Nettipakaraṇa* explains that there are immeasurable terms, words, phrasings, definitions, etymological interpretations and explanations.29

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 (mūlapadas). The root-terms consist of nine terms for what is ‘wholesome’ (kusala) and nine for what is ‘unwholesome’ (akusala).30 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.31 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 better appreciate its meaning.32

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26 On this topic, see Bond 1979, 30, Bond 1980, 19, Bond 1982, 41–2.
27 At D 2 PTS I 62 and elsewhere; quoted at Netti 5.
28 A 4: 188 PTS II 182.
29 Netti 9.
30 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 wholesome terms? Craving (tañhā), ignorance (avijjā), greed (lobha), hostility (dosa), confusion (moha), perception of the attractive (subhosaññā), perception of the pleasant (sukhasaññā), perception of the permanent (niccasaññā), perception of a self (attasaññā) – 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 (samma), meditative insight (vipassanā), non-greed (alobha), non-hostility (adosa), non-confusion (amoha), perception of the unattractive (asubhosaññā), perception of the painful (dukkhasaññā), perception of impermanence (aniccasaññā), perception of non-self (anattasaññā) – these are the nine wholesome terms, in which all that belongs to the wholesome are collected and classified.’
31 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 (nandiyañāta), trefoil (tipukkha), lion’s play (sihavikkhīlita), looking at the directions (disālocana), the hook (aṅkusa).’ These methods deserve a fuller treatment than I can give them here; see Bond 1988 and especially Caudron 2000.
32 Netti 2: ‘Here, what are the sixteen exegetical modes? Exposition (desanā), investigation (vicaya), fitting in (yuttī), footing (padatṭhāna), characteristic (lakkhana), fourfold array (catubhya), conversion (āvaṭṭa),
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.33

The exegetical mode of ‘access’

The discussion of ‘transcendental dependent arising’ occurs in the full explanation (patiniddesa) of the sixteen exegetical modes, specifically in the course of the explanation of the exegetical mode of ‘access’ (otaraṇa).34 The explanation begins with a summary explanation in verse:

Dependent rising,35 faculties, categories, domains and spheres:
the exegetical mode that accesses [meaning] through these is access.36

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;37 (ii) the faculties (indriyas),38 (iii) the constituents (khandhas);39 (iv) the domains (dhātuṣ);40 and the spheres (āyatanaṇa).41

The Nettippakarana explains the sixteen exegetical modes one by one through the exegesis of short discourses or extracts from longer ones, these discourses generally being relatively obscure.

33 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).

34 Nāṇamoli translates the otaraṇa-hāra as ‘the mode of conveying ways of entry’, while Caudron (2000) translates it as ‘access’.

35 I deliberately use this formulation rather than ‘dependent arising’, to echo the Pāli paticcuppādo, abbreviated from the synonymous paticcasamuppādo for the sake of the Āryā metre.

36 Verse summary presented at Netti 4, then repeated at Netti 63, at the beginning of the full explanation of the mode: yo ca paticcuppādo | indriyakhandhā ca dhātu āyatanā | etehi otarati yo | otaraṇo nāma so hāro. These gāthās are in Āryā metre (12, 18, 12, 15 morae per pāda).

37 These are the twelve links in both natural (anuloma) and contrary (pāṭiloma) order; and, uniquely in this context, in terms of ‘worldly’ and ‘transcendental’ dependent arising.

38 There are various lists of faculties: one is faith (saddhā), energy (viriya), mindfulness (sati), concentration (samādhi), understanding (paññā); another is the five kinds of feeling (vedānā): 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).

39 The three khandhas, ‘constituents’ or ‘groups of good qualities’, consist in the constituent of virtuous conduct (sīlakkhandha), the constituent of concentration (samādhi), and the constituent of understanding (paññā); this list is distinct from the five khandhas or ‘constituents’ of experience (rūpa, vedānā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa).

40 These include the eighteen domains (the six senses, their objects and their consciousnesses) and the three domains: the domain of sense-desire (kāmadhātu), the domain of [meditative] form (rūpadhātu) and the formless domain (arūpadhātu).

41 These include the six senses and their objects (hence overlapping with the domains).
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 Nettipakaranā 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 nor going. When there is no coming nor going, there exist no death nor rebirth. When there is no death nor rebirth, neither here nor there nor in between exist. Just this is the end of unsatisfactoriness.**

This saying of the Buddha is found in the Udāna among a series of four discourses, each entitled 'connected with nībūna' (nībūnapatiṣaṃyuttta), and each featuring an utterance (udāna) as enigmatic as this one. The Nettipakaranā’s exegesis of this extract begins as follows:

In “there is agitation for one who is dependent”, what is called dependence is twofold: dependence on craving and dependence on 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.** 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.

