

Ānanda, eye is empty of self or of anything belonging to self (cakkhum suññaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā). Material forms (rūpā) are empty of self or of anything belonging to self. Visual consciousness (cakkhuviññāṇaṃ) is empty of self or of anything belonging to self. Visual contact (cakkhusamphassa) is empty of self or of anything belonging to self. And the rest ... (ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) are empty of self or of anything belonging to self. Also, whatever feeling (vedayitaṃ) pleasant or unpleasant or neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant arises conditioned by mind-contact (manosamphassa-paccayā) is empty of self or of anything belonging to self.

Corresponding to this text in the Chinese is SA 232,⁵⁰ though here the Buddha is conversing with Samṛddhi (P. Samiddhi). According to SA 232, when Samṛddhi asks the same question, the Buddha replies:

Eye is empty (眼空 Skt. cakṣuḥ śūnyam), empty of eternal and unchanging nature (常恆不變易法空 Skt. śāśvatenāvipariṇāmadharmaṇa śūnyam), empty of anything belonging to self (我所空 Skt. ātmīyena śūnyam). Why is this so? This is nature as it is (此性自爾 Skt. prakṛtir asyaiṣā). Material forms, visual consciousness, visual contact, the feelings unpleasant or pleasant or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant that arise conditioned by visual contact are empty, empty of eternal and unchanging nature, empty of anything belonging to self. Why is this so? This is nature as it is. Ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are also thus. This is called "empty world" (空世間 Skt. śūnyo loko).

Although the two texts use slightly different expressions - e.g. "empty of eternal and unchanging nature" (常恆不變

易法空) and "this is nature as it is" (此性自爾) are lacking in SN 35. 85 - the meaning of "empty world" is the same in both.

Accordingly, the Buddha in the SN and SA versions refers to *the six sense-spheres* (saḷāyatana; including *the six sense-faculties*⁵¹ and *the six types of external object*⁵²), *six consciousnesses*,⁵³ *six contacts*,⁵⁴ and *six feelings*⁵⁵ as "the world" (loka). Also, he focuses on the "sentient being" (P. satta, Skt. sattva) when looking at the world.⁵⁶ *The six sense-faculties* corresponding to *the six types of external object* produce *the six types of consciousness*. The coming together of these three phenomena (i.e. the six sense-faculties, the six external objects, and the six types of consciousness) is *the six contacts*. Through *the six contacts*, *the six feelings* are produced,⁵⁷ each of which is either pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, or neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant feeling (i.e. neutral feeling).⁵⁸ These inter-relationships or inter-connections in the view of the world can be shown as follows:

sense-faculties	external objects	consciousness, etc.
eye -----	visible forms -----	visual cons., etc.
ear -----	sounds -----	auditory cons., etc.
nose -----	odours -----	olfactory cons., etc.
tongue -----	tastes -----	gustatory cons., etc.
body -----	tangible things -----	tactile cons., etc.
mind (manas) -----	mind-objects -----	mental cons., etc.

As shown above, the two versions record in common that every one of these - the six sense-spheres (six sense-faculties and six external objects), six types of consciousness, contact, and feeling - is empty of self or of anything belonging to self. Since these are not-self, the world is empty of self. Thus, the notion of "not-self" in the two traditions is the basis for saying "the world is empty"; here "emptiness" has the meaning of "not-self".

It is important to note here that in explaining the meaning of the world as empty, the Buddha in the discourses does not say that eye itself (etc.) is *empty*. He says "eye is *empty of self* (suññaṃ attena) or *of anything belonging to self*" (attaniyena). It is not that the eye itself, or any of the other items is *empty*.

To summarise this section, two uses and meanings of "emptiness" have been noted: (1) In the teaching of 空三昧 kong-sanmei/suññatā-vihāra "emptiness" means "empty of craving or of desire, hatred, and delusion". The meditative state of emptiness (kong-sanmei/suññatā-vihāra) is a state of wisdom, highly valued among meditations. Also this is the *ultimate meaning of emptiness* in early Buddhism, since it is connected with the meaning of nirvana (nibbāna). (2) In the teaching of suñña-loka "empty world", "emptiness" means "not-self". The notion of not-self is "A is empty of B, but A is not empty." Also this is a *basic meaning of emptiness* in early Buddhism, because seeing the world as empty is the key to bringing about the fading away of craving or of desire, hatred, and delusion. To see the world as empty is to get rid of the self-view, and the self-view is the root cause of craving (or desire, hatred, and delusion). (How to see the world as empty of self in early Buddhism will be discussed in 1.4. "The Recognition of Emptiness".)

1.3. Conditioned Genesis, Nirvana and Emptiness

Conditioned genesis (P. paṭiccasamuppāda, Skt. pratītyasamutpāda) is a fundamental principle of the Buddha's teaching. Insight into conditioned genesis leads to "nirvana" (P. nibbāna, Skt. nirvāṇa); and, as will be shown below, both conditioned genesis and nirvana are connected with emptiness.

Firstly, we discuss conditioned genesis as a principle of the Buddha's teaching. According to SN 12, 65⁵⁹ and SA 287,⁶⁰ the Buddha discovered and realised the dharma (the nature of phenomena) of conditioned genesis in meditation as he attained enlightenment (sambodha); and he declared, revealed, and taught the dharma leading to nirvana for humankind. "Conditioned genesis" refers to this principle: "When this exists, that exists; this arising, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not exist; this ceasing, that ceases." (imasmim sati idaṃ hoti, imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati. imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati).⁶¹ The reference is particularly to the origin of suffering (dukkha) and the cessation of suffering (i.e. nibbāna, nirvāṇa). The Buddha refers to the means for realizing this principle as "the ancient way of the noble (enlightened) ones". It is his noble eightfold way, the way leading to knowledge of the four noble truths, or of conditioned genesis. According to both texts (SN 12 65 and SA 287), after having discovered and fully realised the dharma of conditioned genesis in his meditation, the Buddha says:

... thus I have attained to the ancient way of the noble (enlightened) ones: ... right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentrative meditation. . . . I have gone along this path and seen *aging-and-death*,⁶² *the origin of aging-and-death*,⁶³ *the ceasing of aging-and-death*,⁶⁴ *the path leading to the ceasing of aging-and-death*.⁶⁵ In the same way, I have fully come to know birth ..., becoming ..., attachment ..., craving ..., feeling ..., contact ..., the six sense-spheres ..., name-and-material form ..., consciousness ..., *activities, the origin of activities, the ceasing of activities, the path leading to the ceasing of activities*.