

Buddhist Paleo-Compatibilism  
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From Chapter 6 of *Bodhicāryavatāra* by Śāntideva

22. There is no anger in me toward bile and the like though they cause great pain.  
Why anger toward sentient beings? Their anger is also due to causes.
23. Just as this pain arises unwished for,  
So anger also arises unwished for due to causes.
24. A person does not intentionally get angry, having thought 'I will be angry';  
Nor does anger arise with the intention to arise.
25. Whatever transgressions and evil deeds of different sorts there are,  
All occur through the power of their causes, but no autonomous power exists.
26. Nor is there the thought 'I will produce' in the assemblage of conditions,  
Neither does what is produced think 'I am produced'.
27. For surely the primal stuff that is posited, the so-called self that is imagined,  
These are not produced with the thought 'I come to be'.
28. For when unarisen that does not exist, what is there that would then wish to come to be?  
And because it is concerned with its object, no cessation is possible
29. A permanent self would be unconscious like space, clearly inactive.  
What action can there be with respect to what is inactive, even in conjunction with  
another condition?
30. Something that at the time of the action is just like it was before, what by way of an  
action is done by it,  
Such that it is said to have an action? If there is connection, which of the two is the cause  
of that?
31. Thus everything is constrained by something else, even that which constrains is not  
without constraint;  
When entities are inactive like nirvana, at what does one get angry?
32. [Objection:] Prevention [of anger] is thus not appropriate, for who prevents what?  
[Reply:] It [prevention] is taken to be appropriate with regard to dependent origination  
due to the cessation of suffering.

Incompatibilism: the view that freedom and psychological determinism are incompatible  
hard determinism: determinism holds, hence no freedom  
libertarianism: there is freedom, hence determinism is false

Compatibilism: the view that freedom and psychological determinism are compatible  
traditional compatibilism (Locke, Voltaire)  
neo-compatibilism (Frankfurt, Dennett, Flanagan, Fischer)

Paleo-compatibilists hold:

- (1) Persons are free in the responsibility-entailing sense.
- (2) Freedom requires that persons be originating causes.
- (3) Nothing could be an originating cause in the required sense.
- (4) All psychological states are the effects of prior causes

Buddhist Reductionism:

there is no self;  
the person is a conceptual fiction and is only conventionally real.

Semantic Dualism

ultimate truth: correspondence to mind-independent reality  
conventional truth: quasi-truth under a folk theory that reliably leads to successful practice

Semantic dualism at work in the reply to the objection from moral desert (*Visuddhi-Magga* XVII.§162-72.; *Milindapanha* p.46)

The Compatibilist-Incompatibilist Debate

Incompatibilist: freedom is freedom of the will, which requires that the will not be determined

Compatibilist: freedom is ability of person to act on their will

Incompatibilist: this is only *ersatz* freedom, given determinism about volitional states; the person a mere conduit of causation

Compatibilist: accountability as a maximizing strategy

Incompatibilist: this shows the compatibilist to be recommending that we maintain the illusion of 'could have done otherwise' on consequentialist grounds, thereby revealing an inability to appreciate the dignity conferred by genuine freedom

Neo-compatibilist: prospective reading of 'could have done otherwise' for systems with capacities of self-scrutiny, self-control and self-revision

Incompatibilist: the 'before I was born' objection

Two possible Buddhist Reductionist responses:

beginningless births  
semantic dualism and paleo-compatibilism