The exegesis of ‘dependence’ (nissaya) in terms of ‘craving’ (tan̄hā) and ‘views’ (diṭṭhi) is an example of a re-phrasing of one term (dependence) as two of the root-terms (mūlapadas) (craving and

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** 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 calitam anissitassa calitam nattthi. calite atasī passaddhi. passaddhiyā sati nati na hoti. natiyā atasī āgatigati na hoti. āgatigatiyā atasī cutūpapāto na hoti. cutūpapāte atasī n‘ev’idha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena na ubhayamantare sabbattha. es‘ev’anto dukkhassa. There is a parallel preserved in Sanskrit at Udānavarga 26: 20: anihśritasyacalitam prasrabdhī 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.

** Ud 8: 1–4 PTS 80–1.

** ‘Passionate’ (ratta) is cognate with ‘passion’ (rāga); ‘bewildered’ (sammuḷha) 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.’

** Netti 65: nissitassa calitam’ti nissayo nāma duvīdho tanhānissayo ca diṭṭhiṇissayo ca. tattha yā rattassa cetanā ayaṃ tanhānissayo. yā mūḷhassa cetanā ayaṃ diṭṭhiṇissayo. cetanā pana saṅkhārā. saṅkhārapaccayā viiññāno. viiññānapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. evaṃ sabbo paṭiccasamuppādo. ayaṃ paṭiccasamuppādehi otaranā.
views). But exegesis in the mode of access is here 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 Nettippakarana on the mode of access continues:

In this context, the feeling (vedanā) of one who is compelled 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 and are factors of existence are included in the domain of phenomena. This is the access by means of domains. The domain of phenomena belongs to the sphere of phenomena. This sphere is polluted and is a factor of existence. This is the access by means of spheres.

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 Nettippakarana 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 (paññākkhandha), the faculty of understanding (paññindriya), the non-polluted domain of phenomena (dhammadhātu), and the non-polluted sphere of phenomena (dhammāyatana). But it is the next section of our discourse that is of more direct interest:

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46 This kind of re-phrasing is an interpretive method typical of early Buddhist commentary; Baums (2014, 23–6) calls the method ‘categorial 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.

47 The ‘domain of phenomena’ (dhammadhātu) refers to the domain of the ‘objects’ (dhammas) of the manas or mind-sense, among the eighteen domains.

48 Netti 65: tattha yā rattassa vedanā ayaṃ sukha vedanā. yā sammūhassa vedanā ayaṃ adukkhamasukhā vedanā. imā dve vedanā vedanākkhandho. ayaṃ khandhehi otaraṇā. tattha sukha vedanā dve indriyāni sukhindriyāṃ somanassindriyāṇca adukkhamasukhā vedanā upekkhindriyāṃ. ayaṃ indriyehi otaraṇā. tāniyeva indriyāni sankhārapariyāpannāni ye sankhārā sāsavā bhavangā te sankhārā dhammadhātusangahaññā. ayaṃ dhātūhi otaraṇā. sā dhammadhātu dhammāyatanaariyāpannā yaṃ āyatanaṃ sāsavām bhavangām, ayaṃ āyatanehi otaraṇā.
When there is relaxation: relaxation is of two kinds – bodily and mental. A bodily pleasure is bodily relaxation. A mental pleasure is mental relaxation. One whose body is relaxed experiences happiness. A happy mind becomes concentrated. One who is concentrated understands what is actually the case. One who understands what is actually the case becomes disenchanted. One who is disenchanted becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion one is liberated. As regards liberation, one knows that one is liberated. 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.

Although the Nettippakaraṇa 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 Cetanākaraṇiya Sutta from the Aṅguttara Nikāya, which elsewhere it cites in full.

The exegesis of Udāna 8: 4 to illustrate the exegetical mode of access continues with an extraordinary passage explaining what might be meant by non-inclination:

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 compulsion, due to the ending of hostility, due to the ending of confusion. 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.

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49 This distinction of two kinds of ‘relaxation’ (passaddhi) is already found in the discourses, e.g. S 46: 52, S 54: 13.
50 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 transcendent dependent arising.
51 The formulation of links from happiness to liberation here resemble those in D 34.
52 Netti 66: passaddhiyā satīti dvividhā passaddhi kāyikā ca cetasikā ca. yaṁ kāyikam sukham ayām kāyapassaddhi. yaṁ cetasikam sukham ayām cetasikā passaddhi. passaddhakāya sukham vediyati sukhino cittaṁ samādhiyati samāhito yathābhūtaṁ pajānāti. yathābhūtaṁ pajānanto nibbindati. nibbindanto virajjati. virāgā vimuccati vimuttamīṃm vimuttamiti ūpānaṁ hoti. khīṇā jāti vusitaṁ brahmacariyāṁ katām karanīyāṁ nāpāram itthattāyā ti. The final sentence is a common formula in the discourses signifying the attainment of the goal.
53 See note 6 above for references.
54 Cetanākaraṇiya Sutta is cited in full at Netti 144, as an example of a ‘discourse concerned with penetration’ (nibbhedhabhāgīya); 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’ (padatthāna).
55 The ending (khaya) of the three root afflictions (mūlakilesā), ‘passion’ (rāga), ‘hostility’ (dosa) and ‘confusion’ (moha).
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.  

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.

**Worldly and transcendental dependent arising**

The *Nettipakarana* 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.  

Neither here’ means among the six subjective sense-spheres. ‘Nor there’ means among the six objective sense-spheres. ‘Nor in between’ means one does not see the 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.’

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’.

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56 Netti 66–7: *so na namati rūpesu na saddesu na gandhesu na rasesu na phoṭṭhabbesu. na dhhammesu khaya rāgassa khaya dosassa khaya moхassā. yena rūpena tathāgataṃ tīثhantam carantam paññāpayamāṇo paññāpeyya tassa rūpassa khaya virāgā nirodhā cāgā patinissaggā rūpasaṅkhaye vimutto. tathāgato aththitipī na uttpatitipī na uttpatī na aththitipī na upeti nevatthi no aththitipī na upeti. otha kho gambhiro appameyyo asankheyyo nibbutotiyeva sankham gacchati khaya rāgassa, khaya dosassa, khaya moхassā. yāya vedanāya ... pe ... yāya saññāya. yehi saññārena... yena viññāṇena... The whole formulation contains close echoes of a passage repeated in M 72 PTS I 486 and S 44: 1 PTS IV 383.

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

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

59 Netti 67: *āgati’ti idhāgati. gati’ti peccabhavo. āgatigatipī na bhavanti, nevidhā’ti chasu ajjhātikesu āyatanesu. na huran’ti chasu bāhiresu āyatanesu. na ubhayamantaren’ti phassasamuditesu dhhammesu attānaṃ na passati. esevanto dukkhasā’ti paṭiccassamuppādo. so duvidho lokiyo ca lokuttaro ca. tattha lokiyo avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā yāva jāramaranā. lokuttaro sīlavato avippasissāro jāyati yāva nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānāti. tenāha bhagavā nissitassa calitāṃ anissitassa calitāṃ natthi ... pe ... esevanto dukkhasā’ti.*
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 Nettippakarana in a non-technical sense, as the first pair of eighteen ‘root-terms’ (mūlapadas) for categorising kinds of discourse.\(^{60}\) 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.\(^{61}\)

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.\(^{62}\)

It would seem reasonable to understand the Nettippakarana’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,\(^{63}\) hence it is ‘about ordinary experience’. This form of dependent arising is said here in the Nettippakarana 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’. Hence it is ‘about what is beyond ordinary experience’.\(^{64}\) 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,

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\(^{60}\) 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 work, Patisambhidāmagga, 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 Paṭis 166–7.

\(^{61}\) A 8: 5 PTS IV 156–7: āṭṭhime bhikkhave lokadhammā lokam... katame aṭṭha? lābhā ca alābhā ca yaso ca ayaso ca nindā ca pasāmā ca sukhañca dukkhañca. ime kho bhikkhave aṭṭha lokadhammā; cited at Netti 162. ‘Worldly states’ translates lokadhammas.

\(^{62}\) Dhp 94: yass’indriyāni samathām gatāni | assā yathā sārathinā sudantā | pahinamānassa anāsavassa | devāpi tassa pihayanti tādino; cf. Thā 205–6; cited at Netti 162, and cf. Peṭ 47.

\(^{63}\) See PED 588, s.v. lokiya; cf. MW 907, s.v. loka; 909 s.v. laukya, laukika.

\(^{64}\) See PED 588, s.v. lokuttara; MW 907, s.v. lokottara.
but the stages of ‘virtuous conduct’ and ‘freedom from remorse’ are familiar from the *Anguttara* 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.  

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 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.

‘Categorial 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 ‘categorial mapping’ will show what kind of category ‘transcendental dependent arising’ represents, and how it differs from the standard map of canonical exegesis.

Stefan Baums characterises the exegetical method of some Gandhāran commentarial works preserved on birch-bark fragments as ‘categorial mapping’, which involves the systematic mapping of discourses, especially verses, onto basic sets of Buddhist categories. The vast and varied landscape of early Buddhist discourses are the ‘terrain’, which in this metaphor are ‘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).

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65 ‘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, katam karaṇiyaṃ, 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’ (*anupubbisikkhā*), and paradigmatically at D 2 PTS I 62–84.

66 In Baums 2014, which is drawn from his PhD thesis (Baums 2009). In fact, what I am calling ‘categorial mapping’, Baums mainly calls ‘categorial reduction’. I would prefer to reserve the phrase ‘categorial reduction’ for Niddesa-style glosses of words in terms of better-known doctrinal terms, and use the phrase ‘categorial mapping’ for the larger-scale interpretation of discourses.
In Appendix 1, I include tables that indicate how the Nettippakaraṇa 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 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. The Peṭakopadesa demonstrates at length how the four truths can be used as a top-level mapping, 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.” 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.

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’. The Nettippakaraṇa similarly uses the four truths as a top-level map, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four truths</th>
<th>origination</th>
<th>cessation</th>
<th>path</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Udāna 8: 4</td>
<td>‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’</td>
<td>‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’</td>
<td>‘when there is relaxation’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nettippakaraṇa on access</td>
<td>dependent arising in natural order</td>
<td>dependent arising in contrary order</td>
<td></td>
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67 See Baums 2014, 26 for the equivalent emphasis in the Gandhāri commentaries.
68 At Peṭ 5–22.
69 See above for full text and note 42 for full references.
70 Peṭ 18: tattha katamo samudayo ca nirodho ca maggo ca? nisitassa calitam... es’ ev’ anto dukkhassā’ti. tattha dve nissayā ayaṃ samudayo. yo ca anissayo yā ca anati [reading anati with Be in preference to PTS arati] ayaṃ maggo. yā āgatigati na hoti cutūpapatāto ca yo es’ ev’ anto dukkhassāti ayaṃ nirodho. imāni tīṇi saccāni. The text continues to interpret Ud 8: 4, but is very corrupt. Nāṇamoli 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 anupatṭhitakāyasati, ‘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 upatṭhitakāyasati, ‘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 silasamvaro, ‘restraint through virtuous conduct’, and vimutti, ‘liberation’.
71 At Peṭ 110, translated below.
72 It does so in a less obvious way than Peṭ, but the same principles apply: see Netti 8 and 104–9.
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 Nettippakaraṇa’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 of liberation. The *Peṭakopadesa* uses the same eighteen root-terms, five exegetical methods and sixteen exegetical modes as the Nettippakaraṇa, but it is otherwise arranged differently. It takes up many of the same discourses for discussion, 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*). This exegetical mode involves the joint ascription to a given discourse of various ways of rephrasing with the same meaning. 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. In this context, what is dependent is consciousness; this means with formations as condition there is consciousness,

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73 The differences are studied in Ńāṇamoli 1962, xiii–xxvi.
74 See Ńāṇamoli 1962, lvi–lvi.
75 Ńāṇamoli translates *samāropana* ‘co-ordination’ in both Peṭ and Netti. Caudron (2000, 158) translates *samāropana* ‘putting forth’. The Sanskrit word āropana has the sense of ‘attributing’ (MW 151, s.v. āropana; 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.
76 This is to simplify the meaning of the mode for the sake of this discussion; see Bond (1982, 94–5) and Caudron (2000, 158–60) for fuller accounts of the *samāropana-hāra* in Netti.
77 The unexpected English phrasing of ‘from ignorance as condition, these formations’ echoes the Pāli *ime avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*. 
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.\textsuperscript{78}

The rephrasing of ‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’ in terms of the natural (\textit{anuloma}) sequence of dependent arising and of ‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’ in terms of the contrary (\textit{patiloma}) is the same as in the \textit{Nettipakarana} 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.’\textsuperscript{79} 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 \textit{nibbāna} without any appropriation left. This is jointly ascribed to the middle of this discourse, a joint reference to dependent arising and to liberation;\textsuperscript{80} 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.\textsuperscript{81}

While the \textit{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 \textit{Udāna} 8: 4 in terms of the stages to liberation, it goes on to jointly ascribe ‘when there is calming down’ \textit{both} to dependent arising \textit{and} to these stages of liberation. This is to say that the two ways of rephrasing this part of \textit{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 (\textit{attha}), that is, \textit{nibbāna}.\textsuperscript{82}

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\textsuperscript{78} Peṭ 110: \textit{nissitacittassa ca mattiko ca nissayo tanhā ca diṭṭhi ca. tattha diṭṭhi avijjā tanhā saṅkhārā. tattha diṭṭhipaccayā tanhā ime avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā. tattha nissitaṃ viññāṇam idam saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇam yāva jarāmaranam. idam saṃkhittena bhāsite avasīṭtham paropayati. anissitassa calitam [reading with Be rather than \textit{PTS} \textit{calitam}] natthīti tassa evam diṭṭhiyā tanhāya ca pahānāṃ...} Unfortunately, the text of Peṭ is rather corrupt beyond this point, though \textit{Nānamoli’s translation} (1962, 152–3) suggests a continuing resemblance to Netti on the mode of access.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Nānāmoli} (1962, 153) refers to \textit{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 \textit{65} above.

\textsuperscript{80} ‘Joint reference’ translates \textit{yoga}; \textit{Nānāmoli} (1963) has ‘construing’.

\textsuperscript{81} Peṭ 111: \textit{tattha yaṃ samāropanā passaddhakāyo sukham vedeti. sukhino cittam samādihiyati. yāva vimutto’mhiṭi [Be \textit{vimuttittamiti}] nāṇadassanam bhavati. so āsavānaṃ khayā ca vimutti no upapajjati. tassa upapattissa āgatigatiyā asantikā nevidha [with Be rather than \textit{PTS} \textit{āgatigatiyam asantikam na cetaṇā}] na hūram na ubhayam antarena. es’ ev’ anto dukkhasassī [Be instead of \textit{PTS} \textit{ev’attoh ‘nuyāti} anupādisesā nibbānadhātu. idam assa suttassa majjihe samāropitam paticcasamuppāde ca vimuttiyam ca yogo na ca etam tassa saṃkhittena bhāsitassā viññāhānaṃ attham vibhajjati. ayām vuccate samāropano hāro.}

\textsuperscript{82} 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).
We can represent the Peṭakopadesa’s exegesis of *Udāna 8.4* in a table, comparing it to that in the Nettippakarana:

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<th>orignation</th>
<th>cessation</th>
<th>path</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Udāna 8: 4</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peṭakopadesa on joint attribution</strong></td>
<td>dependent arising in natural order</td>
<td>dependent arising in contrary order</td>
<td>and [stages of the path to] liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nettippakarana on access</strong></td>
<td>dependent arising in natural order</td>
<td>dependent arising in contrary order</td>
<td>transcendental dependent arising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worldly dependent arising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Nettippakarana evidently differ in how they categorise the series of stages, from virtuous conduct to liberation, found in the *Kimatthiya Sutta* and the Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta. Whereas Netti describes them as ‘transcendental dependent arising’, the Peṭakopadesa elsewhere simply calls them ‘eleven states rooted in virtue’ (*ekādasasīlamūlakā dhammā*).83 Since both exegetical texts discuss these discourses several times, the Nettippakarana’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,84 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 Nettippakarana 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 Nettippakarana 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.

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

84 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.
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 Nettippakaraṇa and Petakopadesa 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.\(^85\)

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. 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.\(^86\)

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

\(^85\) A 2: 25 PTS i.60–1: dveme bhikkhave tathāgatām abbhācikkhanti. katame dve? yo ca neyyatthām suttantaṃ nītattho suttanto’ti dīpeti yo ca nītatthām suttantaṃ neyyattho suttanto’ti dīpeti. ime kho bhikkhave dve tathāgatām abbhācikkhanti.

\(^86\) S 12: 1 PTS II 1: katamo ca bhikkhave paṭiccasamuppādo? avijjāpaccayā bhikkhave saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇam… evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti. avijjāya tveva asesavāragnirodhā saṅkhāranirodho… evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti. The formulation is repeated many times in the nidāna-saṃyutta and elsewhere.
implicit meaning, such as the Upanisâ 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 Upanisâ 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 Nettipakarana 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.87 ‘To which nature of things (dharmatā) must [the terms and expressions of the discourses] be compared? To dependent arising’.88 For the Nettipakarana, ‘dependent arising’ refers not just to the familiar formula of the twelve links, but also to conditionality considered as dharmatā, ‘the real nature of things, how things are.’89 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’,90 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 Cetanâkâraṇiya Sutta states: ‘it is the nature of things (dharmatā) that freedom from remorse arises for one who is ethical and blessed with virtuous conduct.’91 And it is therefore reasonable for the Nettipakarana 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.

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’,92 which is rather different to that in the

88 Netti 22: katamissa dhammatâya upanikkhipitabbâni? paṭiccasamuppâde. See DOP II 456, s.v. upanikkhipati, ‘places beside (for comparison)’.
89 DOP II 471 s.v. dhamma.
91 Peṭ 88–9; the summary stanza is the same as in Netti, but the explanation that follows is entirely different.
Nettippakarana.93 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’.94 It asks, what is the way to this purification? In answer, Peṭakopadesa quotes from the Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta,95 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.

In Appendix 2, I present two diagrams illustrating these different interpretations of dependent arising in Nettippakarana and Peṭakopadesa. The difference is partly semantic: the Petakopadesa 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 Nettippakarana, 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 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 Nettippakarana, with its unique reference to transcendental dependent arising, has provided a useful precedent for a modernist expression of the dhamma.

93 It is this kind of comparison that suggests that Netti and Peṭ are two separate workings-out of the same basic exegetical method.
94 From M 60 PTS I 407, quoted in Peṭ 88: atthi hetu atthi paccayo sattanaṃ visuddhiyā. sahetu sapaccayā sattā visujjhanti.
95 A 11: 2 PTS V 312–3; although the text of Peṭ here is corrupt and this attribution is a guess: see Nāṇamoli 1964, 116.
### 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). The following table represents the mapping of *Udāna* 8: 4 in the *Nettipakarana* reduced to its essentials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>discourse extract (Ud 8: 4):</th>
<th>rephrasing as root-terms (<em>mūlapādas</em>)</th>
<th>gives access to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’</td>
<td>dependent is: craving (<em>taṅhā</em>) views (<em>diṭṭhi</em>)</td>
<td>intention (<em>cetanā</em>) is: passion (<em>rāga</em>) confusion (<em>moha</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’</td>
<td>Independent: calm (<em>samatha</em>) insight (<em>vipassanā</em>)</td>
<td>knowledge (<em>vijjā</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘when there is relaxation’</td>
<td>ending of: passion (<em>rāga</em>) hostility (<em>dosa</em>) confusion (<em>moha</em>)</td>
<td>giving up:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge (<em>vijjā</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discourse extracts on the left are first ‘reduced’ to a recognisable 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 *Petakopadesa*, in the exegetical mode of joint attribution (*samāropana hāra*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>discourse extract (Ud 8.4):</th>
<th>rephrasing as root-terms (<em>mūlapādas</em>)</th>
<th>joint attribution:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘there is agitation for one who is dependent’</td>
<td>dependent is: craving (<em>taṅhā</em>) views (<em>diṭṭhi</em>)</td>
<td>formations (<em>saṅkhārā</em>) ignorance (<em>avijjā</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘there is no agitation for one who is independent’</td>
<td>giving up: craving (<em>taṅhā</em>) views (<em>diṭṭhi</em>)</td>
<td>cessations of: formations (<em>saṅkhārā</em>) ignorance (<em>avijjā</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘when there is relaxation’</td>
<td>[stages of the path]</td>
<td>leading to: <em>nibbāna</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

INSERT ILLUSTRATION HERE
### Abbreviations

| D | *Dīgha-nikāya*, PTS eds. vol. I (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890), vol. II (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1903), vol.3 (Carpenter 1910); translated as *Long Discourses of the Buddha* (Walshe 1987). |
| DOP | Dictionary of Pāli vol.1 (Cone 2001) vol.2 (Cone 2010). |
| Netti | *Nettipakkaraṇa*, 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). |
| Peṭ | *Peṭakopadesa* PTS (Barua 1982); translated as *Piṭaka Disclosure* (Ñāṇamoli 1964). |
| S | *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, PTS eds. vols.I–V (Féer 1884–98); 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). |

### Bibliography


